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20 August 2009

PZ Myers Does It Again

Clive Hayden

PZ Myers has, once again, railed against something that he doesn't understand at his blog Pharyngula. Hi PZ! Notice that he doesn't actually address the content of Dr. Dembski and Dr. Marks' paper, which you can read here: Conservation of Information in Search: Measuring the Cost of Success, published at the IEEE. Given his argument, he doesn't know how to measure the cost of success, yet claims that Dr. Dembski doesn't understand selection. A bit of advice PZ, the argument presented by Dr. Dembski and Dr. Marks is very sophisticated PZ, your mud slinging isn't PZ, you need to step it up PZ. I know this new stuff isn't ez, but you may want to consider a response that has actual content PZ. Your argument against this peer-reviewed paper is still in its infancy, or, more accurately, still in the pharyngula stage, embryonic in its development.

Since evolution of the kind PZ subscribes to cannot be witnessed, the argument has moved into genetic algorithms with the advent of computational abilities to determine the affair, and the IEEE is an entirely appropriate place to publish on that subject. We're not going anywhere, we'll give him time to catch up and educate himself to the tenets of the paper's actual content. And if/when he does, maybe he'll write another blog, and possibly write one with active information, that is, actual information, or else his argument will never reach it's target.

This entry was posted Thursday, August 20th, 2009 at 10:03 pm and is filed under Darwinism, Education, Evolution, Intelligent Design, Science. You can skip to the end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.

252 Responses

1

DiEb

08/20/2009

11:31 pm

Dr. Dembski has opened his defences as he stated at *Uncommonon Descent* that he used Dr. Dawkin's weasel-algorithm as an example, though the search described in his paper differs from the search Dawkins proposed.

This is the point Dr. Myers exploits.

[2](#)

yakky d

08/20/2009

11:54 pm

Clive,

> Given his argument, he doesn't know how to measure the cost of success, yet claims that Dr. Dembski doesn't understand selection.

Well, I think it's fair to ask why Dr. Dembski again erroneously asserts that the weasel algorithm involves "latching", in view of the fact that he calls special attention to this part of the paper in his post.

I won't comment on anyone's understanding of "selection", but it seems to me any evolutionist would agree that latching 1) is unnecessary and more importantly 2) would make the algorithm even more biologically unrealistic than it is to begin with. Mutations are supposed by evolutionists to be random wrt fitness; latching completely contradicts this principle.

[3](#)

[BillB](#)

08/21/2009

1:49 am

PZ's critisism concerns the representation of Dawkins WEASEL algorithm in Dembski and Marks paper. Dembski and Marks represent the algorithm incorrectly.

If D and M want to claim that WEASEL actually includes extra components that Dawkins never included in his description, then they need to make these claims clear in their paper, and provide some argument or evidence to support them.

As it stands the description of WEASEL in their paper misrepresents Dawkins algorithm. A reader who is familiar with Dawkins book, or who follows up the reference, will also see that is is misrepresented, and that can cast doubt on the validity of D and M's conclusions. A bit more checking and it would become clear that D and M have had this pointed out to them prior to publication, and yet they never corrected the mistake, or acknowledged that their representation was unorthodox.

The bottom line is that it is wrong to misrepresent other peoples work. Dembski and Marks are providing a very good reason for readers doubt or dismiss their papers conclusions so they really haven't done themselves any favours.

[4](#)

Tajimas D

08/21/2009

1:55 am

Clive, I'm wondering how Dr. Dembski closing down comments on his thread bears on your assertion that UD is an open forum for criticism.

5

Indium

08/21/2009

4:24 am

As far as I know latching and non-latching versions of the program behave very similar for large enough population sizes (and small enough mutation rates). But even if Dr. Dembski misrepresented Dawkins* the bottom line is still correct: Active information is present and guides the algorithm to the target phrase. After thinking about that however, for me this seems to even strengthen Dawkins´ argument with regard to the power of mutation and selection: It is almost like a partitioned search!

As Dr. Dembski notes in his paper, the active information of evolution enters when the fittest members of a generation are chosen. I think some of this active information is more or less an endogenous parameter of the organisms: How healthy are they, can they produce fertile offspring etc. Quite obviously, some of this active information also comes from the environment, which "chooses" the fittest members of a generation (selection!): When fast predators are present, the slowest or weakest members of the prey population will probably not be able to reproduce. This way, the average running speed of the prey population increases. In a certain way, the information "fast predators are present" then has been transferred into the prey genome.
One could therefore argue that organisms in a specific environment contain information about the environment. In fact, this can be used scientifically: If they find bones of an ancient creature, scientists can draw a lot of conclusions about the specific characteristics of the place the creature lived in.

* I think he did. The wording in the Blind Watchmaker gives no hint of latching. A video of Dawkins presenting the algorithm shows no latching. Dawkins says there is no latching. Latching is not needed for the algorithm to work. The algorithm is more complicated when it uses latching. Explicit latching is not something biologists would implement when modelling evolution: Mutation rate is supposed to be independent of the resulting fitness. The only argument FOR latching I have seen is the fact that no mutation of correct letters is shown in the BW tables, which is easily explained by the fact that only the best members of a few generatios were shown. There is no reason to believe one should see fitness reducing mutations in this case.

6

DATCG

08/21/2009

8:00 am

Did Dawkins program compare intermediate steps to an end goal? Yes or No?

7

Indium

08/21/2009

8:12 am

Yes, he did.

8

DATCG

08/21/2009

8:37 am

oh my gosh…

what a joke. he compares, builds, compares, builds, all the while rewarding as it builds a closer version of the target.

Latching, cumulative, whatever, he's locking in better versions each iteration after comparison is made to the target and deemed successful.

This is a farce. Whatever Dawkins attempted to do, the analogy fails for unguided evolution from the very get-go.

This is a designed program built upon assumptions of what he thinks has occurred over time.

Yet in order to build a successful trial, he must compare to the end goal.

This is no different than having a blueprint of DNA already available to you. Then turning it over to all the cellular functions ready to edit, translate, transcribe and build a new organ.

He is recreating design steps, not blind steps.

Geeeeez this is foolish stuff.

Thank God this man is no longer in charge of Public Understanding of Science.

9

BillB

08/21/2009

8:57 am

DATAG

WEASEL is an example of a search algorithm and its stated purpose is to demonstrate how cumulative selection can find a target quicker that a random search.

You are right to express surprise at the farce – it is not an example of 'unguided evolution' or anything but the most grossly simplified analogy to it. This is why Dawkins describes it as 'A bit of a cheat'.

Dawkins description of it as a cheat is correct when trying to apply it to biological evolution because WEASEL involves a search for a specific target. Biology does not, that this is what Dawkins is acknowledging. By using WEASEL as an example (regardless of whether they modify it to include latching) Dembski and Marks also remove any relevance to biological evolution.

10

DeLurker

08/21/2009

8:58 am

Long time lurker, first time poster. Hi, all!

DATCG#7

    what a joke. he compares, builds, compares, builds, all the while rewarding as it builds a closer version of the target.

You should read *The Blind Watchmaker*. Dawkins explains that the Weasel algorithm is just a simple example of selection, not a simulation of evolutionary theory. In his own words from TBW:

> Although the monkey/Shakespeare model is useful for explaining the distinction between single-step selection and cumulative selection, it is misleading in important ways. One of these is that, in each generation of selective 'breeding', the mutant 'progeny' phrases were judged according to the criterion of resemblance to a distant ideal target, the phrase METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL. Life isn't like that. Evolution has no long-term goal. There is no long-distance target, no final perfection to serve as a criterion for selection, although human vanity cherishes the absurd notion that our species is the final goal of evolution. In real life, the criterion for selection is always short-term, either simple survival or, more generally, reproductive success.

The point of the Weasel algorithm is to show the power of selection. This relates to another of DATCG's statements:

> Latching, cumulative, whatever, he's locking in better versions each iteration after comparison is made to the target and deemed successful.

There is no latching in Dawkins' Weasel algorithm. That's the primary interesting point it makes. Simply selecting the most fit individual in a generation will lead to increasingly greater fitness. It is mathematically possible that a child in the Weasel algorithm will be less fit than its parent — in fact this does happen. It is less likely, but still mathematically possible, that all of the children in a generation might be less fit than their parent. Over a number of generations, though, fitness does increase.

If you'd like to see a more complex example, read the book and play with Dawkins biomorphs.

11

DATCG

08/21/2009

9:00 am

Indium,

Thanks, I found more info before seeing your reply.

PZ Meyers and the rest are huffing and puffing over nothing.

Honestly, they should all be embarrased by this, especially Dawkins. What a charade.

If anything, Dawkins program infers ID is correct. He unknowingly stepped in it. He is confirming the exact opposite of his professed beliefs.

DNA is a blueprint – an end goal.
As is his Weasel sentence – an end goal.

Cumulative steps are part of any normal design process for step by step building up of parts into a Final Design.

In the case of life – whether it is skin or liver cells. The cellular functions build according to the End Goal of DNA BluePrint.

So his program once written would not change, only Dawkins End Goal(BluePrint) of "Me thinks…" to "Me don't think carefully at all, except much ado about nothing." for it to produce a different End Goal(BluePrint).

Essentially, he has just eliminated evolution altogether. He has effectively replaced evolution with blueprint driven outcomes that are inserted by an Intelligent Designer. He has made it harder to believe in unguided life without blueprints and easier to believe in guided life with blueprints(end goals).

Now, how did DNA blueprints(end goals) come to exist?

Well thats Origins and the only thing we have as concrete evidence today is Life begets Life.

We have no evidence of DNA Blueprint Spontaneous creation, nor of the machinery that must spontaneously be created to read it, edit and create the cellular life forms, tissues, organs, etc., in the unguided evolutionary scenario.

All of this must be very disconcerting for someone like a Dawkins or PZ Meyers. I guess Dawkins can take solace in belief of advanced

civilizations having evolved before us seeding the planet.

At this point, it is all that is left to him.

[12](#)

Alex73

08/21/2009

9:01 am

Now it is getting really tiresome. Could someone, please, especially one those who defend Dawkins, provide a reference where the actual code (BASIC or Pascal) written by Dawkins himself and used for the results in the Blind Watchmaker (ref [12] in the paper) are published? Any confusion could be dispelled with a single link.

In the absence of the original code it is arguable that the results in the pages 47-48 of the Blind Watchmaker are consistent with latching to the correct letters, even if it is not mentioned in the book or denied by Dawkins himself. I do not say that he is dishonest: it is possible to write a piece of code that appears not to latch, however it is algorithmically identical to latching.

Now on the BBC programme there is no latching in the sense that correct letters are also allowed to mutate, however the generation count is also much higher than the one mentioned in the book. It is indeed consistent with the statement that different codes or parameters were used for the two documents.

I personally do not care anything about various third party implemenations of the described procedure in the book, because the description itself is way too vague.

The latching interpretation is not in contradiction in any ways what the book referred to in [12] says. If it is not latching and this property is important, then Dawkins could have been more careful and show evidence for it. So Dembski and Marks are not in contradiction with the book, nor are they misrepresenting what it says. I think until the author himself clarifies the situation with solid evidence (i.e. the code), their interpretation is valid, even if some people do not like it.

[13](#)

BillB

08/21/2009

9:16 am

Alex73:

> Now it is getting really tiresome.

I agree,

In the absence of any code all we have to go on are Dawkins own words. Far from being vague they actually describe the algorithm quite well – it is hardly complicated after all.

The results printed in the Blind Watchmaker are indeed consistent with a latching mechanism but they are **also** consistent with the non latching algorithm Dawkins describes.

Which is the better explanation, that WEASEL is supposed to use latching even though it isn't needed, or that it doesn't use latching?

Latching as a component of the WEASEL algorithm is not an 'interpretation' of Dawkins description, it is an unwarranted addition to his algorithm. Dawkins describes his algorithm clearly enough for it to be replicated, and for the results he publishes to be replicated – **this has been done on multiple occasions.**

[14](#)

Indium

08/21/2009

9:18 am

Alex73,
The wording in the Blind Watchmaker gives no hint of latching. A video of Dawkins presenting the algorithm shows no latching. Dawkins says there is no latching. Latching is not needed for the algorithm to work. The algorithm is more complicated when it uses latching. Explicit latching is not something biologists would implement when modelling evolution: Mutation rate is supposed to be independent of the resulting fitness. The only argument FOR latching I have seen is the fact that no mutation of correct letters is shown in the BW tables, which is easily explained by the fact that only the best members of a few generatios were shown. There is no reason to believe one should see fitness reducing mutations in this case.

I believe that you think the earth is flat. Nothing in what you have written contradicts this statement.

15

BillB

08/21/2009

9:23 am

> I believe that you think the earth is flat. Nothing in what you have written contradicts this statement.

I believe that he dictates his posts to a typist who enters them into his computer, everything he posts is consistent with this.

16

Indium

08/21/2009

9:25 am

DATCG,

I guess everybody knows that the Weasel program is not a good model for how evolution works in every aspect. It shows that a search that is guided by some kind of environmental feedback can be surprisingly efficient and is especially much more efficient than a blind search. No more and no less.

Maybe we/you can come up with better and still very simple model of evolution?

17

Joseph

08/21/2009

9:30 am

DiEB:

> Dr. Dembski has opened his defences as he stated at Uncommonon Descent that he used Dr. Dawkin's weasel-algorithm as an example, though the search described in his paper differs from the search Dawkins proposed.

Dawkins example was one of "cumulative selection" in which once something is found the search for it is over.

That is exactly what Wm Dembski stated in that paper.

With "weasel" the latching occurs as a matter of the program.

That much is obvious to anyone who has looked at it.

18

DATCG

08/21/2009

9:33 am

BillB,

Huh? So Dawkins wrote this program to not prove evolution? Whaaaa? LOL.

OK, anyone else care to explain what Dawkins original intent is for WEASEL?

Is BillB's version correct?

19

BillB

08/21/2009

9:35 am

The question of whether Dawkins included latching has been taken up with the man himself. See this page for the details. The relevant bit is (in relation to Dembski being informed about his erroneous representation):

> I even corresponded with Dawkins to make sure that there were no editions or versions of "The Blind Watchmaker" that incorporated anything arguably like Dembski's inventions.

That leaves only two possibilities, Dembski is mistaken or Dawkins is lying.

If Dawkins suddenly produced the code that showed no latching mechanism, would he then be accused of fabricating this code to cover his back? How would he prove that it was really the same code?

Given that other peoples attempts to recreate his algorithm are known to produce correct results, Dawkins own non-latching code, fabricated or not, would also produce correct results.

20

BillB

08/21/2009

9:38 am

DATAG:

> OK, anyone else care to explain what Dawkins original intent is for WEASEL?

Whaaaa? LOL – he explains its purpose in his book!

21

Indium

08/21/2009

9:40 am

Joseph,
that´s exactly the point under debate: The search is not over once a correct letter is found. Correct letters are still mutated sometimes.
A video of Dawkins presenting the algorithm demonstrates this.
If the population size is large enough and the mutation rate small, than the behaviour is very similar, however.

DATCG:
I think BillB is correct: The program was not written to prove evolution. It was written to demonstrate the power of a search where incremental improvements are rewarded with reproductive success. It is all explained very nicely in the book. Maybe you can have a look at the original text?

22

BillB

08/21/2009

9:42 am

Joseph:

> Dawkins example was one of "cumulative selection" in which once something is found the search for it is over.

> That is exactly what Wm Dembski stated in that paper.

The algorithm Dembski describes performs a partitioned search, Dawkins WEASEL algorithm does not.

23

DATCG

08/21/2009

9:54 am

BillB, Indium,

Aha…

"It was written to demonstrate the **power of a search where incremental improvements are rewarded with reproductive success"**

Boy, thanks, that clears it up.

And this does not attempt to support evolution in what way again?

24

DATCG

08/21/2009

9:56 am

"The algorithm Dembski describes performs a partitioned search, Dawkins WEASEL algorithm does not."

Why does it matter? End Goal or not?

And why doesn't Dawkins as a "scientist" for Public Understanding open up his program for review by all?

You're quibbling over tidbits and looking past the elephant in the room.

25

DATCG

08/21/2009

10:05 am

As to whether letters are changing or not… this seems to have been covered ad naseum previous discussions…

In similar comments, See KairosFocus #45 for a wrap up:

Comment 45 Kairos wrap up

Until Dawkins, who professed to be a Scientist for Public Understanding unveils his program, we'll never know.

But the fact is, he admits its a bit of a cheat. Fine, kudos to admitting he is cheating.

But lets move on to the bigger reality of targeted goals as proof of Design Concepts for DNA Blueprints.

I think Dawkins did ID a favor.

26

DATCG

08/21/2009

10:07 am

BillB,

I didn't except your explanation. Care to try again?

Are you stating that Dawkins wrote this program in effort to NOT SUPPORT evolution?

27

DeLurker

08/21/2009

10:11 am

DATCG#24

> But lets move on to the bigger reality of targeted goals as proof of Design Concepts for DNA Blueprints.
>
> I think Dawkins did ID a favor.

Again, from my #9 above, Dawkins' own words:

> Although the monkey/Shakespeare model is useful for explaining the distinction between single-step selection and cumulative selection, it is misleading in important ways. One of these is that, in each generation of selective 'breeding', the mutant 'progeny' phrases were judged according to the criterion of resemblance to a distant ideal target, the phrase METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL. Life isn't like that. Evolution has no long-term goal. There is no long-distance target, no final perfection to serve as a criterion for selection, although human vanity cherishes the absurd notion that our species is the final goal of evolution. In real life, the criterion for selection is always short-term, either simple survival or, more generally, reproductive success.

Dawkins was very clear in *The Blind Watchmaker* that the Weasel algorithm is just a very simple example of one aspect of evolutionary theory. It demonstrates the power of selection over randomness. That's it.

As you can see, he also notes that "Evolution has no long-term goal." That's not supportive of ID at all.

28

BillB

08/21/2009

10:15 am

DATCG

It does exactly what it says, it demonstrates ".. the power of a search where incremental improvements are rewarded with reproductive success".

Text strings that are a better match than any others to a target are 'rewarded' by being copied and mutated.

Dawkins uses this to introduce some of the underlying concepts of biological evolution.

He IS using it to help explain the mechanisms that underpin evolution. He IS NOT providing it as an example or proof of evolution.

Re Partitioned search:

> Why does it matter? End Goal or not?

It matters when you write papers for peer review about search algorithms that your descriptions of different algorithms are correct.

WEASEL is not part of a peer reviewed publication, it is part of a popular science book designed to inform and educate. There is no need for him to supply the code, the algorithm he describes contains all the information you need to reproduce the system in whatever language you like.

You mentioned an Elephant?

29

BillB

08/21/2009

10:24 am

> As to whether letters are changing or not… this seems to have been covered ad naseum previous discussions…

Yes it has.

> Until Dawkins, who professed to be a Scientist for Public Understanding unveils his program, we'll never know.

See my comment @ 17.

> Are you stating that Dawkins wrote this program in effort to NOT SUPPORT evolution?

See my comment @ 25.

30

yakky d

08/21/2009

10:31 am

DATCG,

This is a farce. Whatever Dawkins attempted to do, the analogy fails for unguided evolution from the very get-go.

Yes, as Dawkins wrote in TBW,

Evolution has no long-term goal. There is no long-distance target, no final perfection to serve as a criterion for selection, although human vanity cherishes the absurd notion that our species is the final goal of evolution.

And I think you've pointed out a problem for Dembski's argument. He claims that his paper is pro-ID because it contains a critique of weasel, which he characterizes as a search for a target. But, as Dawkins pointed out, evolution is *not* a search for a target. So what does Dembski's analysis of weasel have to do with evolution?

31

DATCG

08/21/2009

10:34 am

Some references to Dawkins program on Wiki:

"The weasel program is a computer simulation written by Richard Dawkins in order to **demonstrate the power of random variation and non-random cumulative selection in natural** and artificial evolutionary systems."

It does no such thing as highlighted in bold. That is merely an assertion. It does demonstrate however artificial selection.

Again, thanks for adding weight to ID.

Me Thinks His Intepretation of How Evolution Works is a FARCE

His program does not demonstrate cumulative selection of "natural evolutionary systems"

If you have a problem with this, take it up with Wiki. Not me.

And for implications to biology…

"The program is a vivid demonstration that the preservation of small changes in an evolving string of characters (or genes) can produce meaningful combinations in a relatively short time as long as there is some mechanism to select cumulative changes, whether it is a person identifying which traits are desirable (in the case of artificial selection) or **a criterion of survival ("fitness") imposed by the environment (in the case of natural selection).**

They're trying to have it both ways. It doesn't model, but it does model! Which is exactly what Dawkins is trying to do, have it both ways. Talking two sides.

Why do they sound like Obama?

Simple enough BillB and Indium?

He is assuming the answer that he wants and then saying, see, this is how it might work if we speed it up artificially. But then, you point out he admits its a cheat, so its not how it works.

In his own words…
"Although the monkey/Shakespeare model is useful for explaining the distinction between single-step selection and cumulative selection, it is misleading in important ways. One of these is that, in each generation of selective 'breeding', the mutant 'progeny' phrases were judged according to the criterion of resemblance to a distant ideal target, the phrase METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL. Life isn't like that. Evolution has no long-term goal. There is no long-distance target, no final perfection to serve as a criterion for selection, although human vanity cherishes the absurd notion that our species is the final goal of evolution."

Actually, not sure where he gets human vanity other than from arrogant atheist who deem themselves self-important enough to rule the world, eliminate religion and reprogram children based upon his or their wish list.

"In real life, the criterion for selection is always short-term, either simple survival or, more generally, reproductive success"

Ah yes, nice. Back to reproductive success of survival. Yet he believes this produces the long term output of humanity, lowly as he considers us all. How many billions of years did it take Mr. Dawkins?

So, his program proves absolutely nothing.

Am I right? If not, then tell me what it proves. And tell me why Wiki asserts it as a demonstration for natural evolutionary systems – where this point is critical for the success of evolution.

Without it, evolution stops. Thus, he is using this program to support his assertions for how evolution works. This still ends up being a farce.

He admits it, great.

[32](#)

DATCG

08/21/2009

10:46 am

yakky d,

His argument about the WEASEL program is a charade. He wants to use it to show that "cumulative selection" can work. He knows it is a charade, so he falls back and says in the end, in case anyone smart enough catches on – we know this is not how evolution really works – doh!

Honestly guys, why follow such mish-mash?

So, you tell me, why does Wiki state it "demonstrates… natural evolutionary systems"

Do you believe WEASEL "demonstrates… natural evolutionary systems"?

We know it demonstrates artificial systems. This is no surprise. In Darwin's day, nor 4000 years ago when artificial breeding was known to have taken place.

But his use of the program shows that by utilizing BluePrints, Guided Evolution can work. He has unwittingly helped ID.

[33](#)

DATCG

08/21/2009

11:02 am

Slight edit…

"So, his program proves absolutely nothing" for unguided evolution, nor for cumulative selection. It proves artificial selection. It proves nothing for natural evolutionary systems. It is only an assumption on the part of Wiki.

If I am wrong, then tell me what his program demonstrates. If you say it demonstrates a natural selection process, we will argue.

If you say it demonstrates an artificial selection process, then we are in agreement.

He, nor Wiki can have it both ways.

I wish I had more time. Check in later.

[34](#)

DeLurker

08/21/2009

11:05 am

DATCG#31

> He wants to use it to show that "cumulative selection" can work.

In the simplified scenario of the Weasel algorithm, using strings of characters and an easily computed fitness function, cumulative selection is, in fact, shown to work much better than random selection.

If you read the rest of the book, you'll see how Dawkins addresses more complex scenarios. Weasel is just an appetizer.

[35](#)

yakky d

08/21/2009

11:16 am

DATCG,

> His argument about the WEASEL program is a charade. He wants to use it to show that "cumulative selection" can work. He knows it is a charade, so he falls back and says in the end, in case anyone smart enough catches on – we know this is not how evolution really works – doh!

I agree that weasel doesn't show how evolution really works, but again that undermines Dr. Dembski's claim that his paper is pro-ID.

> Honestly guys, why follow such mish-mash?

Good question, but who keeps bringing up the topic of weasel?

> So, you tell me, why does Wiki state it "demonstrates… natural evolutionary systems"

> Do you believe WEASEL "demonstrates… natural evolutionary systems"?

I think weasel, along with Dawkins' subsequent disclaimers about targets etc, does a reasonable job of introducing how evolution works. Unfortunately, the disclaimers tend to be ignored and people end up reading more into it than they should.

I don't think weasel demonstrates natural evolutionary systems at anything more than a very superficial level.

> But his use of the program shows that by utilizing BluePrints, Guided Evolution can work. He has unwittingly helped ID.

Are you saying here that you believe that the Designer might have used the weasel algorithm or some variant to create life on earth?

[36](#)

[BillB](#)

08/21/2009

11:22 am

> If you say it demonstrates a natural selection process, we will argue.

> If you say it demonstrates an artificial selection process, then we are in agreement.

It demonstrates the power of selection with an example of selection for proximity to a fixed target – which Dawkins points out is

biologically unrealistic.

In ID speak a computer program can never demonstrate natural selection because it is designed. They can demonstrate artificial selection though, and its natural equavalent, alongside reproduction with variation, are all observed in nature.

Do you dispute this and is the difference between setting an artificial goal and the existence of real fitness selection in nature so big as to render artificial vs natural selection devoid of any equivalence?

> his program proves absolutely nothing.

I will soon tire of banging my head against your brick wall. Dawkins programme demonstrates, it doesn't attempt to prove.

37

yakky d

08/21/2009

11:28 am

DATCG,

> If I am wrong, then tell me what his program demonstrates. If you say it demonstrates a natural selection process, we will argue.

I don't think it demonstrates natural selection very well. Maybe it works a bit better as a demonstration of "artificial" selection, I don't know. But of course we already know artificial selection works from experience. We don't need a computer simulation to verify that "guided evolution", if that essentially amounts to artificial selection, works.

Nevertheless, if we agree that weasel has little or nothing to do with real, unguided evolution, then Dembski's critique becomes moot.

38

kibitzer

08/21/2009

12:16 pm

I just looked at the paper in question: http://marksmannet.com/RobertM.....Search.pdf. Dawkins is cited and the partitioned search for his target phrase is portrayed as "ratcheting" in the correct letters. I've also looked at The Blind Watchmaker, where, in the absence of the actual computer code, it appears that correct letters are being ratcheted. So what's the big deal? If Dawkins has a different algorithm that does not involve ratcheting, then Dembski and Marks simply need to amend their calculations. But does anyone seriously doubt that any such analysis won't show that Dawkins inputted huge amounts of "active information"?

39

DeLurker

08/21/2009

12:29 pm

kibitzer#37

> I've also looked at The Blind Watchmaker, where, in the absence of the actual computer code, it appears that correct letters are being ratcheted.

You can't determine that from simply looking at the progeny produced every 10 generations.

Read the actual algorithm that Dawkins describes. Nothing like latching is mentioned. The last time this was raised here (before I

delurked), David Kellogg pointed to a website that goes step-by-step through Dawkins description to develop a version of the Weasel program (it's here: http://www.softwarematters.org/more-weasel.html). This version, with no latching since latching was never mentioned in *The Blind Watchmaker*, produces very similar output to what Dawkins showed.

Dawkins himself has said that no latching was implemented: http://austringer.net/wp/index.....r-sweater/

There's even a video showing Dawkins running the program and it can be seen that correct letters **do** revert to incorrect letters on occasion. (Sorry, no link.)

40

BillB

08/21/2009

12:38 pm

> If Dawkins has a different algorithm that does not involve ratcheting

Dawkins DESCRIBES his algorithm in the book, it does not include ratcheting!!!!!

> it appears that correct letters are being ratcheted.

Yes!, that's what happens when you implement the algorithm Dawkins describes without adding any latching mechanisms!!!!!

41

yakky d

08/21/2009

12:48 pm

kibitzer,

> So what's the big deal? If Dawkins has a different algorithm that does not involve ratcheting, then Dembski and Marks simply need to amend their calculations.

The only big deal is that Dr. Dembski was alerted of this issue almost 9 years ago. Why haven't the calculations been amended in the meantime?

> But does anyone seriously doubt that any such analysis won't show that Dawkins inputted huge amounts of "active information"?

I think you mean "will show", here, but I don't doubt that. Of course the weasel algorithm performs better than a random search. The question is whether or not Dembski's analysis says anything about evolution. The notion of "active information" is defined in the context of a search for a target, but Dawkins states that targets don't exist in ToE.

42

kibitzer

08/21/2009

12:54 pm

yakky d: "But Dawkins states that targets don't exist in ToL." So do we take his word for it? If his algorithm is supposed to model evolution, then evolution does involve a targeted search. Dawkins is speaking out of both sides of his mouth.

Where in The Blind Watchmaker does Dawkins explicitly deny ratcheting? In the example he gives (METHINKS…), ratcheting appears to take place. So why not give Dembski the benefit of the doubt?

43

[Joseph](#)

08/21/2009

1:00 pm

Bill,

He didn't have to include latching. The program latches given a high enough population size and a low enough mutation rate.

And a partitioned search is the same as Dawkins' cumulative selection.

That is once something is found the search for it is over.

That was Dawkins' point in the book.

44

DeLurker

08/21/2009

1:04 pm

kibitzer#41

> Where in The Blind Watchmaker does Dawkins explicitly deny ratcheting?

Why would he deny something that isn't a component of the mechanism he was trying to demonstrate? No biologist suggests that natural selection always preserves "correct" genes. Doing so would eliminate the purpose of Dawkins' demonstration.

Follow along the example at http://www.softwarematters.org/more-weasel.html and point out, if you can, where anything that Dawkins says could possibly be interpreted to suggest ratcheting.

45

R0b

08/21/2009

1:06 pm

Clive:

> Given his argument, he doesn't know how to measure the cost of success, yet claims that Dr. Dembski doesn't understand

selection.

Yes, it's doubtful that PZ has actually read the paper, so he probably doesn't know how to measure the cost of success. Nor do you for anything biological. How do you do it if you're not given a target, a lower-level search space, and a higher-level search space?

But the points that PZ makes about the paper are correct. The paper is about searches, with no attempt to tie them to biology. And since Dembski has consistently portrayed WEASEL as using latching rather than selection, in spite of the fact that WEASEL's explicitly stated purpose is to illustrate selection, and in spite of being corrected on this for years, PZ's razzing doesn't seem overly harsh.

46

[BillB](#)

08/21/2009

1:10 pm

> And a partitioned search is the same as Dawkins' cumulative selection.

No it isn't, partitioned search explicitly locks part of the candidates configuration out of the search once has reached a goal. Dawkins algorithm does not.

To illustrate the difference and its importance: Partitioned search will fail if you change the target half way through (Unless you explicitly build in a method of un-latching letters), WEASEL will chase whatever target is is given, even if this changes from generation to generation.

47

[kairosfocus](#)

08/21/2009

1:27 pm

Joseph:

One adjustment: CRD did not have to use EXPLICIT latching, to get the sort of apparent — indeed, evident — latching effect we can see in the 1986 published o/p from "good" runs:

_____

>> We may conveniently begin by inspecting the published o/p patterns circa 1986, thusly [being derived from Dawkins, R, The Blind Watchmaker , pp 48 ff, and New Scientist, 34, Sept. 25, 1986; p. 34 HT: Dembski, Truman]:

1 WDL*MNLT*DTJBKWIRZREZLMQCO*P
2? WDLTMNLT*DTJBSWIRZREZLMQCO*P
10 MDLDMNLS*ITJISWHRZREZ*MECS*P
20 MELDINLS*IT*ISWPRKE*Z*WECSEL
30 METHINGS*IT*ISWLIKE*B*WECSEL
40 METHINKS*IT*IS*LIKE*I*WEASEL
43 METHINKS*IT*IS*LIKE*A*WEASEL

1 Y*YVMQKZPFJXWVHGLAWFVCHQXYPY
10 Y*YVMQKSPFTXWSHLIKEFV*HQYSPY
20 YETHINKSPITXISHLIKEFA*WQYSEY
30 METHINKS*IT*ISSLIKE*A*WEFSEY
40 METHINKS*IT*ISBLIKE*A*WEASES
50 METHINKS*IT*ISJLIKE*A*WEASEO
60 METHINKS*IT*IS*LIKE*A*WEASEP
64 METHINKS*IT*IS*LIKE*A*WEASEL >>

_____

In over 200 places where letters in principle could revert, of over 300 letters total, we see no reversions.

Add this to the statement by Dawkins in BW:

>> It . . . begins by choosing a random sequence of 28 letters … it duplicates it repeatedly, but with a certain chance of random error – 'mutation' – in the copying. *The computer examines the mutant nonsense phrases, the 'progeny' of the original phrase, and **chooses the one which, however slightly, most resembles the target phrase,*** METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL . . . . What matters is the difference between the time taken by **cumulative selection**, and the time which the same computer, working flat out at the same rate, would take to reach the target phrase if it were forced to use the other procedure of single-step selection >>

To get that difference, CRD resorts to a proximity based targetted selection process that rewards not functionality — dismissed as "single step selection" — but instead mere closeness to the pre-loaded target phrase. **Which means that Weasel does not CREATE information, but clumsily replicates already existing information.**

This is fundamentally unlike what is claimed for evolution by random variations plus natural selection of the fittest sub populations.

Also, the runs above and he words about cumulative selection strongly suggest EXPLICIT latching as a natural and legitimate interpretation.

We may see such from Dictionary dot com:

>> cu·mu·la·tive (kymy-ltv, -y-l-tv)
adj.
1. *Increasing or enlarging by **successive addition.***
2. Acquired by or resulting from accumulation. >>

That is what was already achieved is locked in and new progress is incremental on top of that. Locked in and latched are synonymous.

As my always linked has noted for months, [and as came out in earlier exchanges] latching may be explicit or implicit, the latter being based on parameters and selection filter specifications.

But then you and I have been called dishonest and worse — up to today — for simply stating the unpopular truth on this: the emperor has no clothes.

And, it seems that the cognitive dissonance at work among Darwinists has filled many with a need to deflect inconvenient facts, through red herrings, strawman distortions and ad hominem attacks.

Sad, but revealing of the parlous state of Darwinism in the Darwin 200 year.

GEM of TKI

48

kairosfocus

08/21/2009

1:35 pm

PS: Another red herring — change the target half way through. THE of course is the definite article.

49

Clive Hayden

08/21/2009

1:39 pm

DeLurker,

Dawkins said "One of these is that, in each generation of selective 'breeding', the mutant 'progeny' phrases were judged according to the criterion of resemblance to a distant ideal target, the phrase METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL. Life isn't like that."

Life isn't like that. In other words, what he demonstrated with the Weasel analogy, is really not an analogy for life, or for anything he's trying to explain within life. Then why offer it at all? What is it supposed to analogize if not life? It's not analogous to non-life, or, death. Maybe it was posited to evidence nothing at all, only to confuse people that it should have import with life systems, when in reality it doesn't. I've seen a lot of confusion with this analogy from folks who believe it is like life.

50

Clive Hayden

08/21/2009

1:55 pm

R0b,

> Nor do you for anything biological. How do you do it if you're not given a target, a lower-level search space, and a higher-level search space?

If we, as human intelligent agents, cannot measure the cost of success, then we cannot say what is successful, for if the cost outweighs the "success", it really isn't successful, in the respect that it is too costly for the attending benefit. This is an argument against evolution if anything.

51

DeLurker

08/21/2009

2:05 pm

Clive Hayden#49

> Life isn't like that. In other words, what he demonstrated with the Weasel analogy, is really not an analogy for life, or for anything he's trying to explain within life. Then why offer it at all? What is it supposed to analogize if not life?

Dawkins himself explains, just before the bit you quoted:

> Although **the monkey/Shakespeare model is useful for explaining the distinction between single-step selection and cumulative selection**, it is misleading in important ways.

(Bolding mine, I hope it comes through.)

All the Weasel algorithm was intended to do was to explain the difference between random selection and cumulative selection. Nothing more. It's just a cartoon version of one evolutionary mechanism, and Dawkins explains that. However, even cartoons can be a useful teaching tool, which is what the Weasel algorithm was developed to be.

52

BillB

08/21/2009

2:10 pm

> In over 200 places where letters in principle could revert, of over 300 letters total, we see no reversions.

Good grief man! That's exactly what will happen when you run the algorithm without a latching mechanism, as you almost admit here:

latching may be explicit or implicit, the latter being based on parameters and selection filter specifications.

Calling it implicit latching is just a semantic device to avoid having to admit that you are wrong.

With mutation rates and pop sizes within certain ranges the fittest member of each generation will have an exceedingly low probability of having any correct letter mutated to an incorrect letter. When you 'print off' a small sample of fittest phrases over an entire run, as Dawkins did in his book, it is highly unlikely that you will see any reversions. You can call that implicit latching if you want but it is not an accurate representation of the facts because with a mutation rate anywhere above zero any letter can mutate, even a correct one.

53

[BillB](#)

08/21/2009

2:15 pm

> PS: Another red herring

Another rhetorical dismissal. Please acquire some manners and make an attempt to understand other peoples posts rather than just dismissing them.

54

R0b

08/21/2009

2:30 pm

Clive:

> Life isn't like that. In other words, what he demonstrated with the Weasel analogy, is really not an analogy for life, or for anything he's trying to explain within life.

If Weasel were like Life in every respect, then it would not be an analogy — it would be Life itself.

Weasel is like Life in some respects (selective reproduction with random mutation) but not in others. Everyone including Dawkins agrees on that, so it's a little strange that this criticism has persisted for more than 2 decades.

55

Nakashima

08/21/2009

2:48 pm

Mr Kibitzer,

You raise an interesting issue, which is obscured by all the predictible response to Dr Dembski's predictible provocation. The paper does go beyond defining active information to asserting a knowledge of the source of the active information.

(I do have trouble with the concept of conservation of information which underlies the concept of active information. Suppose I have a program that computes the digits of pi. If I run this program and produce the first million digits, do they have the same information content? If I ran it for the first billion digits, do they have the same information content?)

56

Clive Hayden

08/21/2009

2:49 pm

R0b,

It's a little more than strange that it would be invented and used if it has no import with actual life. Dawkins didn't say "Life is somewhat like that in some respects and not like that in others." He said "Life's not like that." Period. It's a little strange that it was used at all.

57

Clive Hayden

08/21/2009

2:55 pm

DeLurker,

> Dawkins himself explains, just before the bit you quoted:
>
> Although the monkey/Shakespeare model is useful for explaining the distinction between single-step selection and cumulative selection, it is misleading in important ways.
>
> (Bolding mine, I hope it comes through.)
>
> All the Weasel algorithm was intended to do was to explain the difference between random selection and cumulative selection. Nothing more.

I see, one misleading analogy to explain the misleading part of another misleading analogy. I guess I cannot blame Dawkins, it's hard to get a handle on real life, and we must revert to analogies, and then claim that our analogies have no basis in real life.

SCheesman

08/21/2009

3:01 pm

Nakashima:

> I do have trouble with the concept of conservation of information which underlies the concept of active information. Suppose I have a program that computes the digits of pi. If I run this program and produce the first million digits, do they have the same information content? If I ran it for the first billion digits, do they have the same information content?

In fact, the number of decimals of pi is not a measure of information at all; it is merely a representation with different degrees of accuracy when expressed in a given numeric base. The true amount of information contained in the program is that required to specify the formula for the generation of pi, and that is independent of the number of decimals generated using the program. This reflects the quote given on Mark's and Dembski's "Evolutionary Informatics" web page at

http://www.evolutionaryinformatics.org/

> "… no operation performed by a computer can create new information."

> – Douglas G. Robertson, "Algorithmic Information Theory, Free Will and the Turing Test," Complexity, Vol.3, #3 Jan/Feb 1999, pp. 25-34.

Put another way, the decimals of pi output by the program add not a single bit to the amount of information already stored in the program necessary to generate them.

59

Matteo

08/21/2009

3:40 pm

This whole "no latching" objection seems absurd to me. The success of the weasel program relies on some pretty good psuedo-latching at least, to prevent the character strings from drifting away from their past successful matches. It matters very little whether Dawkins explicitly wrote in latching code or whether he chose mutation rates and population sizes to prevent "error catastrophe". Either way, he smuggled in some necessary information (I mean apart from the giant heist of comparing everything to his distant target string).

Their constant defending of the WEASEL program as if it meant a damned thing for their case is just one of many reasons why I conclude that Darwinists really have very little idea of what they're talking about. All they've got is a whole bunch of wishful thinking.

60

yakky d

08/21/2009

3:50 pm

kibitzer,

> "But Dawkins states that targets don't exist in ToL." So do we take his word for it?

If there *are* targets in evolution, then instead of arguing against weasel, Dr. Dembski should use a real example from biology.

> If his algorithm is supposed to model evolution, then evolution does involve a targeted search. Dawkins is speaking out of both sides of his mouth.

I didn't think he was talking out of both sides of his mouth when I first read TBW. He presents a simple model which illustrates some

aspects of evolution well, but not others. Again, Dawkins explains very clearly the shortcomings of the model, and in the end, I think a reasonable reader would understand the points Dawkins is trying to make.

> Where in The Blind Watchmaker does Dawkins explicitly deny ratcheting? In the example he gives (METHINKS…), ratcheting appears to take place. So why not give Dembski the benefit of the doubt?

I don't think we can fault Dawkins for not addressing every possible misinterpretation of the algorithm. Maybe the latching objection didn't occur to him at the time (it makes no sense from an evolutionist's perspective for starters). Also, space is at a premium in a book, and I would imagine he would want to keep his explanation as uncluttered as possible.

[61](#)

DeLurker

08/21/2009

4:28 pm

Clive Hayden#57

> DeLurker,

>> Dawkins himself explains, just before the bit you quoted:

>>> Although **the monkey/Shakespeare model is useful for explaining the distinction between single-step selection and cumulative selection**, it is misleading in important ways.

>> (Bolding mine, I hope it comes through.)

>> All the Weasel algorithm was intended to do was to explain the difference between random selection and cumulative selection. Nothing more.

> I see, one misleading analogy to explain the misleading part of another misleading analogy. I guess I cannot blame Dawkins, it's hard to get a handle on real life, and we must revert to analogies, and then claim that our analogies have no basis in real life.

Could you please point out exactly what is misleading? The Weasel algorithm is a tool for explaining one aspect of evolutionary theory. Dawkins is very careful in *The Blind Watchmaker* to specify the limits of the tool. The rest of the book goes considerably beyondthis simple tool.

In context, there is nothing misleading about the Weasel algorithm.

[62](#)

R0b

08/21/2009

4:40 pm

Clive:

> Dawkins didn't say "Life is somewhat like that in some respects and not like that in others." He said "Life's not like that." Period. It's a little strange that it was used at all.

Let's look at the whole paragraph from TBW:

> Although the monkey/Shakespeare model is useful for explaining the distinction between single-step selection and cumulative selection, it is misleading in important ways. One of these is that, in each generation of selective 'breeding', the mutant 'progeny' phrases were judged according to the criterion of resemblance to a distant ideal target, the phrase METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL. Life isn't like that. Evolution has no long-term goal. There is no long-distance target, no final perfection to serve as a criterion for selection, although human vanity cherishes the absurd notion that our

species is the final goal of evolution. In real life, the criterion for selection is always short-term, either simple survival or, more generally, reproductive success.

WEASEL illustrates cumulative selection, a fundamental principle of biological life. It is different from life in that it has a long-term goal while life does not. "Life isn't like that" is smack in the middle of a paragraph that discusses that difference. Given the context, why in the world do you interpret "that" as referring to the whole of WEASEL? And given the first sentence, why would you think that Dawkins sees WEASEL as being different from life in *all* respects?

63

Alex73

08/21/2009

4:58 pm

This is more interesting than I initially thought. Staying with the book, anyone can see that the mutation rate is pretty low, because even incorrect letters are likely preserved. Let's suppose the following:

1. The program chooses a winner only if it has more matching letters than the parent string. (i.e. in case of the best child string(s) having the same number of matches as the parent one the entire generation is discarded) It seems to be perfectly in line with Dawkins' own words.

2. The mutation rate is so low that during the simulation there is only a very low chance for any generation to have a child where:

a: three mutations happen

b: two of these produces the matching letter from previously non-matching ones

c: one mutation changes a previous matching letter into a non-matching one

then the algorithm will produce results just like a latching algorithm without any explicit latching.

A quick calculation suggests that it would be the case at 1% probability for a letter mutation. BTW it looks like this figure could produce the the results seen in the book.

Now if a non-latching algorithm is unlikely to produce results different from a latching one, I think it is arguable that it can be evaluated as the latching version.

64

Clive Hayden

08/21/2009

4:58 pm

R0b,

> Given the context, why in the world do you interpret "that" as referring to the whole of WEASEL? And given the first sentence, why would you think that Dawkins sees WEASEL as being different from life in all respects?

Because that's what it says. If there is no target, there is no weasel phrase. Cumulative would mean anything that accumulated, even nonsense phrases.

65

R0b

08/21/2009

4:59 pm

SCheesman:

> This reflects the quote given on Mark's and Dembski's "Evolutionary Informatics" web page at
>
> http://www.evolutionaryinformatics.org/
>
> "… no operation performed by a computer can create new information."
>
> – Douglas G. Robertson, "Algorithmic Information Theory, Free Will and the Turing Test," Complexity, Vol.3, #3 Jan/Feb 1999, pp. 25-34.

And a similar statement by Leon Brillouin is also frequently quoted in EIL work, with the implication that these quotes have something to do with EIL concepts. They don't. This is simply equivocation on the word "information".

Robertson was explicitly talking about algorithmic information, not active, endogenous, or exogenous information. Algorithmic information, by definition, is not increased by any computational process. This fact has nothing to do with the EIL's conservation of information.

Brilloun is very explicit that computers don't increase information because they are deterministic. Again, this has nothing to do with the EIL conservation of information, which deals with probabilistic searches.

66

R0b

08/21/2009

5:09 pm

Clive:

> Because that's what it says. If there is no target, there is no weasel phrase. Cumulative would mean anything that accumulated, even nonsense phrases.

No, that's not what it says. Biological life and WEASEL have cumulative selection in common, regardless of whether there is a target or not. So you're wrong in acting as if Dawkins thinks that they have nothing in common. And you're wrong in acting as if their differences makes this commonality cease to be common.

67

Clive Hayden

08/21/2009

5:15 pm

R0b,

It cannot be common and uncommon at the same time. If the phrase is not a target, then any accumulation goes, and the whole weasel endeavor is for naught.

68

Joseph

08/21/2009

5:19 pm

BillB,

Given a large enough population size and a small enough mutation rate you will never see a character reversal.

That is ratcheting.

Cumulative means to increase by succesive additions.

Ratchet means to move in degrees in one direction only.

Dawkins clearly meant that cumulative selection is equal to ratcheting.

69

Joseph

08/21/2009

5:20 pm

R0b,

Do you have any biological examples of cumulative selection?

And if there isn't a target then "cumulative" is meaningless.

70

R0b

08/21/2009

5:25 pm

Clive:

> It cannot be common and uncommon at the same time.

Of course it can't. Cumulative selection is common, so if you think it isn't, then you're wrong.

> If the phrase is not a target, then any accumulation goes, and the whole weasel endeavor is for naught.

Irrelevant. Just because WEASEL defines fitness in terms of a distant target doesn't mean that every evolutionary algorithm or process has to do so in order to produce something interesting.

Clive Hayden

08/21/2009

5:29 pm

R0b,

Ahh, I see, "something interesting", like anything that accumulates in any sort of way, even an accumulation of letters from monkeys would produce "something interesting" whatever that means. We have now left the weasel analogy far behind, and are now looking for "something interesting", again, whatever that means. In the respect that things accumulate, is that really "interesting" in virtue of itself? It would of course depend on what accumulated, and if there is no target that is being approximated to in the accumulation, then the accumulation is anything, randomness, and always will be, for there would be nothing to compare the accumulation to, no standard of comparison. Call this "interesting" if you want, for there is no arguing personal taste.

DeLurker

08/21/2009

5:52 pm

Alex73#63

> Let's suppose the following:
>
> 1. The program chooses a winner only if it has more matching letters than the parent string. (i.e. in case of the best child string(s) having the same number of matches as the parent one the entire generation is discarded) It seems to be perfectly in line with Dawkins' own words.

Actually, it doesn't. Dawkins' words are:

> The computer examines the mutant nonsense phrases, the 'progeny' of the original phrase, and chooses the one which, however slightly, most resembles the target phrase, METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL.

It is mathematically possible for all progeny to be less fit than the parent. In that case, the Weasel algorithm would pick the best of the bad litter and keep going.

> A quick calculation suggests that it would be the case at 1% probability for a letter mutation. BTW it looks like this figure could produce the the results seen in the book.

The site I mentioned above uses a rate of 5% and produces results similar to those in the book. I seem to remember someone running a large number of trials with different population sizes and mutation rates the last time this topic came up, but I can't find it at the moment.

R0b

08/21/2009

5:53 pm

Clive:

> and if there is no target that is being approximated to in the accumulation, then the accumulation is anything, randomness, and always will be, for there would be nothing to compare the accumulation to, no standard of comparison.

No. Just because fitness is not defined in terms of a long-term target, that does not imply pure randomness.

Since you are no longer arguing that WEASEL has nothing in common with life, I'll take that as a concession. Thank you.

74

Joseph

08/21/2009

7:01 pm

DeLurker,

Yes in an unrealistically small population with an unrealistically high mutation rate there could be a reversal.

That is why I said in a large enough population and a small enough mutation rate latching/ ratcheting is a given.

And realistic mutation rates are less than 1%. Much less.

75

Joseph

08/21/2009

7:05 pm

Fitness is usually defined as those who leave more offspring.

And there are many reasons why that could be.

Also there may be many different "beneficial" variations competing within the same population.

76

Learned Hand

08/21/2009

7:28 pm

Yes in an unrealistically small population with an unrealistically high mutation rate there could be a reversal.

Stripping out the subjective weasel words, this is an admission that a reversion is possible in any nonzero population with any nonzero mutation rate. Did Dembski restrain his allusion to WEASEL to a narrow band of "reasonable" numbers? I don't recall any such limitation.

77

Clive Hayden

08/21/2009

11:37 pm

R0b,

I made no concession. "Weasel" has nothing in common with life, remember, life's not like that, it doesn't search out a target, so there is no Weasel to be got. And having no goal does mean that there is no goal, not even fitness as a goal, for you would have no criterion for fitness, for there is nothing to compare any accumulation to.

78

kairosfocus

08/22/2009

12:49 am

Onlookers:

Let's go straight to the main point.

The latest wave of Darwinist rhetorical wave attacks on "Weasel" are clearly intended to distract attention from, distort our understanding of and get us to dismiss the latest key ID peer reviewed paper, and its author. (As well as of course those who would support it.)

tot hat end a by now all too familiar ruthless and destructive pattern of rhetoric has been deployed by the Darwinists: distractive red herrings, led out to strawman misrepresentations soaked in ad hominems and ignited to cloud, confuse, choke, poison and polarise the atmosphere. And, if you dare point this out, you will be attacked through turnabout false accusations, in my case now amounting to accusing me of "gutter politics." [That's why I have publicly stated to BillB that he has gone beyond the pale of civil discourse. Sadly, he is now an example of what not to do. Prayers, of course are always indicated; for all of us finite, fallible, fallen, struggling sinners.]

The most urgent thing therefore is to first refocus our attention on the main point, then expose the sleazy tactics for what they are — and I think you all will know the fairly recent historical exemplars of where that sort of incivility points and what it can do if it snowballs across our civilisation unchecked. (And TME, the written complaint should now be at the HS Dept.)

I] First things first:

What Dembski and Marks have done is:

1 –> they have extended the reach of the design thought focussed on CSI, by now addressing the issue of how we get to specified targets in configuration spaces.

2 –> The baseline approach is a random walk algorithm, which as we know from the many discussions of FSCI, can be swamped by exhaustion of search resources.

3 –> For instance if the entity uses 1,000 bits of info capacity to define its functionality (a functionality which is of course vulnerable to modest perturbation and so comes in islands), it will be such that the observed universe across its working life will only be able to run through less than 1 in 10^150 of the number of configs specified by that many bits.

4 –> Now, the cost of search issue is that there is no generic search algorithm that for all relevant problems will consistently outperform random search. that is while it may do better in some cases, it will actually do worse in others, and on average will be at most as good or as bad as random search.

5 –> this imposes the point hat there are horses for courses, and "good" search algors for particular challenges.

6 –> therefore, before we get to the direct search, we have a second order search for a good search to deal with. And so the problem explodes in a vicious regress.

7 –> but, when we introduce the possibility of independent knowledge of the situation, we see that we might be able to pick a good

search.

8 –> The impact of such a good search can be measured by the advantage it confers over random search.

9 –> that is, we have now defined ACTIVE INFORMATION at least up to the level of a concept.

10 –> the empirically known source of such active information: intelligence.

OOPS!

II] The Distraction

In a few sentences of the new paper, Drs Dembski and Marks make mention of a partitioned search approach to the Dawkins Weasel sentence target of 1986.

This actually makes a lot of sense, as it is a well-known, self-confessed instance of targetted search using cumulative — step by step addition — search based on knowledge of target and proximity to it. (All of this is directly stated by Dr Dawkins himself, in so many words,a s I have long since laid out here, for those concerned to be truthful and fair minded.)

That has some consequences:

a –> Targetted search that uses mere proximity and which eliminates and even discusses complex functionality as a threshold [why CRD derides "single-step selection"], is NOT a good analogy to what chance variation and natural selection are said to do; for want of basic similarity.

b –> In the context of CRD's enthusiastic description, he stresses the cumulative selection that rewards the slightest increment to target, and eagerly published a 40+ and 60+ generation run to target.

c –> In neither case do we ever see a letter that has gone correct revert [with over 200 possible places for hat reversion to happen, taking up the bulk of the 300+ published letters from runs] — by sharpest contrast with the 1987 BBC horizon videotaped run, which also took up many, many more generations as a consequence of frequent reversions.

d –> So, when we multiply the two aspects of the available evidence, we see immediately that it is a legitimate form of a weasel algorithm to consider a case of letterwise-partitioned, explicitly latched search.

e –> This, Dembski and Marks did and this they (and those who point out the legitimacy of so doing) are being castigated for.

f –> Now, we know also that subsequently CRD is reported c 2000 to have claimed that Weasel c 1986 was not explicitly latched. This raises the question, whether such is compatible with the evidence published c 1986.

g –> the answer is yes, as without EXPLICIT latching of successful letters and further step by step ratcheting forward with those in the bag specifically protected from further change, we can get IMPLICIT latching, at least for "good" runs.

h –> This works by having a due balance of generation size, mutation rate per letter, and an appropriate selection filter (which includes the specifics of the Hamming distance to target metric).

i –> What will happen in such a case is that art least one no-change case will be present in an overwhelming majority of generations, and that single step changes will dominate the rest.

j –> That way, filters can be set up so that the closest to target will be either a same-state case, or a one-step increment in such "good" runs. [Observe that in 40 gens to target for 28 letters, nearly 1/2 the time, no-changer must win, and one step advances win most of the rest of cases.]

So, both explicit and implicit latching are legitimate approaches to Weasel in looking at the published behaviour c 1986.

And in neither case do the red herring and strawman talking points over latching — not to mention the ad hominems that have been tossed at pro ID UD regulars with such abandon — make a dime's difference tothe force of the Dembski-marks case in teh main.

GEM of TKI

PS: Last time around, there were a lot of talking points on how the apparent latching was not real. It seems that for now the law of large numbers implications for the 200-letter sample have put that set of talking points to rest. [Cf the already linked for a discussion of that red herring trail.]

PPS: Let us note: many of these involved in the latest wave of attacks here and elsewhere are clearly connected to academia and/or education and presumably also the media and/or wider chattering classes. What we have seen over the past few days therefore, sadly,

speaks volumes about judgement, truth and fairness issues that seem to be all too commonly characteristic of this generation of the intelligentsia in our civilisation; reflecting the corrosive impact of evolutionary materialism driven secular humanism — which is inherently amoral [spell that: is-ought gap] and thus enabling of immorality, especially when pet issues are at stake. I think it is time to create viable alternatives to a corrupted intellectual culture and institutions.

79

kairosfocus

08/22/2009

1:01 am

PPPS: BTW, just to show that we are not singing off the same hymn sheet, there is a point of minor disagreement between Joseph and I. Since the filter rewards the closest to target in any one generatio0n, with big enough generations, and big enough mutation rates, multiple mutation cases may become common enough that we begin to *see* other effects in the runs of champions: substitutions where one letter advances to correct even as another reverts, and cases of double etc letter advances. So, I think there is a band on pop size to see the latching and quasi-latching IMPLICIT effects. As I vaguely recall, once I started to push Atom's adjustable Weasel up to the 999 pop limit and also push mutation rates, some of these effects popped out of the woodwork. (Atom, that sounds like an old fashioned product name . . . sorry.)

80

kairosfocus

08/22/2009

1:08 am

OOPS: a –> Targetted search that uses mere proximity and which eliminates and even ~~discusses~~ *dismisses* complex functionality as a threshold [why CRD derides "single-step selection"], is NOT a good analogy to what chance variation and natural selection are said to do; for want of basic similarity.

81

kairosfocus

08/22/2009

1:12 am

NB: Atom has a good discussion here, in the graffiti thread, as usual. [A, how is the Luminous One?]

82

feebish

08/22/2009

1:32 am

kairosfocus in 79:
"with big enough generations, and big enough mutation rates, multiple mutation cases may become common enough that we begin to see other effects in the runs of champions: substitutions where one letter advances to correct even as another reverts, and cases of double etc letter advances."

This is why I think "demi-ratcheting" is the proper term to describe this Weasel business, as I mentioned in March in this comment:

Since correct letters can sometimes change, "latched" doesn't quite work, while "ratcheting" implies change in only one direction (the good direction). By using the term "demi-ratcheting," we capture the rare occasions of correct letter reversions, while at the same time noting that the number of correct letters, the as it were "fitness" of the offspring, ever ratchets upwards.

At any rate, in his comment #7 to his post about his new paper, Dr Dembski makes it clear that the issue of demi-ratcheting ("locked or non-locked") is beside the point. So there isn't much use arguing about it here.

83

yakky d

08/22/2009

1:40 am

kairosfocus,

> a –> Targetted search that uses mere proximity and which eliminates and even dismisses complex functionality as a threshold [why CRD derides "single-step selection"], is NOT a good analogy to what chance variation and natural selection are said to do; for want of basic similarity.

Let's stipulate that this is true: Weasel is not a good analogy to Darwinian evolutionary theory. How then does Dr. Dembski's critique of weasel become a critique of Darwinism, and somehow lend support to ID?

84

kairosfocus

08/22/2009

1:58 am

YD:

Kindly look at part I of my comment at 79 above, which I specifically gave as first priority.

You will see there how the further analysis extends the frame of thought for inference to design.

Also the onward, linked Atom comment and exchange with Rob make for interesting insights from one active with the EIL.

Fresh meat.

GEM of TKI

PS: When a red herring-strawman-ad hominem distractor has been heavily used [and, rememeber I have been accused now of "gutter politics" and just over a week ago or so was threatened -- if it was just a threat (why I emailed and have written) -- with being reported to the US HS Dept as a potential terrorist threat to be put on a watch list for pointing out that this is an increasingly commopn and dangerous rhetorical pattern], it is necessary to address it correctively, and that justified what is part II.

85

kairosfocus

08/22/2009

2:09 am

FB:

Remember, we are accounting for "good" runs that appear to latch and are claimed to not have used explicit latching. So, IMPLICIT latching and associated ratcheting through cumulative advance towards the target, become relevant concerns.

As you will see in my linked discussion, in App 7 the always linked, I speak of QUASI-latching — close enough to your term — to speak of the case of relatively rare reversions (which I have usually seen with substitutions).

When the parameters are detuned enough, we see far from latched behaviour similar to that BBC Horizon 1987 video, and often that happens with exploding numbers of generations; also similar to the BBC Horizon tape. This last, often as the last few letters keep getting substituted out so the deal is very hard to close.

GEM of TKI

PS: I guess I should note too that one aspect of sci methods is the replication of results. thanks to Atom's adjustable Weasel, we can replicate all sorts of patterns, which strongly legitimates the spectrum of weasels: explicitly latched, implicitly latched (esp for good runs), quasi-latched, unlatched. (Note too that Apollos showed us a case where an explicitly latched weasel can be programmed to do reversions etc.)

86

yakky d

08/22/2009

2:22 am

kairosfocus,

I don't see anything in part I of your post that discusses weasel specifically. Recall that in his post, Dr. Dembski referred to the weasel section specifically, saying that the analysis supported ID. I'm still at a loss as to the point of that section, if as you say, weasel is a very poor analogy for Darwinian evolution and hence is essentially irrelevant to the ID/Darwinism debate.

87

Alex73

08/22/2009

5:56 am

DeLurker,

Indeed, you got a point, Dawkins does not say that. However, his code may still *implicitly* work as I described if it does the following:

(0. Each generation is a well organized list of child strings.)

1. Once a generation has been created, it starts from the first one in the list.

2. It compares it to the Weasel string and gives it a score and makes it the candidate for the new parent. Then proceeds to the next string.

3. If the 2nd string has **higher** score than the first one, then the 2nd one becomes the new parent. In any other case, the first string will remain the next parent.

4. Continue to do #3 with all other strings.

Now due to the low mutation rate, it is very likely that the first highly scoring string will be identical to the parent string or only differ in non-matching letters. In this case my description is still valid in the far majority of the cases.

What Dawklins could have done is to gather all child strings with the highest score and choose one from them randomly. This is, of course, not mentioned in the book. However, in this case, we should have seen plenty of changes among the incorrect letters and also some correct letters reversing. In his examples when he goes from 2 non-matching letters to 1 non-matching letter, there could have been many of other intermediate generations with different 2 non-matching letters until a lucky strike fixes one of them while not

ruining any other one.

Dawkins did not publish the code. We do not know why, but he certainly can avoid much criticism by doing that. The results he published look like explicit laching could be used. However, even in case of no explicit latching his code could likely behave just like one with low mutation rate and certain programmatic solutions. So those analyisng his 'search engine' as a partitioned search have a strong case. He also admits that it is not a good simulation of real life, so proving that evolution cannot work like this will not bring down the Darwinist establishment.

Then why is it such a holy cow?

88

BillB

08/22/2009

5:59 am

KF:

The issue being discussed here is the fact that Dembski and Marks describe WEASEL as a partitioned search thus:

> Partitioned search [*Reference to Blind Watchmaker*] is a "divide and conquer" procedure best introduced by example. Consider the L = 28 character phrase
>
> LESAEW * A * EKIL * SI * TI * SKNIHTEM
>
> Suppose that the result of our first query of L = 28 characters is
>
> MAS?**E**VOLUTIONARYI?NFROMATIC**S**
>
> Two of the letters {E, S} are in the correct position. They are shown in a bold font. **In partitioned search, our search for these letters is finished.** For the incorrect letters, we select 26 new letters and obtain
>
> LISTEN?ARE?THESE?DESIGNED?TOO

Dawkins does not describe his algorithm as such, and if you implement his algorithm as he describes it you produce a programme that does NOT perform a partitioned search and DOES produce multiple 'mutant progeny'.

This is the issue being discussed, it is what PZM is complaining about and his complaint is what this whole post is about.

As you yourself have admitted, WEASEL does not require an explicitly coded latching **mechanism** to produce the published results. Including a latching **mechanism** and not generating a population of candidate progeny converts WEASEL from a non-partitioned population based search into a partitioned iterative search.

Lets go over this again:

The description of the WEASEL algorithm provided by Dawkins is of a non-partitioned (non-latching) search that produces multiple candidates for each generation where every letter has a probability of mutating, and only the 'fittest' is selected for the next generation.

Dembski and Marks describe an algorithm (as detailed above) where letters in a phrase are constantly randomised, and for each letter the randomisation is halted when that letter matches the target.

These are two different algorithms.

I'll repeat the central point in case you missed it:

This debate concerns Dembski and Marks incorrect portrayal of another work in their own peer reviewed paper. They never justify describing WEASEL as a partitioned, non-population based search in their paper. If they believe that this is a valid interpretation then they should make this clear in their publication and give their reasons.

This is the issue, everything else you keep bringing up is obfuscation and distraction.

Now can you please try and stay on-topic.

89

BillB

08/22/2009

6:03 am

Oops, it appears that whilst quoting from the paper the letters in the search phrases got pasted in reverse order.

I wonder how that happened 😊

90

BillB

08/22/2009

6:04 am

And there are some formatting errors, but you get the drift I hope.

91

kairosfocus

08/22/2009

6:13 am

YD:

Please note, the introduction to 79 shows why I first focus on the main point Drs Marks and Dembski were making, and then in part I I addressed the non-technical level of that main point.

In Part 2 I addressed the red herring talking points that have been used since publication was announced, to try to shift attention from what was achieved, and to go down a sadly familiar rhetorical garden-path lit by the light of burning ad-hominem-soaked strawmen.

In particular, the talking points on weasel (constituting a second level of red herrings and strawman distortions) are a red herring.

I think part of the challenge many face is need for a bit of background on what design theory, information search and cost of search are about, and how these relate to bio-systems (and to Weasel).

Pardon, therefore, some step by step notes on points:

1 –> ID is about the empirical study of signs of intelligence, among which complex, specified information [CSI] is a key sign, including of course the development of methods of measurements and calculation for quantities associated with such signs. (In the context of both known engineered systems, and biosystems, functionally specific, complex information [FSCI] is a particularly interesting sub-set of CSI.)

2 –> Information exists in the context of *contingency*: e.g. strings of capital letters and spaces are such that they can in any one position take up 27 values: A/ B/ . . . / Z/ *, the * standing in for the space.

3 –> As a result, if we have one position, say X, it can take up 27 possible states. For two member strings: XX, there can be 27 x 27 states, and for 28 length strings we have 27^{28} possible values [~ $1.197 * 10^{40}$], including of course METHINKS*IT*IS*LIKE*A*WEASEL

4 –> Particular configurations can come about in various ways: e.g. Shakespeare could compose — intelligently — a sentence; a random letter generator could get very lucky in one shot, or there may be ways to cumulatively — by step by step progressive additions — start from a random initial string and create it.

5 –> In any case, the point is that the Weasel string is not just any ordinary string: it functions as a specific, meaningful sentence in English.

6 –> It is also COMPLEX, not just because it has many interacting parts, but because these parts are such that they may take up manifold configurations, so there is a space of possible configurations that is large [over 10^40 possible configs].

7 –> In that space, only a tiny fraction will fulfill the function of being the Weasel sentence, and this can be recognised in the particular case by looking at the string. [And, we may compose measures for how close to this we are.]

8 –> Now, we come to the problem of how do such things originate? By enormous good luck is in this case strictly possible but not sufficiently probable to be credible.

9 –> By intelligent action is a routinely observed cause.

10 –> Mr Dawkins claimed c 1986, that instead of "single step" good luck, if an initially at random string were allowed to multiply into a population generation by generation with some small chance of mutation of the letters, where the "closest" to Weasel were selected and the process would iterate, in a rather short time we will arrive at Weasel. He wrote two programs [one in BASIC, the other in PASCAL] and published some "runs."

11 –> However, on closer inspection, the programs already embed the Weasel sentence as a target, and the process of moving to the sentence is one of targetted search; and as he admitted, this is fundamentally dis-analogous to the claimed mechanism of evolution by chance variation and natural selection. indeed, it is evolution by artificial selection.

12 –> But, we are here dealing with a discussion of searches in configuration spaces, and since DNA is also a digital text string which is functional and complex, searches and search mechanisms and challenges facing them are relevant to the origination of FSCI and to the question of inference to design as the best explanation for cell based life.

13 –> in that context, Weasel is a case of a search, and teh ststement by CRD that it was by cumulative progress to taarget is a search method. The print-offs of 1986 and the remarks on cumulartive progress to target make it a reasonable implementation of QWeasel to do what is called partitioned letter-by letter search with explicit latching of the successful leters. (that otehr versions are alos possible is much of the focus for a side-discussion, already addressed.)

14 –> What Weasel demonstrates in fact — though not in CRD's intent — is the advantage conferred by active information, that makes the "cumulative selection" targetted search more likely to succeed than the average or reference search algorithm.

15 –> That is, since we already know the target, the simplest search would be to find the statement of the target in the WEASEL program and reproduce it.

16 –> Another solution is to split up the string into 28 sub-searches, with each letter now facing odds of 1 in 27 of being correct. Test for being on target letter by letter. Lock up the successful letters. Vary the others at random, and repeat the test. Do again until the whole target is achieved. 9noteteh role played by the known target in the search, and how saving successful letters form further change makes the search far more effective.)

17 –> Another solution is not so direct, but by getting into a band where population per generation, mutation rate per petter and selection filter are working together right, "good" runs will IMPLICITLY do in effect the same thing, as already explained. but again, the location of the target is a key aspect of the relatively advantageous performance of the search.

18 –> In either case, these searches would for sure fail to arrive at and preserve say METHINKS*IT*IS*LIKE*A***BEAGLE**, as the embedded target in teh program now pushes the string away from the target. That is, the Weasel type algorithm with the wrong target is sure to fail, even while just plain random chance has 1 in 10^40 or so odds of getting home on any one toss.

19 –> In this case, the active information in the algorithm has a NEGATIVE effect, of sending the strings to bark up the wrong tree. (Pardon puns.)

20 –> What Dembski and Marks discuss in the paper is that active information in some cases will greatly assist searches, but in others will do just the opposite, so on average they will be no better than random search. [If you were to pick a pool of active searches out of a hat and run them against random walks, on average the one would do no better than the other.)

21 --> So, once we inject active information as a way to structure a search, we see that the search for a search that will run well on this track at this distance will become a problem. [By way of illustration, my countryman Mr Bolt was almost accidentally discovered at 15 on the cricket pitch, and put on a 200 m track. With only a little serious coaching, he ran world beating times. The rest is history, including what he is doing on the straight run race after a couple of years of trying. But he is not known as a 5,000 m champion. If someone with an educated eye were not looking at that cricket pitch, where would he be today?]

22 –> We can then build technical measures of the impact of a particular active information approach, by comparing its performance

against random search as a yardstick of the average of all searches.

23 –> Where does such AcI come from? In all known cases: intelligence, e.g by knowing he target or knowing the way different configs perform , i.e the lay of the performance landscape so to speak. [We have long known how to take advantage of peakiness and the slopes of hills leading up to peaks through hill-climbing techniques.]

23 –> in short, active information is a sign of intelligence, and it is a measure of the impact of such intelligence on search relative to the yardstick random search.

24 –> As such it is inherently about design theory, and it is about the developments of metrics for design inferences, allowing quantitative measurement of key features of designed systems and the distinguishing of such systems from those that credibly cme about by chance and blind mechanical necessity without intelligent intervention to create directed contingency rather than stochastic, undirected contingency.

GEM of TKI

92

kairosfocus

08/22/2009

6:32 am

PS: Mr BillB, you have forfeited the right of civil discussion through your uncivil conduct, and that to someone who in your presence only a few days back in this blog had to deal with the threat or fact of malicious false report to the US Homeland security Dept as a terrorist threat, for warning on the dangers of incivility.

You know what you need to do to make amends.

PPS: Onlookers:

It has already been demonstrated above at 79 that Weasel c 1986 can legitimately be interpreted as a partitioned search, given the meaning of the term cumulative [= "Increasing or enlarging by successive addition."], the CRD stated context of rewarding the "smallest" increment of advance to the target [i.e *one* letter], and the published "good" runs — 40+ and 60+ gens to target — of 1986 that do not show reversions in samples amounting to 200+ letters that could have reverted; with the sharp contrast of the BBC Horizon 1987 videotaped, much longer and plainly unlatched run underscoring the difference in what was going on 1986 vs 1987.

And, all of this is on a red herring led off to strawmen soaked in ad hominems and ignited, on a matter where the issue in the main — one that shows the SCIENTIFIC progress of Design theory resented and resisted to the point of repeated, now more or less *routine* abuses and uncivil behaviour by the Darwinist establishment and their supporters — is the significance of active information and the rise of a new ID metric associated with it.

93

kairosfocus

08/22/2009

6:42 am

PPPS: Onlookers, recall as well, ratcheting advance to target, which effectively latches in successful letters, can be done BOTH explicitly and implicitly, especially in the case of selecting "good" runs to showcase. So, Drs Marks and Dembski are strictly correct to analyse on what is in front of them in BW, circa 1986: ratcheting behaviour without apparent reversion of ANY letter that once goes correct, across a sample of 200+.

94

BillB

08/22/2009

6:52 am

> 18 –> In either case, these searches would for sure fail to arrive at and preserve say METHINKS*IT*IS*LIKE*A*BEAGLE, as the embedded target in teh program now pushes the string away from the target. That is, the Weasel type algorithm with the wrong target is sure to fail, even while just plain random chance has 1 in 10^40 or so odds of getting home on any one toss.

Think about what you are saying – if you want the search algorithm to find one target but you specify a different target, then it won't find the target that you haven't specified.

> You know what you need to do to make amends.

Again, I'll turn my cheek to your insults, accusations of dishonesty, and abuse.

95

[BillB]

08/22/2009

6:54 am

PPPPSSSSS

Please try and actually read my post @88 instead of coming up with excuses to avoid dealing with the issue on its merits.

96

R0b

08/22/2009

8:45 am

Clive @ 77:

> I made no concession.

It was lame of me to say you made a concession. I'm unimpressed when others crow when I drop a subject, so it was stupid of me to do the same. I apologize.

> "Weasel" has nothing in common with life

Does cumulative selection (selection acting on the product of previous selection) occur in Weasel? Does it occur in life? If the answer is yes to both, then they have something in common. This is pretty simple.

> And having no goal does mean that there is no goal, not even fitness as a goal, for you would have no criterion for fitness, for there is nothing to compare any accumulation to.

Dawkins says that life has no "distant ideal target" or "long-term goal" or "long-distance target" or "final perfection". Here is how he describes life: "In real life, the criterion for selection is always short-term, either simple survival or, more generally, reproductive success."

"No long-term goal" does not mean "not even fitness as a goal." You seem to be of the opinion that fitness must be evaluated against a long-term goal. If so, you're wrong. In life, as well as in many virtual environments, fitness is not forward-looking at all. Perhaps organisms need only be better than their cousins at something in order to reproduce, and that "something" may even change over time.

97

Nakashima

08/22/2009

8:56 am

I don't see how any kind of demi-, quasi-, etc latchet ratchet tisket tasket can be seen as an argument for ID. Your saying that there is a strong emergent property of history based, population based methods.

98

DeLurker

08/22/2009

9:22 am

Alex73#87

> Indeed, you got a point, Dawkins does not say that. However, his code may still implicitly work as I described if it does the following:
>
> (0. Each generation is a well organized list of child strings.)
>
> 1. Once a generation has been created, it starts from the first one in the list.
>
> 2. It compares it to the Weasel string and gives it a score and makes it the candidate for the new parent. Then proceeds to the next string.
>
> 3. If the 2nd string has higher score than the first one, then the 2nd one becomes the new parent. In any other case, the first string will remain the next parent.
>
> 4. Continue to do #3 with all other strings.
>
> Now due to the low mutation rate, it is very likely that the first highly scoring string will be identical to the parent string or only differ in non-matching letters. In this case my description is still valid in the far majority of the cases.

The Weasel algorithm is clearly defined in *The Blind Watchmaker*. While your description may describe the majority of cases, it is definitely not valid. Your original statement to which I responded was:

> 1. The program chooses a winner only if it has more matching letters than the parent string. (i.e. in case of the best child string(s) having the same number of matches as the parent one the entire generation is discarded) It seems to be perfectly in line with Dawkins' own words.

This is simply not the case.

Further, I'm not sure that your suggestion

> What Dawklins could have done is to gather all child strings with the highest score and choose one from them randomly.

would change the output when sampled every ten generations. It is just as likely that the first child with a given fitness would have a reversion as that any other child would.

Finally, your last sentence

> Then why is it such a holy cow?

The only issue I have is that Dembski and Marks continue to misrepresent Dawkins simple example, even after having been repeatedly corrected, with references to videos and Dawkins' own statement that no latching was used. The Weasel algorithm would be of little interest if Dembski and Marks didn't bring it up so often.

99

DeLurker

08/22/2009

9:29 am

kairosfocus#92

> It has already been demonstrated above at 79 that Weasel c 1986 can legitimately be interpreted as a partitioned search

That is not the case. In fact, it has been conclusively demonstrated here:

http://www.softwarematters.org/more-weasel.html

that it is not possible to interpret the Weasel algorithm as defined in *The Blind Watchmaker* as a partitioned search based on a line by line reading of the actual text.

The only people who seem to have this misconception are Royal Truman and Dembski and Marks. I suggest that you try the exercise of going through Dawkins' very clear prose to implement the Weasel algorithm yourself to see why it is obviously not a partitioned search.

100

Joseph

08/22/2009

10:18 am

Lerned Hand:

> Stripping out the subjective weasel words, this is an admission that a reversion is possible in any nonzero population with any nonzero mutation rate.

Only to those who are twisted and demented.

As I said given a large enough population and a small enough mutation rate there will NEVER be a reversal.

IOW using realistic numbers latching/ ratcheting will ALWAYS occur.

101

Joseph

08/22/2009

10:27 am

1- Dawkins uses the weasel program to illustrate cumulative selection

2- Cumulative means to increase by succesive additions

3- Dawkins used cumulative selection to show that once something is found you don't have to keep searching for it- you have it. You don't keep searching for something you already have.

4- Dembski/ Marks used the words "partitioned search" and "ratcheting".

5- In a partioned search once you have something needed you don't need to search for it any more/

6- Ratchet means to move in degrees in one direction only.

So the bottom line is anyone familiar with the English language can see that Dembski and Marks were not wrong and their reference to TBW supports their claim.

102

Joseph

08/22/2009

10:32 am

Any targeted search is evidence for ID as non-telic processes to not have a target in mind.

IOW if Dawkins wrote a program to scrammble letters, without selection towards a target, and it hit on "Methinks it is like a weasel", he would have something that supports his position.

Selection in that scenario would be whatever survived.

103

BillB

08/22/2009

10:52 am

Joseph:

> Cumulative means to increase by succesive additions

From wikipedia on 'cumulative elevation gain':

> In running, cycling, and mountaineering, cumulative elevation gain refers to the sum of every gain in elevation throughout an entire trip. It is sometimes also known as cumulative gain or elevation gain, or often in the context of mountain travel, simply gain. **Elevation losses are not counted in this measure.**

Also:

> Dawkins used cumulative selection to show that once something is found you don't have to keep searching for it

Dawkins used WEASEL to demonstrate how and why cumulative selection was better than random searching.

> In a partioned search once you have something needed **you don't need to search for it any more**

Wrong. In a partitioned search once you have found something you permanently stop looking for it. In WEASEL when a letter is found it is not removed, locked or latched out of the randomisation mechanism.

So the bottom line is anyone familiar with the English language can see that Dembski and Marks have misrepresented Dawkins work.

104

Joseph

08/22/2009

11:10 am

BillB,

Given realsitic numbers Dawkins' weasel will never show a reversal.

Never.

IOW for all intents and purposes it is latched in place.

I said:

In a partioned search once you have something needed you don't need to search for it any more

Toi which you replied:

> Wrong. In a partitioned search once you have found something you permanently stop looking for it.

How is that any different from what I said?

Then you say:

> In WEASEL when a letter is found it is not removed, locked or latched out of the randomisation mechanism.

If reaslistic numbers are used there will never be a reversal.

Dawkins whole point about cumulative selection was that once it is found the search for it is over.

That is the big difference between that and a random search.

105

Joseph

08/22/2009

11:11 am

And please tell me how "cumulative elevation gain" is of any relevance to the weasel program?

106

DiEb

08/22/2009

11:33 am

> Given realsitic numbers Dawkins' weasel will never show a reversal.

We all agree that Dawkin's weasel is an unrealistic algorithm, just made to demonstrate a principle.
So, there are no "realistic numbers", a mutation probability of 4% per letter and a moderate number of individua (50 or even 100) shows reversals sometimes – at least in my implementation. (These numbers seem to be near enough to the ones Dawkin's used, judging from the number of generations it takes to complete the search)

107

BillB

08/22/2009

11:54 am

Joseph:

There is a big difference between **not needing** to search for something and to **stop looking**

With WEASEL any correct letter in the parent phrase can be mutated when producing children. In a partitioned search correct letters CAN NOT be mutated.

> Dawkins whole point about cumulative selection was that once it is found the search for it is over.

Yes, once you find something the search for it is over BY DEFINITION. With WEASEL the things that are found have a probability of being lost again. With a partitioned search they do not.

If you run WEASEL and examine the members of each generation you will see correct letters mutating all the time, the fittest candidate will almost always be the one with the least reversions, or none at all.

And please tell me how "cumulative elevation gain" is of any relevance to the weasel program?

You said it here:

Cumulative means to **increase by succesive additions**
…
Dembski/ Marks used the words "partitioned search" and "ratcheting".
…
Ratchet means to move in degrees **in one direction only.**

Do you understand from the wikipedia quote how the word cumulative is not the same as the word ratcheting? In this context the cumulative value refers ONLY to the sum of gains and not the sum of gains AND losses, it does not however prohibit losses.

cumulative elevation gain refers to the sum of every gain in elevation throughout an entire trip.
…
Elevation losses are not counted in this measure.

Now lets swap Elevation for Fitness:

cumulative fitness gain refers to the sum of every gain in fitness throughout an entire run.
…
Fitness losses are not counted in this measure.

Any clearer yet?

108

Sal Gal

08/22/2009

12:48 pm

Dawkins did not stop at the primitive Weasel illustration. Dembski did.

109

Alex73

08/22/2009

1:27 pm

DeLurker,

Thanks for taking the time to reply my post. Respectfully, I disagree with you. Dawkins does not lay out the algoritm clearly enough as he did not tell the mutation rate, population size and the exact selection criteria if multiple strings have the same fitness score. As I said earlier, certain combination of these will result in an algorithm thats output is indistinguishable from the explicit latching method.

However, I agree with you that the C code you quote is a valid interpretation of the book. What I was talking about can be observed clearly if you examine the best_progeny function. Let me recapitulate: In case of low mutation rate there double mutations will be rare, triple mutations will be even rarer. Depending on your mutation rate no changes and single letter changes will dominate the population. The best_progeny function, therefore, will **likely** meet the original parent string or another string with just a single letter difference first. From this point you can continue the analysis and will see, that for low enough mutation rates the best_progeny will be strongly biased towards chosing just as if explicit latching was in the code.

This bias can be somewhat mitigated by selecting all the different ones giving the top score and chosing one of them randomly. It is because during later generations a fixed letter may more often come together with a ruined one, and if there is no higher score than that of the original string then this way obviously non-latching ones will have a higher chance to appear in the results.

110

jerry

08/22/2009

2:24 pm

Just out of curiosity, what are some good examples of cumulative selection/evolution in nature?

111

kairosfocus

08/23/2009

6:57 am

BillB:

Again, you have gone beyond the pale of reasonable, civil discourse and dialogue. You know how to make amends.

Remember, turnabout accusations intended to incriminate the VICTIM are a compounding of the rhetorical tactic of red herrings, led out to strawmen soaked in ad hominems and ignited to cloud, confuse, poison and polarise the atmosphere. [That's what is being done to Dembski and Marks in his thread, BTW.]

And, to try to turn my correctively pointing out the above rhetorical tactic being routinely used by Darwinist advocates at UD and elsewhere into grounds for false accusations of "gutter politics" is far, far beyond the pale.

Remember, as well, I am CURRENTLY dealing with a threat of or actual malicious report to the US Homeland Security that was declaratively intended to get me on a security watch list.

Do you see why I am insisting that shooting the messenger is not good enough?

(If you know Jamaican History, you should be aware of a certain member of the Assembly, who for years warned of the follies being undertaken and how they would predictably end in an explosion as Jamaicans are not inclined to starve to death quietly. He was ignored, derided and demonised by the usual idea hit men. Then, when the explosion happened, after an idiot in the Colonial dept mishandled a petition for help in the face of famine, he was taken by force to where martial law was in effect and kangaroo courted without access to key exculpating evidence from his physician [he was too sick to attend the relevant vestry meeting that absence form was the supposed proof of complicity with the "rebellion" -- riot really -- and hanged with indecent haste. It so happens that that is not just national history for me, it is FAMILY history. So I know in my bones where this sort of destructive rhetorical tactic can lead.)

You know how to make amends.

_____

Onlookers:

Observe how, above, at 78 and 91, I refocussed attention on the achievement of the paper by Marks and Dembski in the main.

That being inconvenient, a red herring was led off along the Weasel tangent to an ad hominem laced strawman. (Joseph's catch where he outlines what cumulative and partitioned means and someone proceeded to agree while indicating disagreement is a classic.)

Joseph, at 101 summarises the tangential matter aptly, reflecting also my own earlier summaries. (And as to the assertions, accusations and loaded questions in 88, they have long since been answered on the merits, and will be answered again in the below. meanwhile, do remember to check at and for the summary of what M & D have done, at non-technical level. I of course do not say much on the technicalities of conservation of information, apart from the point that complex functional info originates with intelligence in our experience, and that stochastic undirected contingency is not a credible approach to get to FSCI.)

I excerpt and comment in bracketed nortes:

_____

>> 1- Dawkins uses the weasel program to illustrate **cumulative** selection [CRD's term of choice c. 1986]

2- Cumulative means to increase by succesive additions [Dictionary, normal meaning; entails that progress to date is preserved completely or in material part, and further increments are progressive in the same direction. So, when I have discussed explicit latching, implicit latching and quasi latching as possible dynamics of algorithms that can be used to "do a weasel" one or more of them will come in under tighter and looser readings of "cumulative." (And, remember onlookers, I have had the discussion in those terms linked one click away all along so soon as this topic came up. It is obvious that objectors are not reading to understand and dialogue towards the truth but in the main to find "likely" spots to put in their distractive talking points.)]

3- Dawkins used cumulative selection to show that once something is found you don't have to keep searching for it- you have it. You don't keep searching for something you already have. [The printoffs c. 1986 intended to illustrate good cases of "cumulative selection in action, show not one letter that, having gone correct, reverts, across a sample of 200+ such letters. When this is taken with terms like cumulative selection and the remarks on selecting of the slightest increment to target, it is hard to imagine how CRD could have spoken of ratcheting action with concomitant latching effects more explicitly without giving something like pseudocode.]

4- Dembski/ Marks used the words "partitioned search" and "ratcheting". [Correct, and descriptive of what was in front of them in BW. that other Weasels can be constructed that do not have latching effects and ratcheting to the target is a red herring off the first red herring. In otehr words, over the past 23 or so years, it is plain that many legitimate interpretations of Weasel are possible. **Marks and Dembski have gone with a reasonable interpretation of the original.**]

5- In a partioned search once you have something needed you don't need to search for it any more/ [Correct]

6- Ratchet means to move in degrees in one direction only. [Correct]

So the bottom line is anyone familiar with the English language can see that Dembski and Marks were not wrong and their reference to TBW supports their claim. >>
_____

The matter is clear enough, save to those who are in captivity to defense techniques against cognitive dissonance in the face of evidence that does not suit the Darwinist life origins story and its popularisations and icons, of which Weasel is one.

GEM of TKI

112

kairosfocus

08/23/2009

7:19 am

Alex73:

While CRD did not give explicit details on the algorithm or code, he did provide showcase runs and commentary that identifies on preponderance of evidence [and that is all the degree of warrant that a reasonable person can demand on this], that cumulative selection circa 1986 did have full ratcheting action on "good" runs as then conceived [there is no evidencve of occasional slips,a nd a significant sample thas tin context points to smooth progress . . .].

That a debate over the implications of such latching-ratcheting (i.e it highlights the fact that the search is a targetted search based on mere proximity not a plausible proxy for bio-function) has subsequently shifted our estimation of what a "good" run should look like does not change the circumstances as at 1986.

And given that fact, it is a legitimate interpretation of Weasel circa 1986 to use a program that acts like that. As noted, it can be done explicitly or implicitly, with the same effective result in the relevant point of reference, the output: Once a letter goes right, it does not revert, i.e we have partitioning of the search and ratcheting, thus latching too.

Moreover, all of this is on at best a tangent to a point of signal achievement by Drs Marks and Dembski: they have extended the scope and power of ID analysis through the concept of active information and its implications on the known source of complex functional information and the issue of cost of search whereby since searches are horses for courses, then the search for a good search imposes a prohibitive cost on proposed unintelligent mechanisms that are put up as possible ways to get to CSI — and especially cases where the

specification is functional — without intelligent action.

As to where that leads, let's just say that the classical analysis of cause points to the fundamental, originating causal force of the creative, volitional intelligent, intending agent who finds means to effect his goal that require and use mechanisms and materials.

To what Plato speaks of as the soul, e.g. in The Laws, Book X. There the Athenian Stranger critiques the evolutionary materialists of that day — yes, that is correct — inm part thusly:

_____

>> Ath. Nearly all of them, my friends, seem to be ignorant of the nature and power of the soul [[= psuche], especially in what relates to her origin: they do not know that she is among the first of things, and before all bodies, and is the chief author of their changes and transpositions. And if this is true, and if the soul is older than the body, must not the things which are of the soul's kindred be of necessity prior to those which appertain to the body?

Cle. Certainly.
Ath. Then thought and attention and mind and art and law will be prior to that which is hard and soft and heavy and light; and the great and primitive works and actions will be works of art; they will be the first, and after them will come nature and works of nature . . . .

Ath. . . . when one thing changes another, and that another, of such will there be any primary changing element? How can a thing which is moved by another ever be the beginning of change? Impossible. But when the self-moved changes other, and that again other, and thus thousands upon tens of thousands of bodies are set in motion, must not the beginning of all this motion be the change of the self-moving principle? . . . . self-motion being the origin of all motions, and the first which arises among things at rest as well as among things in motion, is the eldest and mightiest principle of change, and that which is changed by another and yet moves other is second. . . . .

Ath. If we were to see this power existing in any earthy, watery, or fiery substance, simple or compound-how should we describe it?

Cle. You mean to ask whether we should call such a self-moving power life?

Ath. I do.
Cle. Certainly we should.
Ath. And when we see soul in anything, must we not do the same-must we not admit that this is life?

[[. . . .]

Ath. And what is the definition of that which is named "soul"? Can we conceive of any other than that which has been already given-the motion which can move itself?>>

_____-

Of course, this raises a string of underlying worldview level issues:

a –> Plato here comes to the pivotal issue, and subtly argues for the admission into our worldviews, of the living, self-directing soul as the first cause of change; in effect noting that soul- in- action is an item of our undeniable conscious living experience and observation: we are en-souled and we also "see" the soul in other "things."

b –> This is of course precisely the point that materialists most vigorously wish to object to, but only to end in self-referential incoherence challenges.

c –> The decision cannot be settled on the declarative authority of materialistic "Science" or on putting up a question-begging (but plausible) "definition."

d –> Plato, we may note, avoids such a begging of the question: he seeks instead to ground the definition he offers in the world of experience and observation of en-souled life.

e –> A similar line of reasoning is thus also connected to the aspect of "soul" we call mind: do we experience and observe mindedness?

f –> If so, mind is real, and — as an intelligible reality — is thus also subject to that process of seeking a precise, insightful, accurate description we call definition.

g –> And, we therefore face a case of William James' forced, momentous, living option: we must each choose, in light of the balance of comparative difficulties and challenges we find to be acceptable; knowing and respecting — even when we think they are in error — that others will see things a different way.

_____

Okay for now . . .

GEM of TKI

[113](#)

kairosfocus

08/23/2009

7:38 am

PS: Evolutionary Materialism crca 360 BC:

_____

>> Ath. They [the avant garde evolutionary materialists of that day] say that the greatest and fairest things are the work of **nature** [i.e. phusis -- the mechanisms of the world in effect] and of **chance**, the lesser of **art** [i.e. techne], which, receiving from nature the greater and primeval creations, moulds and fashions all those lesser works which are generally termed *artificial.*

Cle. How is that?
Ath. I will explain my meaning still more clearly. *They say that fire and water, and earth and air* [i.e the classical "material" elements of the cosmos], *all exist by nature and chance, and none of them by art,* **and that as to the bodies which come next in order-earth, and sun, and moon, and stars-they have been created by means of these absolutely inanimate existences. The elements are severally moved by chance and some inherent force according to certain affinities among them-of hot with cold, or of dry with moist, or of soft with hard, and according to all the other accidental admixtures of opposites which have been formed by necessity.** *After this fashion and in this manner the whole heaven has been created, and all that is in the heaven, as well as animals [revall, we too are animals, rational ones] and all plants, and all the seasons come from these elements, not by the action of mind, as they say, or of any God, or from art, but as I was saying, by nature and chance only.* Art sprang up afterwards and out of these, mortal and of mortal birth, and produced in play certain images and very partial imitations of the truth, having an affinity to one another, such as music and painting create and their companion arts. And there are other arts which have a serious purpose, and these co-operate with nature, such, for example, as medicine, and husbandry, and gymnastic. And **they say that politics cooperate with nature, but in a less degree, and have more of art; also that legislation is entirely a work of art, and is based on assumptions which are not true.**

Cle. How do you mean?
Ath. In the first place, my dear friend, these people would say that the *Gods exist not by nature, but by art, and by the laws of states, which are different in different places, according to the agreement of those who make them; and that the honourable is one thing by nature and another thing by law, and that the principles of justice have no existence at all in nature, but that mankind are always disputing about them and altering them* [i.e radical relativism on law, culture, and ethics]; and that *the alterations which are made by art and by law have no basis in nature, but are of authority for the moment and at the time at which they are made.-* These, my friends, are the sayings of wise men, poets and prose writers, which find a way into the minds of youth. *They are told by them that* **the highest right is might**, and in this way the young fall into impieties, under the idea that the Gods are not such as the law bids them imagine; and hence arise factions, **these philosophers inviting them to lead a true life according to nature, that is, to live in real dominion over others** [i.e evo mat c 360 BC was seen as a gateway to abuses and tyranny of the strong over the weak], and not in legal subjection to them. >>
_____

Some details differ, but the pattern sounds fairly familiar.

[114](#)

Indium

08/23/2009

8:20 am

After looking at the algorithms again, it is unbelievable easy to see that they are completely different (and still I did not notice it myself at first): Just look at the examples given. In the Dawkins version letters that are not correct are still very often (in the majority of cases) transferred to the daughter generation. The reason is simple: The letters are changed only when a mutation event forces them to. This

means that parent and daughter generations are always very similar.

Now look at the example as provided by Dembski and Marks: The daughter and parent generations are *completely* different except for the 2 correct letters.

This is the perfect proof that Dembski and Marks use the wrong algorithm. The one they use might be interesting in itself but it is certainly not the one from the Blind Watchmaker.

115

[Joseph](#)

08/23/2009

9:00 am

BillB,

Have you ever used a ratchet?

Do you undertsand how a ratchet works differently from a regular wrench?

With a ratchet the reverse motion is not counted.

IOW ratcheting fits in perfectly well with your definition of cumulative elevation gain.

BTW with weasel all we are concerned with is the ONE output.

Nothing else matters.

116

allanius

08/23/2009

9:16 am

"In real life, the criterion for selection is always short-term, either simple survival or, more generally, reproductive success."

Don't be silly. There are no "criteria for selection" in nature per se. That's anthropomorphism. Nature for its own sake is perfectly value-neutral. Even Darwin knew this—hence his uneasiness over the term "natural selection," which is an oxymoron.

The only possible selection criterion the Darwinists have been able to conjure up for nature is fitness for survival. Alas for WEASEL, DNA is not alive. Nor does it have any useful function until life appears. To describe DNA in terms of "fitness" is to presuppose life. Nature presupposes nothing.

"Methinks it is a weasel" is meaningless until we invest it with meaning. Dawkins thinks it has value only because he recognizes it as language. In the same way, DNA has no meaning apart from the language of life. To claim that DNA acquired the "fitness" of language before life appeared is a non-sequitur.

Dawkins believes that gradualism produced the wonder of life by "blind" or undirected means. Could be, but to use such terms as "selection" and "fitness" to justify his belief is tendentious. What he really needs to show is that nature can produce DNA without selecting. Back to zero.

117

Dave Wisker

08/23/2009

9:34 am

Hi jerry,

Just out of curiosity, what are some good examples of cumulative selection/evolution in nature?

Any example where the survivors from one round of selection are the source of the next generation. That's cumulative selection.

118

Joseph

08/23/2009

10:25 am

Dave Wisker:

> Any example where the survivors from one round of selection are the source of the next generation. That's cumulative selection.

What is accumulating?

With sexual reproduction there isn't any guarantee what either parent has (for a beneficial mutation) will get passed to any offspring.

So the bottom line is there isn't any evidence for cumulative selection.

119

jerry

08/23/2009

10:26 am

Dave Wisker,

You have just trivialized the concept by saying any form of replication is cumulative evolution since all organisms are subject to selection. Do you really want the pro ID people to say, "We asked for examples of cumulative selection and this is what they gave us."

The pro ID people will say QED!

And there are some basic flaws with your explanation because it is possible for the next generation to have less than what was there before and one would hard pressed to use the word "cumulative" for such a situation.

120

DiEb

08/23/2009

10:31 am

-Indium

yes, the algorithms are indeed completely different. For instance: Dembski's algorithm doesn't need a big population, a single individual takes on average 104.6 generations to complete the search.
In his book, Dawkins's examples terminated afte 43, 64 and 41 generation. To get numbers in this range with Dembski's algorithm, the size of the population should be less than **four**.

121

Dave Wisker

08/23/2009

11:02 am

jerry,

What I gave you was cumulative selection. I couldn't care less what anyone, especially IDers think about it. As for trivial, yes, the effects of cumulative selection are trivially obvious.

122

BillB

08/23/2009

11:19 am

Joseph:

Good point, some ratchets do work to accumulate forward movements by ignoring reverse movements. The ratchet mechanism however is one that locks out reverse movement – If you drive a ratchet will a drill you don't need the forward and backward movement.

Pointing out that even ratchets do not have to move exclusively in one direction does not really help your case.

123

BillB

08/23/2009

12:22 pm

KF,

To start I will point out again that the issue under discussion here is the degree to which Dembski and Marks misrepresent WEASEL. I note that you begin by claiming that my attempts to remain on topic are actually "red herrings, led out to strawmen soaked in ad hominems and ignited to cloud, confuse, poison and polarise the atmosphere." Yet again you are accusing me of dishonesty, of lying when I say that the issue under discussion o this thread is the way WEASEL is portrayed in the paper. Your double standards are nothing if not consistent so I will turn the other cheek (again).

I will just point out briefly again that you are the only one who mistook the obvious parody of Dembskis actions in reporting an academic to the US homeland security, for an actual threat against yourself. I find it hard to believe that you cannot see this, and a less patient person could be forgiven for thinking that you are deliberately misinterpreting the situation in order to make a fuss, stamp your foot and throw a tantrum.

Moving on to the issue being discussed:

As I have already demonstrated Cumulative is used to refer to a process of keeping track of increases in a value whilst ignoring decreases, it does not forbid decreases it just ignores them when keeping account. Accumulating wealth does not imply that you can never spend money or that your bank balance will fluctuate from hour to hour, it implies that your wealth shows an increasing trend over time. The same goes for accumulating height of accumulating height in a fitness landscape. Anyone with a basic understanding of algorithmic searches ought to know this.

Dawkins never describes WEASEL as having a mechanism that locks in correct letters once they are found, his use of the word cumulative does not constitute a description of a letter locking mechanism and the results he publishes are entirely consistent with an algorithm that does not lock letters; this is a simple matter of empirical fact.

It is certainly true that you can replicate the results with a different algorithm, one that removes the use of a population of candidates and includes a letter locking mechanism, but Dawkins does NOT describe his algorithm as having these features, and to suggest that the

simplest interpretation of his description is an algorithm that includes **extra mechanisms**, that he **does NOT describe**, and which **are NOT required** to produce the published results, is certainly taking liberties with the idea of a *'simplest explanation'*.

Now add to this the FACT that Dembskis algorithm does not include the production of a population of candidates for the next parent, but Dawkins explicitly does, and the credibility of your claim that Dembskis description is somehow the most obvious interpretation just stretches to breaking point.

Finally you should add to all this the fact that Dawkins has denied ever including an explicit latching mechanism in WEASEL.

Summing up: Dembski and Marks description of their algorithm is not WEASEL. Their algorithm differs on two distinct points: The use of a latching mechanism to partition the search and the lack of a population of candidates for the future parent phrase. Constructing a different algorithm than the one Dawkins describes, but which can be made to produce similar looking outputs, does not make that algorithm WEASEL.

The fact that an electric motor can produce motion in a car does not make an electric motor a type of internal combustion engine!

(BTW, that was an ANALOGY, not an oil of ad hominem soaked straw-man.)

[124](#)

Clive Hayden

08/23/2009

1:08 pm

R0b,

> It was lame of me to say you made a concession. I'm unimpressed when others crow when I drop a subject, so it was stupid of me to do the same. I apologize.

Apology accepted. I dropped the subject because I had said all that I wanted to say on the matter, and it was beginning to get redundant.

> Does cumulative selection (selection acting on the product of previous selection) occur in Weasel? Does it occur in life? If the answer is yes to both, then they have something in common. This is pretty simple.

Sure things accumulate in both, though I doubt we both mean the same thing by "cumulative selection"….but so do they accumulate with the monkeys typing. The letters accumulate. What Dawkins was trying to demonstrate was that they accumulate in a certain way, without that "way" actually being an actual "way", (for nothing exists to compare how they accumulate as a distant target.) So cumulative selection could occur in any fashion, with no discernment between any one accumulation compared to another in any meaningful way.

> "No long-term goal" does not mean "not even fitness as a goal." You seem to be of the opinion that fitness must be evaluated against a long-term goal. If so, you're wrong. In life, as well as in many virtual environments, fitness is not forward-looking at all. Perhaps organisms need only be better than their cousins at something in order to reproduce, and that "something" may even change over time.

Which is another way of saying anything that ever does, or doesn't do, anything at all, which is entirely vacuous as an explanation, and vacuous as a description. Perhaps this and perhaps that. Perhaps anything in between. This is not valid as an explanation of anything.

[125](#)

DiEb

08/23/2009

4:19 pm

Just to summarize:
i. Dawkin's algorithm seems to have a low mutation rate between generations, while Dembski's rate is much higher: Compare the first two generations of the first example by Dawkins

1) WDLTMNLT*DTJBK**W**IRZREZLMQCO*P
2) WDLTMNLT*DTJBK**S**IRZREZLMQCO*P
with Dembski's example:
1) **SCITAMROFN*IYRANOITULOV**E*SAM
2) **OOT*DENGISEDESEHT*ERA*N**ETS**IL**
(changes in bold)

ii. Dawkin *says* that his algorithm doesn't use latching, while Dembski's algorithm latches.

iii. Dawkins's describes the use of a population (though of unknown size), while Dembski uses only one string

iv. Dawkins gives 43, 64 and 41 as the number of trials his algorithms uses in three runs. The expected number of trials for Dembski's algorithm is 104.55

Methinks, it is another weasel.

126

kairosfocus

08/24/2009

2:01 am

A footnote:

On re-examinig the thread, I saw that some have thought that the BBC Horizon 1987 videotaped Weasel is the same as that of 1986.

I simply note for general information, that the showcased runs of 1986 [cf 47 above and my long since linked discussion] hit target in 40+ and 60+ generations, and without apparent reversion in the letters that go correct (across 200+ cases) . . . and note, Wikipedia as at the time of composing the original discussions, presented the same basic 1986 runs data as we have used. [Wikipedia, notoriously, is not a Design Theory friendly site. Sadly, too often to the point of not just bias but misleading and accusative distortion.]

In 1987 by contrast — kindly observe, Mr Patrick May! (and those who confidently linked him above) — the runs go on much longer, there are FREQUENT reversions and we can see a weird winking effect as correct letters revert and return rapidly. So, we should not naively assume that what was videotaped in 1987 was the same as what was showcased and discussed in 1986, despite the similarity of the target phrase.

And of course ever since, multitudes of algorithms have been presented to "prove" that Weasel c. 1986 did not latch explicitly or implicitly. But all such are plainly irrelevant. Only credible code and a clear, cogent accounting for the statements and the published "good" runs would suffice.

(None such has been forthcoming — including Mr May's linked article that starts with a slanderously loaded conflation of Intelligent Design with Creationism, with of course the onward hints of theocratic tyrannical intent addressed in Weak Argument Corrective no 8. that alone is utterly discrediting, and the analysis fails to address the substantial issues long since raised.)

We therefore need to treat the 1986 and 1987 data as materially different on that evidence. (On the implicit latching model, this can be reasonably accounted for by shifts in parameters such as pop per generation, per letter mutation rate and filter characteristics. Atom's adjustable weasel will show how this can happen.)

GEM of TKI

PS: Re BillB.

Again, this commenter knows he has gone beyond the pale of civil discourse and what he needs to do to make amends.

PPS: Re the focal issue issue

The central context for this discussion is in fact that Marks and Dembski have put forth an advance on the technique of design theory in a peer reviewed publication, active information and its context (including the cost of search), and this in the wider circumstance that for the past 23 years computer simulations portrayed as demonstrations of the way evolution has happened have become a major field; never mind thart simulation worlds — even seemingly plausible ones — are notriously hard to be brought into a good match with reality.

Observe Mr Hayden's remark in the lead of the original post: >>*Notice that he [PZM] doesn't actually address* **the content** *of Dr. Dembski and Dr. Marks' paper . . .* >>

Since that content is somewhat technical and since I have relevant background to remark on it, I have thought it helpful to he wider context of the discussion to put on the table a few points on the significance of the published work "for the rest of us," e.g. at 78 above.

Surely, imparting some understanding of what is at stake in general is germane to assessing why for instance PZM's critiques are off the mark, and similarly why the critique of choice here is also off the mark.

And, a glance above will show that I and others have given adequate explanations for why Dembski and Marks were justified to use the ratcheting — thus, latching (which can be implicit) — action reading of Weasel circa 1986. [I repeat, cumulative progress to target with ratcheting-latching of degree of success to date can be achieved implicitly (especially for showcased "good" runs!) An actual example from Atom's adjustable Weasel is here . . .) This, by co-adapting pop size, per letter mutation rate and filter characteristics, as I discussed long since and have linked from the outset. (Those who will look there will see that out of context, twisted snippets and caricatures are being used to advance teh objections tot he concept that Weasel c 1986 credibly latched and ratcheted, and that this can be done implicitly as well as explicitly. remember: implicit latching is an inferred explanatory dynamic for an OBSERVED result, as can be seen from the runs, and also for CRD's statements about cumulative progress and reward of smallest increment)

The paper of course is being attacked, but not on the merits of its main argument — as the original post remarks — and instead side issues and a now characteristic pattern of abusive darwinist rhetoric are being resorted to.

One of these resorts is the false, ad hominem laced accusation that the partitioned search ratcheting analysis of Weasel circa 1986 presented is not a legitimate interpretation. Such is being sustained in the teeth of any and all contrary evidence from the published runs and the direct statements of Marks and Dembski. Such are hallmarks of cognitive dissonance in the face of unwelcome reality.

Sad, but instructive, to see.

127

kairosfocus

08/24/2009

2:22 am

PPPS: Re DiEb.

In the 2009 paper, p. 1055, WmAD presented an illustrative example of PARTITIONING, not of mutation rates.

We must also recall that the runs from 1986 as published were "good" ones showcased.

So, they would be expected to perform better than the average. For instance the 40+ gens case has three letters correct from the outset. Similarly, it has been SHOWN, not just speculated, that we can have Weasel runs that latch implicitly.

The question of ratcheting/cumulation of the output of the program is settled based on CRD's statements to that effect, and the showcased runs; the real issue then is how that can be, for which we see two viable paths: explicit and implicit latching. And, if one wants, one can do an explicitly latched version of Weasel in which one does a significant pop in each generation and filters for the closest to target to seed the next generation, but he result would not be materially different, save for perhaps speeding up the run to target somewhat (i.e this is a red herring).

(I note, that all of this is on side trails distractive from the substantial contribution documented in the paper and summarised at first level in 78 above.)

128

DiEb

08/24/2009

2:47 am

And just another difference between the searches: The fitness of a string in Dawkins's example is given by a number between 0 and L,

i.e., by log(L) bytes. To describe the fitness of a string in Dembski's process you need L bytes!

129

kairosfocus

08/24/2009

3:20 am

Footnote:

I see there is an attempt by BillB to blame the victim for taking a stated threat [or actual fact] of making a malicious false report with potentially serious consequences seriously.

Sorry, that does not pass the smell test.

GEM of TKI

PS: Onlookers might want to compare the Actual Dembski thread that is being passed off as moral equicvaleincy — pulled up from a Yahoo search just now — with the characterisations above.

I think it is fair comment to say that my warning on what happens when abusive rhetoric of polarisation runs out of control is light years away from Mr Pianka's reported inappropriately gleeful — "he smiles and jokes candidly throughout the lecture" — discussion on Ebola killing off 90% of humanity. Notice Dr Dembski's report on the matter:

> . . . blogged yesterday about UTAustin professor Eric Pianka (aka "Dr. Doom") and his advocacy of killing 90% of the world's human population with airborne Ebola. Could Pianka be charged with terrorism/conspiracy to commit a terrorist act? **What happens if a student actually takes his suggestion to heart and kills a bunch of people?** Why shouldn't we think that Dr. Doom himself would commit the act of human destruction he is advocating? How is what he is saying any different from somebody at an airport saying that he plans to plant a bomb there. Note: This is not a matter of saying he actually has planted a bomb but saying that he plans to plant one — that surely would be enough in the current climate to get him arrested. **So what about Pianka? At what point do his remarks advocating human destruction constitute a terrorist threat that get him arrested?** And if not arrested, how about committed?
>
> As soon as this is posted, I'm going to have a chat with the Department of Homeland Security. [*Called them -- **They are aware of it**; it will be interesting to see if they do anything about it.*] For your information, I've posted an article below by a reporter who was there at Pianka's remarks . . .

That makes the excuse offered above that the threat against myself was a lighthearted parody, and that I am a poor sport or ignoramus not to spot it, even more grotesque.

[Observe, per WmAD's report, the HSD was ALREADY aware of the issue when he called in to ask about it; understandable in light of the following attached journalistic report [formatting messed up on Firefox].]

The dismissal is sadly revealing on the increasingly typical poor attitude of Darwinist advocates to the reputation and rights of those who differ with them. That trend of incivility is precisely what I warned about in the first place, provoking the threat or act of malicious false reporting.

In Caribbean vernacular: *"Fun fe yuh is death to me . . . "* (a frog speaking to a small boy approaching, stone in hand).

For shame!

130

BillB

08/24/2009

3:46 am

> And of course ever since, multitudes of algorithms have been presented to "prove" that Weasel c. 1986 did not latch

explicitly or implicitly. But all such are plainly irrelevant. Only credible code and a clear, cogent accounting for the statements and the published "good" runs would suffice.

So you happily dismiss all the evidence against you?
<Only credible code and a clear, cogent accounting for the statements and the published "good" runs would suffice.

Only credible code and a clear, cogent accounting for the statements and the published "good" runs would suffice.

THIS HAS BEEN DONE AGAIN AND AGAIN!

What is wrong with you man! Talk about rose coloured spectacles – yours are practically opaque. PLEASE remove your blindfold and blinkers and I'll spell it out for you nice and simple:

ALL THE RESULTS DAWKINS HAVE EVER PRESENTED CAN AND HAVE BEEN REPRODUCED WITHOUT A LATCHING MECHANISM.

THE REASONS WHY ARE WELL UNDERSTOOD AND HAVE BEEN EXPLAINED TO YOU

DAWKINS DOES NOT DESCRIBE AN EXPLICIT LATCHING MECHANISM

DAWKINS DESCRIBES THE USE OF A POPULATION

DAWKINS DENIES USING AN EXPLICIT LATCHING MECHANISM

DEMBSKI DESCRIBES AN EXPLICIT LATCH MECHANISM

DEMBSKI DOES NOT USE A POPULATION

therefore:

DEMBSKI AND MARKS ARE USING A DIFFERENT ALGORITHM

DEMBSKI AND MARKS MISREPRESENT DAWKINS WORK WITHOUT JUSTIFICATION

Re satire: Please present evidence that Pianka ever advocated the destruction of the human race. Simply quoting Dembskis claims is not evidence of anything other than Dembskis claims.

[131](#)

Indium

08/24/2009

3:49 am

Once again:

The wording in the Blind Watchmaker gives no hint of latching. A video of Dawkins presenting the algorithm shows no latching. Dawkins says there is no latching. Latching is not needed for the algorithm to work. The algorithm is more complicated when it uses latching. Explicit latching is not something biologists would implement when modelling evolution: Mutation rate is supposed to be independent of the resulting fitness. The only argument FOR latching I have seen is the fact that no mutation of correct letters is shown in the BW tables, which is easily explained by the fact that only the best members of a few generatios were shown. There is no reason to believe one should see fitness reducing mutations in this case.

So, let´s compare the examples given by Dembski and Marks and Dawkins again, shall we?

1. Correct letters
Correct letters don´t stay fixed in the algorithm as intended by Dawkins. Demski and Marks fix correct letters explicitly. I think everythinmg has been said about this latching behaviour. I will just add that the Dawkins version is much more representative of biological evolution.

2. Incorrect letters
Dembski and Marks replace *every* wrong letter with a new random letter. This means that subsequent search results are completely different at the beginning:

1: SCITAMROFN*IYRANOITULOVE*SAM
2: OOT*DENGISEDESEHT*ERA*NETSIL

Dawkins algorithm works in a completely different way: From the parent search string he computes a population of daughter strings which are exact copies except for a fixed (and low) mutation rate per letter:
1: WDLTMNLT*DTJBKWIRZREZLMQCO*P
2: WDLTMNLT*DTJBKSIRZREZLMQCO*P
This is of course much more in line with biological evolution.

3. Population
This is related to point 2:
Dembski and Marks have a population size of one. From a parent string exactly one daughter string is computed. There is no selection involved!
Dawkins generates a large population of daughter strings and selects the best one as the parent string for the next generation.
Again, while it is an extremely simplified model of evolution it at least models the selection part.

Summary:
The two algorithms are completely different in almost every aspect. The one that Dawkins said he used (and everybody can reproduce the results easily) is a much better model of biological evolution:
- Correct letters are not fixed: Mutation rate is independend of resulting fitness: Dawkins: ca. 5% for every letter, Dembski and Marks use an extremely unrealistic rate of 0%/100% for correct/incorrect letters.
- Selection is modelled
- The effect of population sizes is modelled in the Dawkins version.

So, once again, the algorithms are completely different and the latching behaviour is only a small part of this difference.
How somebogy can argue that Dembski and Marks used the Weasel algorithm is beyond me. Including a reference to this stupid algorithm in a published paper was a really strange move anyway…

132

BillB

08/24/2009

4:51 am

Indium:

Good point about the mutation rates – this is a third significant difference between the two algorithms.

> How somebogy can argue that Dembski and Marks used the Weasel algorithm is beyond me. Including a reference to this stupid algorithm in a published paper was a really strange move anyway…

A very good point. There are reams of peer reviewed papers about the many many varieties of Genetic Algorithms available for them to reference, so why would they choose an old popular science book. WEASEL, as described by dawkins, is a type of genetic algorithm, but Dembski and Marks describe a partitioned random walker and reference Dawkins WEASEL. This is patently incorrect – they should have referenced a partitioned random walker example not a genetic algorithm.

133

DeLurker

08/24/2009

6:53 am

Alex73#109

My apologies for the delay in replying. I actually had a bit of a real life this weekend.

> Dawkins does not lay out the algoritm clearly enough as he did not tell the mutation rate, population size and the exact selection criteria if multiple strings have the same fitness score.

True, but it is very clear from his description that no "latching" of any type is involved. He has confirmed this himself:

http://austringer.net/wp/index.....r-sweater/

(look near the bottom for the description of the correspondence with Dawkins).

I find your comments on the selection procedure interesting:

> What I was talking about can be observed clearly if you examine the best_progeny function. Let me recapitulate: In case of low mutation rate there double mutations will be rare, triple mutations will be even rarer. Depending on your mutation rate no changes and single letter changes will dominate the population. The best_progeny function, therefore, will likely meet the original parent string or another string with just a single letter difference first. From this point you can continue the analysis and will see, that for low enough mutation rates the best_progeny will be strongly biased towards chosing just as if explicit latching was in the code.

Yes! That's exactly the point! This simple example of mutation followed by selection, with absolutely no knowledge of *individual* letters on the part of the selection algorithm, leads to rapid convergence on the target. That's all the Weasel algorithm is supposed to demonstrate.

Dawkins then goes on, in TBW and his other books, to discuss what happens when the long term target is eliminated and fitness becomes whatever allows the most reproductive success in the current, constantly changing, environment. The Weasel algorithm is just the first small step on the journey to understanding evolutionary theory.

> This bias can be somewhat mitigated by selecting all the different ones giving the top score and chosing one of them randomly.

I don't think that will matter. The mutation rate is random, so selecting the first in the set of best progeny will be no less random than selecting from the whole set. That is, if there are 100 progeny and numbers 3, 19, 72, and 89 all have the highest fitness, there's no reason to think that 72 has more chance of a reversion than 3.

That being said, it would be interesting to preserve the entire set of progeny with the highest fitness and use them to breed the next generation. At the very least it would make it easier to identify how often pairs of deleterious and beneficial mutations occur simultaneously.

134

kairosfocus

08/24/2009

7:52 am

Onlookers:

1 –> Observe the utter lack of concern over documented incivility, as seen again.

2 –> Observe the plain intent to distract attention from and avoid the central matter on the merits arising from the publication of the latest ID-supportive paper in the professional peer-reviewed literature — the progress of ID in the teeth of the fiercest, and too often distortion-based, fallacy-riddled, uncivil opposition.

3 –> Observe, thus, the cognitive dissonance and distraction, distortion and demonisation-based defense mechanisms deployed in the face of evidence to the contrary of the Darwinist partyline talking points on Weasel 1986.

4 –> Further to this, observe the actual published output of Weasel c 1986:

_____

>> We may conveniently begin by inspecting the published o/p patterns circa 1986, thusly [being derived from Dawkins, R, The Blind Watchmaker , pp 48 ff, and New Scientist, 34, Sept. 25, 1986; p. 34 HT: Dembski, Truman]:

1 WDL*MNLT*DTJBKWIRZREZLMQCO*P
2? WDLTMNLT*DTJBSWIRZREZLMQCO*P
10 MDLDMNLS*ITJISWHRZREZ*MECS*P
20 MELDINLS*IT*ISWPRKE*Z*WECSEL

30 METHINGS*IT*ISWLIKE*B*WECSEL
40 METHINKS*IT*IS*LIKE*I*WEASEL
43 METHINKS*IT*IS*LIKE*A*WEASEL

1 Y*YVMQKZPFJXWVHGLAWFVCHQXYPY
10 Y*YVMQKSPFTXWSHLIKEFV*HQYSPY
20 YETHINKSPITXISHLIKEFA*WQYSEY
30 METHINKS*IT*ISSLIKE*A*WEFSEY
40 METHINKS*IT*ISBLIKE*A*WEASES
50 METHINKS*IT*ISJLIKE*A*WEASEO
60 METHINKS*IT*IS*LIKE*A*WEASEP
64 METHINKS*IT*IS*LIKE*A*WEASEL >>

_____

5 –> Notre that once a letter in these showcased results goes correct, on the samples above, it NEVER reverts, strongly suggestive per sampling theory that it does not revert.

6 –> Observe now Mr Dawkins' description of these results in BW:

_____

>> It [Weasel c 1986] . . . begins by choosing a random sequence of 28 letters … it duplicates it repeatedly, but with a certain chance of random error – 'mutation' – in the copying. *The computer examines **the mutant nonsense phrases**, the 'progeny' of the original phrase, and **chooses** the one which, **however slightly, most resembles** the **target phrase**, METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL . . . .* What matters is the difference between the time taken by **cumulative** selection, and the time which the same computer, working flat out at the same rate, would take to reach the target phrase if it were forced to use the other procedure of **single-step selection** . . . .

Although the monkey/Shakespeare model is useful for explaining the distinction between single-step selection and cumulative selection, **it is misleading in important ways**. One of these is that, in each generation of selective 'breeding', **the mutant 'progeny' phrases were judged according to the criterion of resemblance to a distant ideal target**, the phrase METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL. Life isn't like that. Evolution has no long-term goal. There is no long-distance target, no final perfection to serve as a criterion for selection, although human vanity cherishes the absurd notion that our species is the final goal of evolution. In real life, the criterion for selection is always short-term, either simple survival or, more generally, reproductive success. >>

_____

7 –> We may see from this that Weasel c 1986 is targetted search based on artificial selection of non-functional phrases per mere proximity to target in a context where the underlying core Hoylean challenge was precisely that there is a threshold of complex functionality — a la Schutzenberger et al at Wistar 1966 — that had to be overcome before any credibly mechanism of modest random variation and selection off superior function could credibly trigger hill-climbing to the peaks of Mt Improbability. You have to get to the shoreline of the isle of function before you can climb up to tis hilltops. And, once complex functionality beyond say 1,000 bits of info capacity enters teh situation, not event he resources of hte entire observed universe will be adequate to perform an adequate scan oft e4h configuration space to reasonably get to such a shoreline: 1 part in 10^{150} of a config space is to all practical intents and purposes a search of scope zero. And, real bio-systems as observed start int eh 100's of k bits of information just in their DNA.

8 –> That is, Weasel is fundamentally "misleading" — as CRD acknowledges — and should never have been used in a context promoting the thesis that a BLIND watchmaker can account for apparent functional complexity highly reminiscent of known cases of design.

9 –> Further to this, the steady march of nonsense — non functional — phrases to the target in the published runs c 1986 give a strong hint that something is amiss. that is why they were spotlighted from early on, and seen as an indicator that something was wrong.

10 –> And, observe how CRD dismisses the criterion of complex functionality with the smear-term "single-step selection," using a handy strawman too: we need to get to the shoreline before hill-climbing can start, and this is the fundamental problem of GA's as a model of evolution; they use hill climbing within islands of function [speaking of fitness functions etc], and beg the question of getting to such shorelines. BTW, back to Dec last year when this first came up at UD, that is what I highlighted.]

11 –> Now, within this context, the obvious explanation of the behaviour of Weasel is that it used partitioned, ratcheting search that explicitly latched successful letters. And given the context of showcased results and the meanings of cumulative — "Increasing or enlarging by successive addition" — and ratcheting — "To cause to increase or decrease by increments" — as well as latching — "To close or lock with or as if with a latch" — that is a very reasonable and legitimate interpretation. For, in the observed results and CRD's enthusiastic description, we see evidence for a steady incremental forward march that once a letter is correct it is locked up until the target phrase is complete, whereupon the whole system locks.

12 –> Now, after objections were made, there was a statement by CRD that Weasel was not actually explicitly latched — though of

course we have yet to see demonstrative code c. 1986, nine years later.

13 –> It turns out — and above I linked an actual demonstration of this — that if steady marching to target is seen as good results, then we may cahieve this by a program that implicitly latches.

14 –> That is, given per generation population size, per letter mutation rates and particular filter used, there will be a situation such that in almost all generations there will be at least one unchanged phrase from the seed. In that case, with the selection filter set up so that single letter changes dominate the rest, we tend to have either no advance or else a single step forward.

15 –> Further to this, we may see that the published good runs c 1986 are 40+ and 60+ runs indicative that about 1/2 the time, no change won the filtering on closest to target, and that single step advances won the rest. Also, of course, up to the end of each run, most of the phrases were "nonsense." 9And BTW, the latest red herring on how Dembski uses different rates than Dawkins, is beside the point: Dembski was illustrating partitioning, not mutation rates at that point in the paper, as p 1055 will show; as previously noted and predictably ignored by those looking for gnats to strain out while swallowing camels.]

16 –> So, whether the latching-ratcheting action was explicit or implicit, we have a valid explanation, and both will be giving similar patterns of behaviour in the output; both being invalid as models of evolution for the same reason of begging he question of complex information based function. (All of this, of course was documented in my online remarks on Weasel here before the current exchanges began.)

17 –> Now, in the current paper, Marks and Dembski have spoken of a racheting action, which is accurate as a description of the output c 1986 [and which is diverse from the videotaped o/p as at 1987]. They have offered an explanation thereof that highlights the effect of the mechanism used: once a letter goes correct, it is effectively locked in [which is consistent with both implicit and explicit latching . . . as is the associated mathematics], but such is legitimate relative to what we see the description in BW. And so it is reasonable terminology to observe the fact of evident ratcheting-latching int eh o/p c 1986, and to propose mechanisms and analyse the implications of such mechanisms. Wehile not losing sight of the import of targetted search: MASSIVE INJECTION OF ACTIVE INFORMATION, with the consequent drastic reduction in the resources required for likely success in search. Also we note the source of such AcI, intelligence, and the associated challenge of the search for a good search and the issue that mechanical transmission of information at best preserves or partly preserves complex functional information, it does not reasonably transform it into de novo functionality dependent on de novo complex information.

18 –> So, it is fair comment to describe the current huffing and puffing as distractive and distorting. Especially, when the root point is that **Weasel is revealed by its latching and quasi-latching, ratcheting and ratcheting with occasional slips action, as targetted search, pre-loaded with the endpoint and so cannot reasonably be seen as creating the information in the target phrase de novo.**

19 –> That is, Weasel gives the false impression that it solves the question of *origin* of complex, functionally specific information. (Save, in that it illustrates that the information came form an intelligence . . .)

20 –> More modern GA's with their fitness landscape models fall afoul of the problem of flooding the landscape with a vast sea of non-function. (As i noted last December.)

21 –> And while an intelligence can take soundings and move to targets via near- or partial- successes in the face of non function, a blind watchmaker can only reward differential function. So it is helpless to get us to the shores of function.

_____

So, onlookers, you have enough to spot red herrings and ignore them.

GEM of TKI

135

kairosfocus

08/24/2009

7:56 am

PS: Note onlookers, how there is now a concerted effort to duck the point that the o/p for good runs c 1986 is observed and claimed [cf the highlighted excerpts from CRD in BW again] — beyond reasonable dispute — to latch, and that the means by which that can occur are: explicit and implicit.

136

DeLurker

08/24/2009

8:12 am

kairosfocus#134&135

Sir,

Would you please directly address Indium's #131, directly and as concisely as possible? He or she clearly identified three significant differences between Dawkins work and the representation of that work by Dembski and Marks.

The issue here isn't the Weasel algorithm per se, it is the misrepresentation of it by two individuals who have been repeatedly informed of their error.

137

Indium

08/24/2009

8:36 am

DeLurker,
"he" would be the correct way to adress me.
After looking at my post again I think I have to apologise for all the spelling errors etc! English is not my native language…

kf: So many words. I guess none of them are directed at me (I can see no reaction to my arguments), so I will just let you carry on. Your stuff is funny to read, in a strange kind of way! Happy typing!

138

DiEb

08/24/2009

8:51 am

-Indium

in 125 & 128, I raised questions similar to yours. Here's another detail on the mutation rate: Dawkins's algorithm works best with a rate of 4% – 5%, while Dembski's algorithm prefers the maximal possible rate of mutations in each step (as he only allows for beneficial – or at least neutral ones).

139

BillB

08/24/2009

10:24 am

KF:

perhaps you should read Dembski and Marks paper. They don't present WEASEL as a GA, they present it as a partitioned random walker, various parts of GA's are described in later sections. You mentioned 'More modern GA's' in the context of WEASEL so you seem to regard it as a type of GA. Would you please explain why Dembski and Marks description qualifies as a genetic algorithm?

WEASEL is not an attempt to model biology, just to demonstrate how selection can help searches. Functionality is irrelevant to the purpose behind WEASEL. This whole issue over your fantastical seas of functionality are irrelevant to the point that Dawkins was illustrating with WEASEL – you keep presenting it as a central issue that Dawkins fails to illustrate, but he was not addressing that issue.

This is a classic example of a straw-man argument. You present Dawkins algorithm as attempting to explain something he never intends it to explain, then you whine about how it doesn't explain it.

I agree that the issues surrounding the origin of life are interesting and important, and the dynamics of evolution are also interesting and complex, but Dawkins simple example of the power of selection is not addressing these issues, they are not his point.

It may beg questions for you, just as "It was designed" begs the question "By Whom and How?" but you are erecting a big-red herring skinned straw-man by claiming that Dawkins *fails to demonstrate something he is not trying to demonstrate.*

> the latest red herring on how Dembski uses different rates than Dawkins, is beside the point: Dembski was illustrating partitioning, not mutation rates at that point in the paper

WEASEL, as described by Dawkins does not partition the search space using a letter locking mechanism – letters that are correct are not locked out of the search. **If Dembski wanted to illustrate a partitioned search he should have used an example of a partitioned search!**

> now, after objections were made, there was a statement by CRD that Weasel was not actually explicitly latched — though of course we have yet to see demonstrative code c. 1986, nine years later.

I see you are engaging in civil discourse again by implying that Dawkins is lying, well done! The problem with supplying the code is that you would simply claim that it is not authentic, or that he omitted the bit that contains the mythical latch.

> Notre that once a letter in these showcased results goes correct, on the samples above, it NEVER reverts, strongly suggestive per sampling theory that it does not revert.

We have been over this time and time again. You can produce exactly these results with a non latching mechanism just like the one Dawkins describes – in fact this kind of output is exactly what you would expect.

And, as DeLurker and Indium have pointed out, latching is only one point on which Dembsi and Marks's algorithm differs from Dawkins. Onlookers will have already noted how KF has steadfastly ignored these important differences along with the mountain of evidence against an undocumented latching mechanism.

KF, You may think it is OK to misrepresent other peoples work in peer-reviewed research but most serious academics frown on it, and expect errors to be promptly and politely corrected when they are pointed out. Pointing out the various errors made by D and M is not 'uncivil' or a red herring, or a straw-man, it is how proper academic research is conducted in civil society.

Dembski and Marks persistence in representing WEASEL incorrectly, despite their errors being pointed out, will start to look like deliberate deception if they are not careful. If they still believe that their partitioned random sampler algorithm is the same as the non-partitioned population based walk described by Dawkins then they need to provide justification for this IN THEIR PAPER. **They are entitled to claim that the two algorithms are the same, but they are required to give their reasons!**

[140](#)

R0b

08/24/2009

1:21 pm

Allanius @ 116:

> Alas for WEASEL, DNA is not alive. Nor does it have any useful function until life appears. To describe DNA in terms of "fitness" is to presuppose life.

That's correct. Alas for WEASEL, the program has no pedagogical value for OOL, or, for cosmology or English lit, for that matter. METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WATERLOO.

R0b

08/24/2009

2:09 pm

Clive:

> Sure things accumulate in both, though I doubt we both mean the same thing by "cumulative selection"…

I stated my understanding of the term explicitly: Selection acting on the product of previous selection. This is in contrast to single-step selection, where selection always acts on a newly-generated random string. Dawkins' whole point was to contrast the two.

> The letters accumulate.

Letters accumulate in neither WEASEL nor life.

> What Dawkins was trying to demonstrate was that they accumulate in a certain way, without that "way" actually being an actual "way", (for nothing exists to compare how they accumulate as a distant target.)

You seem to be saying again that in order to have an actual "way", fitness must be in terms of a distant target.

Single-step selection, for any sizable configuration space, will virtually always yield a vector that is statistically random both internally and with respect to external phenomena. Cumulative selection, on the other hand, can transfer information from the environment to the output vector, which trumps this otherwise guaranteed randomness. This is what WEASEL illustrates, and it's true regardless of whether there is a distant target.

Does WEASEL prove that cumulative selection is sufficient to explain all biological structures? Of course not. But it illustrates why the "monkeys at a typewriter" objection to evolutionary theory is not valid.

Of course, the ID movement offers objections more sophisticated than "monkeys at a typewriter".* But TBW is a pre-ID-movement book aimed at laypeople.

* However, I would argue that Dembski's previous approach reduced to "monkeys at a typewriter" in practice, and his current theoretical approach reduces to it explicitly.

Clive Hayden

08/24/2009

8:33 pm

R0b,

> Cumulative selection, on the other hand, can transfer information from the environment to the output vector, which trumps this otherwise guaranteed randomness. This is what WEASEL illustrates, and it's true regardless of whether there is a distant target.

Really? How does Weasel demonstrate that if we keep in mind that there really is no Weasel phrase?

R0b

08/24/2009

11:27 pm

Clive:

Really? How does Weasel demonstrate that if we keep in mind that there really is no Weasel phrase?

I'm really confused by that question. The WEASEL algorithm defines fitness in terms of a target phrase, and it transfers information from that target to the evolving vector. Biological evolution also transfers information from the environment to biota. In both cases, the mechanism of information transfer is cumulative selection. The point of disanalogy is that WEASEL has a long-term target and life does not. So what was your question again?

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kairosfocus

08/25/2009

12:49 am

Onlookers:

A few notes:

1 –> Again, BillB has long since put himself beyond the pale of civil discussion, and now sadly wishes to turnabout blame, a compounding form of the ad hominem phase of the increasingly common rhetorical strategies used by too many darwinists. He seems also to have a major problem with misreading and misconstruing, reflective of significant cognitive dissonance being compensated for by distorting the challenging evidence and demonising its presenters. (I have already long since pointed out he implications of this increasingly common pattern of rhetoric and response to people in our civilisation. Let us just say that I am not optimistic for the prospects of our civilisation, but duty calls for taking a stance in the teeth of the tide.)

2 –> I should point out that just above, I do not describe Weasel c 1986 as a GA proper, but point to the common point between it and GA's i.e what has been aptly called hill climbing; if anything Weasel can be seen as a "missing link." Similarly, in the paper M & D give a simple illustration of how partitioning works rather than presenting a simulation dependent on per letter mutation rate — so the above that criticises them as if they asre usign a divegent mut rate is happening is a distortion (as was already corrected but not heeded). And, their lab, EIL, DOES give us — publicly — a simulation (Atom's adjustable Weasel), which allows variation of pop per generation and mut rate per letter; as I linked in my online remarks in App 7; but BillB is too quick to see points for demonisation to observe carefully and fairly. More can be said on specifics but the corrective point is made. (In short strawmen are being set up soaked in ad hominems and burned, poisoning the atmosphere . . . THAT IS NOW THE STANDARD WAY THAT DESIGN ARGUMENTS ARE "REBUTTED." Do those who act in this way understand that once you set the poison of prejudicial demonisation loose in a civilisation, you are breaking down the civility and mutual respect that are the foundation of justice and liberty? [Cf the discussion above from Plato on the implications of evolutionary materialism, as at 360 BC. this problem of undermining the foundations of morality and justice among a socially or institutionally powerful avant garde sub-culture and its consequence of domineering, destructive behaviour is nothing new, and it has had consequences before, LONG before. Consequences pointed out by one of the leading lights of our civilisation, 2300 and more years ago.])

3 –> You will observe, further, that I have set my observations in the context of Weasel 1986 as showcased and described by CRD. The output cumulatively progresses to target regardless of want of reasonable functionality based on mere proximity, and in a sample of 200+ letters that could possibly revert, this does not happen once.

4 –> So, ratcheting-latching is the credible output behaviour, and the issue is to explain it. I have offered two possible mechanisms: implicit as well as explicit, and point out that either will achieve the result for what were considered "good" runs c 1986.

5 –> And, explicit latching is a very natural interpretation of what Dawkins published and described c 1986. [The 1987 BBC Horizon videotaped result is very different, taking much longer and most emphatically not latching or quasi-latching. As I have described above and in the always linked, App 7. (That is, had objectors paused to examine the otehr side of the story before making loaded remarks and assertions, perhaps we would have had a very different degree of exchange. Sigh . . .)]

6 –> You will observe that on the subsequent reported testimony of CRD c 2000 [but not buttressed by actual code], I have long since said that on the preponderance of evidence, IMPLICIT latching is the best explanation of the showcased 1986 results, as is in my always linked. However, on fair comment, it is not unreasonable or dishonest to offer a Weasel that is explicitly latched, on the 1986 evidence as it stands.

7 –> Since IMPLICIT latching achieves the same effective result as explicit, Marks and Dembski's brief analysis in their paper will apply to the case of effectively latched, ratcheting, cumulatively progressing output.

8 –> Similar observations hold for Indium's remarks. E.g.:

The wording in the Blind Watchmaker gives no hint of latching.

–> CRD's wording — as has been repeatedly given, highlighted and linked (but obviously ignored) — includes print runs that credibly SHOW latching, and speak descriptively of wonderful cumulative progress that rewards the slightest — i.e one-letter- increment in proximity to target

–> Such progress in the context of such printoffs may be legitimately described as ratcheting, with latching of progress to date

–> And once that is present partitioned search is EFFECTIVELY present, with the mathematics that applies to the case.

–> And as has been repeatedly pointed out latching-ratcheting cumulatively progressive o/p can be achieved EXPLICITLY or IMPLICITLY

–> for that, it is possible to write an explicitly latched WEASEL that will also show reversions: someone did that as I recall, to prove the point.

A video of Dawkins presenting the algorithm shows no latching.

–> Correct, for a 1987 BBC Horizon programme.

–> This run, however, behaves dramatically different from the showcased and described o/p circa 1986, as has been presented above.

Dawkins says there is no latching.

–> The latching (as the onlooker can easily enough see for him-/her- self) is highly evident from the o/p and description c 1986.

–> The real issue on this side-point, then, is mechanism, and there are two: EXPLICIT, and IMPLICIT

Latching is not needed for the algorithm to work.

–> In the broader case, yes: there are quasi-latched and far from latched runs if we de-tune the parameters and the filters for that. Inthe specific acse of Weasel 1986, latching and ratcheting progress to target is quite plainly evidenrtsave to those willing to exert selective hyperskepticism to deny or dismiss the inconvenient evidence and where it points.

–> However, much of the rhetorical force of this claim by Indium is that several equivocations lurk: (i) ratcheting/ latching behaviour is a credibly OBSERVED o/p in the first instance, (ii) It may arise through mechanisms that can EXPLICITLY latch, (iii) it may arise through interaction between proximity based targetted search, pop size and mutation rate acting with filter.

The algorithm is more complicated when it uses latching.

–> EXPLICIT latching can use a simple masking filter, on information that will naturally be present. This is not s significant increment of complexity, and in fact it can be argued that the program is simpler in such a case, to conceive and to code.

–> IMPLICIT latching will be just as complex/simple as quasi-latched or even far from latched cases, as the matter is the parameter settings. [Cf here Atom's adjustable Weasel]

Explicit latching is not something biologists would implement when modelling evolution

–> And that is both irrelevant to the reasonable interpretation of Weasel C 1986 as described, and it ducks the point that IMPLICIT latching is not only possible but DEMONSTRATED by an actual linked run.

–> Some would argue that the point of say CRD's selfish gene hyp is that once good genes arise, they become effectively locked in, minor variation notwithstanding. (Observe the patern of sudden appearance, stasis and disapperarance as the dominant fearture of the fossil record, suggesting that there is something at work that tends to conserve major themes.)

–> the rest of the post follows suit, and the technical points were already answered; I see no need to try to do a further point by point fisking in response to what is already exposed by contrast with a simple straightforward examination and analysis.

9 –> Now, why should I sp[end so much time on a red herring issue led out to strawmen soaked in ad honminems and ignited to poison the atmosphere for discussion? ANS: because it is important to point out what is going on so that we can the more readily detect it and

address it in future.

9 --> Also, it should be clear that he rhetorical progression to trashing the person of others is demonstrably dangerous to our civil society and civilisation.

10 --> Indeed, another current thread here is discussion how CRD wishes to equatge denial of "evolution" to holocaust denial. The latter of course just put David Irving in gaol, so it is no laughing matter tosee the comaprison. And let us not forget he threat or act of malicious false therat reporting against the undersigned.

+++++++++++++++

We have been warned.

And there are dozens of millions of ghosts from all too recent history to remind us of what may all too possibly be at stake.

At his point it seem to me that enough has been laid out to show the true balance on the merits, here and int eh already linked. And, there is a clear agenda to indulge in personally loaded rhetoric.

I see little reason to further reward such trollish misbehaviour with attention and effort.

Good evening.

GEM of TKI

PS: Rob, Marks and Dembski have used the random walk search as a baseline reference, a yardstick. they have pointed out tha there are no universal search algors that wll find all targets [e.g. there are no universal decoders that will pick up and cut through all cyphertexts.] They have pointed out hat on average algors not treated as horses for courses will be comparable in OVERALL performance to random walks. they have accounted for the superior performance of good horses on the right courses by way of the injection of Active Information, which reliably traces to intelligence and manifests itself in sometimes tacit knowledge of targets and variation of functionality with configuration [aka fitness landscapes]. They point to the vicious regress implied by the search for a search, and its implications for the cost — resource, effort etc, linked to information injection — of search. (BTW, this is a bridge to economics and to implications of asymmetry of information and the principal-agent dilemma.) to illustrate, above, I point out how the Weasel-sentence loaded algor will hit the Weasel target phrase, but substitute BEAGLE for Weasel as the actual target without changing the target phrase in the program, and it will be guaranteed not to hit, or to lose the true target. [Horses for courses.]

145

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

12:55 am

Rob:

Weasel rewards non-functional "nonsense phrases" on mere proximity to target, through a process of ARTIFICIAL, programmed-in selection on Hamming distance or a proxy for it. THAT is how it exhibits cumulative selection. Tha tis also why Dawkins put up his weasel words on how misleading it is.

It should never have been used in a context that proclaims how a BLIND watchmaker can create de novo complex information, as it does no such thing: without the target being preloaded and ignoring the want of reasonable function, there would be no cumulative progress to it.

Weasel only serves a rhetorical purpose. And it has done that all too well for 23 years now, as the above thread shows all too plainly.

GEM of TKI

146

yakky d

08/25/2009

1:13 am

KF,

> Weasel only serves a rhetorical purpose. And it has done that all too well for 23 years now, as the above thread shows all too plainly.

Other than when I first read TBW years ago, I've never seen Weasel alluded to anywhere except here and a few other blogs in response to posts at UD. Weasel would quickly be forgotten if IDers would stop raising the issue, and try analyzing more interesting GA's that correspond better to biological evolution.

147

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

1:56 am

YD:

It is plain from the intensity of the debates we have seen in recent months, that Weasel and its more technically evolved — and equally intelligently designed — kin have indeed become an icon of evolution; one that seeps out into the mass mind through the confident assumption/ assertion that computer simulations of one kind or another provide "proof" of evolution by random/chance variation plus natural selection.

GA's fail in the same core way that weasel does: injection of smuggled in active informaiton., and the assumption of initial functionality.

As to the turnabout assertion that pretends that it is IDers who are raising Weasel as an issue and Darwinists who are responding, the truth is that Weasel was raised by Darwinists, who spend an inordinate amount of time defending weasel through underhand rhetorical subterfuges that tell astute onlookers that something is seriously wrong in the state of Darwin-land.

Including, the "he hit (back) first" form of the turnabout accusation.

GEM of TKI

148

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

2:08 am

PS: Since too many will not look up a link they need to attend to:

_____

>> TURNABOUT ("HE HIT BACK FIRST") TURN-SPEECH FALSE ACCUSATION: It is very easy to blame a victim of an ad hominem attack (or worse, an actual physical attack) if s/he attempts to defend himself.

In effect "he hit (back) first!"

Blaming the victim, who is usually more sinned against than sinning [cf the now thankfully rejected sleazy Courtroom tactic of blaming the victim of a rape for "provoking" the attack . . .], is a compounded — and often, compounding — form of the atmosphere-poisoning ad hominem attack.

It works by trying to drag the victim down to the level of the aggressor. This, by implying or asserting either . . .

(a) [im-]moral equivalency through pretended equality of blame for the "cycle of accusations/ attacks/ violence" or else, worse . . .

(b) the full-blooded turnabout false accusation: trying to give the false impression that the victim trying to defend him-/her-self is the

one who started (or, "provoked") the quarrel or fight and should therefore bear the lion's share of blame for it.

Further, if the defender is getting the better of the argument, quarrel or fight, resort is too often then made to . . .

(c) Ill-founded accusation of "disproportionate response," converting the attacker into the perceived "real" victim. >>
_____

PPS: As to GA's: life function is observed to be based on algorithms and codes; which constitute functional, specific, complex information, i.e we have islands of function in a vast sea of non-function. Such complex algorithms and codes are observed to have but one empirically observed source: intelligent agents. (And, this is apparently for the excellent reason that chance processes run into the same isolated islands of function in a sea of non-functional configurations challenge: you have to first get to the shores of complex, information based function before you can hill-climb. So, apart form intelligence, how does one cross the sea of non-function in a config space attaching to 1,000 or more bits of information, within the scope of the 10^150 or so states our cosmos as observed can credibly scan across its lifetime? That is less than 1 in 10^150 of the accessible space for just 1,000 bits? And, how many good GA's — not to mention their underlying OSes and interpreters or compilers — fit within 1,000 bits, i.e about 130 bytes or less than 150 ASCII characters?) **Genetic algorithms and the like are plainly not counter-examples, as they are in effect rather complex, artificially designed, programmed constrained hill-climbing searches, within a wider programming context that is already intelligently designed and functional.**

149

BillB

08/25/2009

2:32 am

To conclude:

You regards blatant misrepresentation of other peoples work as a non-issue, a distraction and a red herring. You ignore abundant evidence when it contradicts you and regard 'simple explanations' as ones that require extra and unnecessary additional complications.

But worse than that you have tried to link my attempts to address the issue on its merits as actions synonymous with holocaust denial and Nazism.

Given that my grand parents fought in that war, and my Jewish relatives were murdered, that is absolutely disgusting, deeply offensive, and unforgivable behaviour.

An apology will never be enough.

All that is left is for me to repeat the key evidence, one last time and adding the more resent points, in the hope that you may one day read, and understand them:

ALL THE RESULTS DAWKINS HAVE EVER PRESENTED CAN AND HAVE BEEN REPRODUCED WITHOUT A LATCHING MECHANISM.

THE REASONS WHY ARE WELL UNDERSTOOD AND HAVE BEEN EXPLAINED TO YOU

DAWKINS DOES NOT DESCRIBE AN EXPLICIT LATCHING MECHANISM

DAWKINS DESCRIBES THE USE OF A POPULATION

DAWKINS ALGORITHM ALLOWS ANY LETTER TO MUTATE WITH A FIXED PROBABILITY

DAWKINS DENIES USING AN EXPLICIT LATCHING MECHANISM

However:

DEMBSKI DESCRIBES AN EXPLICIT LATCH MECHANISM

DEMBSKI DOES NOT USE A POPULATION

DEMBSKI RANDOMISES ALL LETTERS THAT DO NOT MATCH THE TARGET

therefore:

DAWKINS IS DESCRIBING A POPULATION BASED RANDOM WALK (A GA)

DEMBSKI IS DESCRIBING A PARTITIONED RANDOM SAMPLER (NOT A GA)

Which means:

DEMBSKI AND MARKS ARE USING A DIFFERENT ALGORITHM

DEMBSKI AND MARKS MISREPRESENT DAWKINS WORK WITHOUT JUSTIFICATION

150

Indium

08/25/2009

2:33 am

kf: This time you addressed me directly, but again you concentrate on the latching thing, which is only a small part of my proof that Dembski and Marks use a completely different algorithm.
May I suggest to read my post again (#131)? Also, DiEb makes an interesting point in #138 and I would like to add that Dawkins´ algorithm would in priciple be able to cope with a slowly moving target, while the algorithm as proposed by Dembski and Marks would never be able to find a moving target once one letter has changed. Another important reason why your implicit/explicit-latching-are-equivalent-strategy fails.

On the other hand you can also go on with this latching thing, it´s funny enough! To give you a good start I can repeat my observations regarding this issue again:
The wording in the Blind Watchmaker gives no hint of latching. A video of Dawkins presenting the algorithm 1987 (same algorithm, different parameters) shows no latching. Dawkins says there is no latching. Latching is not needed for the algorithm to work. The algorithm is more complicated when it uses latching. Explicit latching is not something biologists would implement when modelling evolution: Mutation rate is supposed to be independent of the resulting fitness. The only real argument FOR latching I have seen is the fact that no mutation of correct letters is shown in the BW tables, which is easily explained by the fact that only the best members of a few generatios were shown. There is no reason at all to believe one should see fitness reducing mutations in this case. One other "argument" that I find particularly funny proposes that it is "consistent" with the Blind Watchmaker to assume explicit latching. Of course it is! It is also consistent with the BW that Dawkins has 4 arms and 7 legs.

So, on we go! I am looking forward to your response!

151

BillB

08/25/2009

2:35 am

Ah, and just after posting I notice you try to link my actions to those of accused rapists.

Have you no shame?

You realise that if I behaved like that on this forum I would be banned in an instant.

152

Indium

08/25/2009

2:42 am

…
Oh, and for the benefit of everybody, kf: Please stop using this Nazi/Holocaust argument. This is neither funny nor interesting.

153

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

5:27 am

Onlookers:

The above by BillB amply — and sadly — underscores my point about what happens when distractions, distortions, demonisation and polarisation amplified by turnabout accusation and slanders become the habitual pattern of argument by darwinists. (in particular, his accusartions about misrepresentations have been answered, just ignored in the rush tot he defensive rhetorical talking points of cognitive dissonance. So, if you have kids headed off to College, think about what it means to put your College kids into the hands of people who think and act like that, as their professors.)

Indium, similarly should note that the primary historical reference I have made above — cf. 112 — is to Plato in the Laws, Book X, c. 360 BC. In short, the implications of what happens when an avant garde becomes captivated by ideological evoolutionary materialism and sets out to domineer have long been evident. We can spell that: ALCIBIADES. (Schicklegruber, Stalin, Mao Pol Pot et al are only several more recent cases of refusing to learn from history and repeating its worst chapters.)

As to answering the issues on the merits, I have. Long since, in the always linked, appendix 7. (Observe how this has been ever so studiously ignored in th rush to make up strawmen from what I have said.)

Specifically, point by point, and several times above too.

I even took time to cite and correct step by step a leading paragraph, to 132 above, which has in it the principal errors made by Indium. (For instance there is need to observe carefully the distinctive differences between Weasel output c 1986 and that in the video of 1987. And, having pointed out he evident ratcheting-latching of o/p for showcased runs c 1986, I and otehrs have proposed viable mechanisms, highlighting explicit and implicit latching as ways to explain the data. the contrasting data of 1987 is fairly easily explained by way of de-tuning of parameters and/or a shift of filter for an algorithm that can implicitly latch. And, I have accepted on charity — even in absence of credible code c. 1986 — that CRD did not explicitly latch his algor in 1986. just, I have maintained that on the evidence of showcased output and commentary on it, explicit latching is a legitimate interpretation of Weasel c 1986. I also nted that Marks and Dembski's argument dioes not hinge on weter latching or ratcheting was achieved explicitly, but on whether it was credibly present. Which, the 1986 o/p clearly substantiates,s ave to those who are wiling to be selectively hyperskeptical. As to divergent mutation rates (a point raised abve as though it shows misrepresentation on M & D's part — itself a bit of turnabout accusation), as I have said already, EIL, the M & D lab, HAS long since given us public access to Atom's adjustable weasel [click on "the GUI" under the heading "Weasel Ware" here], which explicitly allows adjustments of parameters. the example on p 1055 in the paper as published, illustrates not particular rates of mutation, but instead the impact of effective partitioning through ratcheting, however achieved: explicitly or implicitly.)

Enough has plainly been said for those needing pointers on the merits. And, on the want of responsiveness on what has been put up already, it is plain that it is a waste of time to try to further correct the intransigent. And enough has been demonstrated to substantiate that intransigence.

G'day.

GEM of TKI

154

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

5:47 am

PS: Onlookers (including Clive):

Kindly observe BillB's latest accusation is revealing of how he arguing his case by ad hominem laced strawman arguments and even turnspeech accusations:

a –> Observe the plain contrast between 148 supra on turnabout false accusation, and the illustrative case in point from 151.

b –> I spoke of the turnabout he hit back first/provoked the attack accusation, citing that the former sleazy courtroom *tactic* used to discredit rape victims is now thankfully abandoned.

c –> BillB promptl;y pounced on it in 151 to try to twist my words into "you try to link my actions to those of accused rapists."

d –> Err, no. FYI, sleazy courtroom tactics are used by unprincipled trial lawyers; who unfortunately are legion. (It is judges at length, acting on the advice of womens' advocates, who have gavelled down such tactics.)

e –> So, plainly, it is not "accused rapists" who badgered witnesses/complainants like this; it was **shysters** [= unprincipled, devious lawyers]. Plainly, at best, BillB is reading very carelessly and resorting to the judgements of anger and cognitive dissonance, angrily spouting second-hand talking points and tactics that are destructive. At worst, it would be putting him in the company of shysters, if he is willfully distorting fairly simple language to falsely accuse, slander and intimidate those whom he cannot address on the merits in a civil tone. Does he want to keep such company with either of these two groups?]

f –> BTW, the only rape accused I have ever known and attended the trial of, was having to deal with an older woman who threw herself at him, then cried rape when things went sour. She discredted herself in the courtroom by showing up in stilettos, stockings and a tight micro-mini. Believe it or not.

155

Indium

08/25/2009

5:50 am

I expected no less, you once again latch onto latching, kf. I will stop this latching discussion here, enough has been said about it really.
Now, why don´t you say a single word about my other arguments?
Maybe we concentrate on one thing first. I will make this as easy as possible for you:
Does the algorithm as described by Dawkins involve a selection process? Yes or No?

156

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

5:51 am

PPS: read p. 2 in the linked Google book on Alcibiades.

157

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

6:02 am

Indium:

If you were to simply pause and read the highlighted excerpt from BW in pint 6 134, and the commentary in points 7 & 8 — to name just the latest presentation [it is in my always linked app 7 points 2 and 3 (with colour highlights that make it even more plain), you

would have your answer, from the horse's mouth and an explanation of its significance.

That you insistently refuse to simply read such already given answers underscores that you are not discussing and so exchanging ideas in a reasonable fashion.

Do you understand therefore why I respond like this, by pointing to the already given and substantiated answer above and in the longstanding linked? Given long before you asked the question in a manner suggestive of accusing me of evading it?

G'day.

GEM of TKI

158

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

6:03 am

Pardon, point 6, 134.

159

BillB

08/25/2009

6:14 am

KF, why mention Nazis, the holocaust and the defenders of rape in a diatribe aimed at me if you were NOT trying to associate me with these actions?

Well, I agree with Indium that more than enough has been said. KF closed his mind to the evidence a long time ago and all that he has left are sleazy insinuations and red herrings.

KF, it would be nice if you would actually answer some of the points I and others have made, like the issue of populations, mutation vs randomisation, and what constitutes the SIMPLEST explanation of the observed behaviour given Dawkins statements on the matter. I have read your linked arguments and found nothing substantial there to back up your position, especially given all the available evidence.

I just don't understand how any reasonably intelligent person can believe that these two algorithms, both described and observed to work in substantially different ways, are therefore 'credibly' the same.

I doubt I will be responding to any more on this thread – Unless KF manages to evolve some civility and decides to apologise?.

160

Indium

08/25/2009

6:31 am

I will take that as "Yes, Dawkins uses selection".

Now, does Demsbki use selection? Since you seem to be reluctant to do so on this board I will give the answer myself: No. Dembski and Marks present an algorithm as the "Weasel" algorithm that doesn´t even use selection!

So, there you have it. Dembski and Marks criticize the wrong algorithm. No selection + no population + wrong treatment of incorrect (!) letters =

Completely Different algorithm.

161

Indium

08/25/2009

6:33 am

My post (at the moment #160) was directed at kf.

162

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

6:47 am

Onlookers:

One last note.

BillB has just now shown that he is not engaging in a rational discussion on even the tangential matter to the primary issue: the advance in design theory marked by the publication of the paper on the implications of active information and associated ideas.

Good day.

GEM of TKI

PS: Off-topic, but important enough to footnote, pardon Clive: despite much faux or manipulated outrage and many confidently parroted talking points to the contrary, if you the interested onlooker are interested in the truth on some of the less savoury but important *historical* influences of Darwinst science (including e.g. in the USA through the eugenics movement — watch the fairground lights display very carefully), you will find the lecture here of some significant interest. We had better face and learn from history, if we wish to progress rather than regress. [HT: BA 77.]

163

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

6:48 am

Onlookers:

One last note.

BillB has just now shown through further turnabout accusations that he is not engaging in a rational discussion on even the tangential matter to the primary issue: the advance in design theory marked by the publication of the paper on the implications of active information and associated ideas.

Good day.

GEM of TKI

PS: Off-topic, but important enough to footnote, pardon Clive: despite much faux or manipulated outrage and many confidently parroted talking points to the contrary, if you the interested onlooker are interested in the truth on some of the less savoury but important *historical* influences of Darwinst science (including e.g. in the USA through the eugenics movement — watch the fairground lights display very carefully), you will find the lecture here of some significant interest. We had better face and learn from history, if we

wish to progress rather than regress. [HT: BA 77.]

164

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

6:50 am

Indium:

You have already been aswered in adequate details.

And it is ATOM who has authored the EIL's adjustable weasel, as already linked.

Good bye.

GEM of TKI

165

BillB

08/25/2009

6:51 am

Hmm, I realised I really couldn't let this piece of bigotry stand without comment:

> BTW, the only rape accused I have ever known and attended the trial of, was having to deal with an older woman who threw herself at him, then cried rape when things went sour. **She discredted herself in the courtroom by showing up in stilettos, stockings and a tight micro-mini.** Believe it or not.

Do you honestly believe that when a woman wears clothes that you disapprove of, an accusation of rape made by her should be disregarded?

166

DeLurker

08/25/2009

7:14 am

kairosfocus#144

> Dawkins says there is no latching.

> –> The latching (as the onlooker can easily enough see for him-/her- self) is highly evident from the o/p and description c 1986.

Are you accusing Dr. Dawkins of lying?

167

Joseph

08/25/2009

7:30 am

DeLurker,

Latching takes place regardless of whether or not it was programmed in.

Just because Dawkins isn't smart enough or honest enough to understand that isn't our problem.

The way he describes cumulative selection and uses the weasel program it is clear that latching is a big part of the process.

That was the difference between random and cumulative.

Now Dawkins could have been clear and said that cumulative means that anything can happen but that would have destroyed his whole premise.

168

Indium

08/25/2009

7:34 am

KF, you are weaseling around. I am not talking about some software on the EIL website. I am talking about the algorithms as presented in the Blind Watchmaker and in the new article from the Drs Dembski and Marks.
Do you now finally see that they are very different in important aspects or not?

No population vs population
No selection vs selection
Complete randomization of incorrect letters vs inheritance of wrong letters.

The list is even longer.
So, from your previous posts I see that it is impossible for you to admit this error (which is mainly the error of Dembski and Marks). But I guess everybody else has now understood the differences well enough to make a judgement "on the merits".

Cheers!

169

Joseph

08/25/2009

7:34 am

BillB:

> DAWKINS IS DESCRIBING A POPULATION BASED RANDOM WALK (A GA)

A targeted search is not a random walk. And Dawkins uses a targeted search.

And he uses his example to show how cumulative selection is better than a random walk.

170

Joseph

08/25/2009

7:37 am

Indium,

You claim that Dembski/ Marks don't use a population.

Yet they have at least one individual which mutates.

All it takes is one to make a population.

And I believe they also use selection-closest to the target.

That is what a partitioned search is all about.

171

Indium

08/25/2009

7:46 am

Joseph,

The wording in the Blind Watchmaker gives no hint of latching. A video of Dawkins presenting the algorithm 1987 (same algorithm, different parameters) shows no latching. Dawkins says there is no latching. Latching is not needed for the algorithm to work. The algorithm is more complicated when it uses latching. Explicit latching is not something biologists would implement when modelling evolution: Mutation rate is supposed to be independent of the resulting fitness. The only real argument FOR latching I have seen is the fact that no mutation of correct letters is shown in the BW tables, which is easily explained by the fact that only the best members of a few generatios were shown. There is no reason at all to believe one should see fitness reducing mutations in this case.
One other "argument" that I find particularly funny proposes that it is "consistent" with the Blind Watchmaker to assume explicit latching. Of course it is! It is also consistent with the BW that Dawkins and kf have 4 arms and 7 legs.
The other funny thing is that the implicit latching is exactly what was supposed to be demonstrated by the algorithm: The combination of random mutation and selction can result in an extremely (almost partitioned) search.

Somehow I get the feeling that we have been at this point before.

Anyway: Did you notice that we have more or less moved on from the latching issue anyway?

172

Indium

08/25/2009

7:48 am

Joseph: Oh, so you call 1 individual a "population" and choosing this one individual for the next generation "selection"!?

173

DiEb

08/25/2009

7:58 am

I calculated some probabilities for the *explicit or implicit latching*.

-kf
A propos explicit or implicit: the *adjustable weasel* works with an explicit mutation rate, commonly 4%, I suppose. Dembski's weasel is another animal, it has an implicit mutation rate which is much higher (my guess, an average 50% – 60%)

[174](#)

[BillB](#)

08/25/2009

8:10 am

Joseph:

Fair point, a random walk is not a search at all if there is no target, and my use of language there was imprecise. A random walk is a targeted search if it is being used to find a target.

A GA is a population based hill climber, WEASEL is a GA where the highest up the hill gets to generate a new population, which end up spread about on the hill close to the parent. The proximity to the parent is determined by the mutation rate.

Dembskis algorithm proceeds by randomly sampling the search space, checking to see if any individual letters match, and if they do those letters are fixed, whilst the rest continue to randomly sample the search space.

Whilst it is possible to measure the population of a village as one, the use of the term in the field of computational search strategies implies that a number of individuals are used concurrently. A population of one in this context renders the use of the word meaningless, and makes all search strategies population based. Your objection is a semantic red-herring – the English language is complex and nuanced, please try and pay attention to the context.

[175](#)

[Joseph](#)

08/25/2009

8:43 am

Indium,

The weasel program starts with a "population" of one.

Each generation starts with a "population" of one.

[176](#)

DeLurker

08/25/2009

8:45 am

Joseph#167

> Latching takes place regardless of whether or not it was programmed in.

Yes! That's the whole point! Mutation followed by selection, without explicit knowledge of which letters are correct, results in significant improvement over random search. I already noted this in my comment #133.

There is, however, definitely no explicit latching in the algorithm.

> Just because Dawkins isn't smart enough or honest enough to understand that isn't our problem.

If you are going to accuse Dr. Dawkins of dishonesty, you should provide proof.

> The way he describes cumulative selection and uses the weasel program it is clear that latching is a big part of the process.

No, it is not. This has been made painfully obvious by BillB and Indium in this thread and at the websites I have referenced.

I note that both you and kairosfocus have avoided the core issue here: Dembski and Marks have misrepresented Dawkins' algorithm despite being repeatedly corrected on this point. The Weasel algorithm is **not** a partitioned search.

177

Joseph

08/25/2009

8:46 am

The wording of "cumulative selection" along with the weasel illustration is more than enough to infer latching/ ratcheting takes place.

BTW the weasel program is an example of a targeted search.

178

Joseph

08/25/2009

8:48 am

DeLurker,

There doesn't have to be any explicit latching/ ratcheting.

The program does it as a matter of course.

The way Dawkins describes cumulative selection and uses the weasel to illustrate the only inference is one of a partitioned search.

179

Indium

08/25/2009

8:50 am

Joseph, the Weasel algorithm selects the next parent from a population of multiple individuals.

The algorithm of Dembski and Marks does nothing of the sort.

180

DeLurker

08/25/2009

8:56 am

Joseph#177

There doesn't have to be any explicit latching/ ratcheting.

The program does it as a matter of course.

Yes, without explicit latching, with a population, and without mutating every incorrect letter every generation. Dembski and Marks have completely mischaracterized the Weasel algorithm.

> The way Dawkins describes cumulative selection and uses the weasel to illustrate the only inference is one of a partitioned search.

You need to look up the definition of partitioned search and compare it to what Dawkins describes in *The Blind Watchmaker*. You will find that your statement is incorrect.

181

Joseph

08/25/2009

9:03 am

Indium,

There isn't anything in the Dembski/ Marks paper that says they do not select from a population of multiple individuals.

182

Joseph

08/25/2009

9:04 am

DeLurker,

There isn't anything in TBW that would lead one to suspect cumulative selection is anything other than a partitioned search.

183

Indium

08/25/2009

9:16 am

Joseph:
"For the incorrect letters, we select 26 new letters and obtain
OOT*DENGISEDESEHT*ERA*NETSIL. (21)
Five new letters are found, bringing the cumulative tally of discovered characters to {T, S,E, *,E, S,L}. All seven characters are ratcheted into place. The 19 new letters are chosen,
and the process is repeated until the entire target phrase is found."
(Hope this works!)

There is no population. It is just a simple partitioned search. Except for the correct letters the daughter generations inherit nothing else from the parents. There is no selection. The algorithm as described by Dawkins works in a completely different way.

184

DeLurker

08/25/2009

9:22 am

Joseph#182

> There isn't anything in TBW that would lead one to suspect cumulative selection is anything other than a partitioned search.

I have already referenced this site where a programmer went step by step through the entire description of the Weasel algorithm in TBW and implemented it directly from Dawkins' own words:

http://www.softwarematters.org/more-weasel.html

Please show a similarly detailed explanation of how Dawkins' words could possibly be interpreted as describing a partitioned search.

185

Clive Hayden

08/25/2009

9:39 am

R0b,

> Biological evolution also transfers information from the environment to biota. In both cases, the mechanism of information transfer is cumulative selection. The point of disanalogy is that WEASEL has a long-term target and life does not. So what was your question again?

My question was on randomness, how Weasel, a targeted search, a point of reference, a distant goal, evidences anything about life if life isn't like *that*, in the respect that there is no target, point of reference, or goal. It seems like you're saying that a mere transfer of information links Weasel to real life, but the program was not designed to evidence mere transfer of information. It was supposed to evidence cumulative selection that actually does something, namely, meets a target phrase. If there is no target phrase, then accumulation is anything at all, all types of accumulation, even nonsense phrases. Indeed, there would be no way to determine what was nonsense and what wasn't unless you had a target. Que sera sera, whatever will be will be seems to me to be the very thing you're saying when you admit that there is no target in life.

186

Joseph

08/25/2009

9:39 am

Indium,

Your reference doesn't support your claim.

As far as you know the partitioned search wentt exactly how Dawkins program went- population wise that is.

187

Joseph

08/25/2009

9:41 am

DeLurker,

The reference is to TBW.

In TBW the way Dawkins describes and illustrates cumulative selection there is no other inference than one of a partitioned search.

"Cumulative" is the key word.

Now all you and your ilk can do is try to say that cumulative doesn't really mean cumulative.

188

Indium

08/25/2009

9:46 am

Joseph,

hhhmm, Dembski and Marks give a pretty good description of their algorithm and it doesn´t include building a population or selecting something from a population. In each generation new random values are chosen for each incorrect letter, that´s all there really is.

I think my claim is absolutely valid. If we can´t agree on the meaning of these very simple sentences there is not much more to discuss. Or maybe you can elaborate a bit?

189

DeLurker

08/25/2009

10:21 am

Joseph#187

> In TBW the way Dawkins describes and illustrates cumulative selection there is no other inference than one of a partitioned search.

Picking one word out of a two page description of the algorithm does not come remotely close to the level of detail provided in the website to which I linked. If that's all you have to support your claim, you should just retract it now.

Again, please provide a detailed explanation of how Dawkins' words could possibly be interpreted as describing a partitioned search. I don't believe you can; what Dawkins describes is clearly not a partitioned search.

190

DiEb

08/25/2009

12:05 pm

So, what's the probability for an execution of Dawkins's algorithm that at a generation is followed by a less fit one at least once, i.e., that a latching definitely didn't take place?

I did the math for a mutation rate of 4%:

1. population size 10: 95,7%
2. population size 50: 0,0000026 %

For a small population – as obviously used in the video of 1987 – reversals are very probable. And while the probability is small for a population size of 50, some lucky programmer may have observed it…

191

DiEb

08/25/2009

12:45 pm

And here you can find a graph of the reversal probabilities for different populations and rates of mutation.

192

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

1:38 pm

Onlookers:

I note that BillB has now fired off a half-cocked gun, leading to a hang-fire. (He seemingly cannot conceive that he might not know the full set of relevant factors before commenting adversely on a matter and on another person's character.)

I noted earlier that no sensible rape complainant in Barbados shows up in court dressed in a micromini.

BillB plainly thought that his had to do with my prejudices — but I was simply a spectator, not a participant in the trial. My opinion had zero weight on the outcome of the case.

(Let's just say that I sat in a waiting room across from a late 20's young miss dressed in a greyish, plaid micro mini, black sheer stockings and a low cut top, and chatted with a couple of friends in for a traffic violation. The topic came up as to why I was there, and I said that I was there because of a rape case accusation against a former student who 300 mi from home was on a rape accusation by another student. Imagine my shock when I got into the courtroom, to see the same young miss as the complainant! Her lawyer should have been fired from the bar for failing to advise his client on suitable court dress, especially with so weak a case as she actually had.)

The actual case was stopped by the Judge as unsafe to further pursue when it turned out after a couple of hours of evidence, that the claimed crime occurred in a bed room in a rooming house full of students with no-one else in the house at the time reporting any untoward sounds or circumstances. A complainant who presented herself as she did, and whose case was as weak as that effectively asked for such a result.

I trust BillB will learn a lesson.

GEM of TKI

PS: Dieb, you will see that the specifics of the filter used are critical as I discussed in the linked, app 7, point 24, as well as pop size. AND, observe that we see showcased cases in the Weasel 86 publications, showcased precisely because they show steady cumulative progress to target. detuning the same basic algor perhaps for video impact could easily account for the 1987 plainly non-latched case. Cf the actual run that shows implicit latching here, as previously linked. I believe this was the second run I did using Atom's adjustable weasel, so it cannot be that improbable. And note the parameters were not "strange" either: a 4% mut rate is about one letter on average per member of pop, and 50 – 500 are reasonable pops.

193

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

1:48 pm

Footnote:

The longstanding linked implicit latching and/or quasi latching runs, from the just linked:

++++++++++++

>> . . . out of the box, at 50 members per generation and with 4% per letter mutation rate, proximity reward search latched or so close to latched on my first run, as makes no difference.

You will also see predominance of both no-change cases and of the single step advances, just as Joseph and I have remarked on.

Finally, I did a 500 pop at 4% run as run no 2. In 31 gens it hit target, i.e the tail effect shows up.

QED.

_____

RUN A: 50/gen, 4% per letter mut rate:

1. HIMMITFEBTIYEVJHKWLSQZBWWZHW
2. MIMMITFEBTIYEVJHKWLSQZBWWZHW
3. MIMMITFEBTIYEVJHKWL QZBWWZHW

[. . .]

27. MEIFINKE IT DS KGKL A VEXJXT
28. MEIFINKE IT DS KGKL A VEXIXT
29. MEIFINKE IT DS KGKL A VEXIXT
30. MEIFINKE IT DS LGKL A VEXIXT
31. MEIFINKE IT DS LGKL A VEXIXT
32. MEIFINKE IT DS LGKL A VEXIXT
33. MEIFINKE IT DS LGKF A VEXZXT
34. MEIFINKE IT DS LGKF A VEXZXT
35. MEIHINKE IT DS LGKF A VEXZXT
36. MEIHINKE IT DS LNKF A VEXZXT
37. MEIHINKE IT VS LNKF A VEXZXT
38. METHINKE IT VS LNKF A VEXZXT
39. METHINKE IT VS LNKF A VEXZXT
40. METHINKE IT VS LNKF A VEXZXT
41. METHINKE IT VS LNKF A VEXZXT
42. METHINKE IT VS LNKF A VEXZXT
43. METHINKE IT VS LIKF A VEXZBT
44. METHINKE IT VS LIKF A VEXZBT
45. METHINKE IT VS LIKF A WEXZBT
46. METHINKE IT VS LIKF A WEXZBT

[. . .]

62. METHINKS IT GS LIKK A WEXSBG
63. METHINKS IT GS LIKK A WEXSBG
64. METHINKS IT NS LIKK A WEXSBG
65. METHINKS IT NS LIKK A WEXSBG
66. METHINKS IT NS LIKK A WEXSBG
67. METHINKS IT NS LIKK A WEXSBG

[. . .]

120. METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEG
121. METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEG
122. METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEG
123. METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEG
124. METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEG
125. METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEG
126. METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEG
127. METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEG
128. METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEG
129. METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEG
130. METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEG
131. METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL

_____

RUN B, 500 pop/gen, 4% per letter mut rate:

1. MEL LSI YHXMAJLMDGMVKTSKGW
2. MEL LSI YHXIAJLMDNMVKTSKGW
3. MEL LSI YHXISJLMDNMJKTSKGW
4. MEL LSI YHXISJLMDN JKTSKGW
5. MEL LNI YHXISJLDDN JKTSKGW
6. MEL LNI YHXISJLDDN JKTEKGW
7. MEL LNB BHXISJLDDN JKTEKGE
8. MEL LNB BHXISJLIDN JKTEKGE
9. MEL LNB BHXISJLIDN JKTEKSE
10. MEL LNB BHXISJLIDN JKTEKSEL
11. MEL LNK BHXISJLIDN JKTEKSEL
12. MEL LNK BHXIS LIDN JKTEKSEL
13. MET LNKV BHXIS LIDN JKTEKSEL
14. MET LNKV BHXIS LIDN AKTEKSEL
15. MET LNKV BHXIS LIDE AKFEKSEL
16. MET LNKV BHXIS LIKE AKFEKSEL
17. MET LNKS BHXIS LIKE AKFEKSEL
18. MET LNKS BH IS LIKE AKFEKSEL
19. MET LNKS BH IS LIKE AKFEKSEL
20. MET LNKS BH IS LIKE AKWEKSEL
21. MET INKS BH IS LIKE AKWEKSEL
22. MET INKS BH IS LIKE AKWEKSEL
23. MET INKS BH IS LIKE AKWEKSEL
24. MET INKS IH IS LIKE AKWEKSEL
25. MET INKS IH IS LIKE A WEKSEL
26. MET INKS IH IS LIKE A WEASEL
27. MET INKS IH IS LIKE A WEASEL
28. METHINKS IH IS LIKE A WEASEL
29. METHINKS IH IS LIKE A WEASEL
30. METHINKS IH IS LIKE A WEASEL
31. METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL
_____

The matter in the main now settled . . . >>

++++++++++++

Trust this helps clear the air. Notice too how a 500 pop sample size seems to have sped up the process wonderfully.

And with the side issue settled, we can address the fact that Weasel 1986 is targetted search that rewards proximity not function, and so is irrelevant to the real challenge, apart from showing the impact of active information.

GEM of TKI

194

Indium

08/25/2009

2:07 pm

kf, nobody disputes that Weasel is a targetted search. I dispute that Dembski and Marks use the correct algorithm in their paper. Except for the latching issue (which I said is ratgher minor) you have chosen not to comment on my points so far.

195

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

2:26 pm

While we are at it, from later in the same earlier UD thread, at 236, a quasi-latched case:

+++++++++++

>> Run C, 500 /gen, 8% mutation rate:

_____

1. QB NRQWFVIDGVT FLOPLWCGHLIJM
2. MB NRQWFVIDVVT FLOPLW GHLIJV
3. MB NRQWFVIDVVT FLOPNW GZLIEV
4. ME NRQWFVITVVT FLOPNW GZLIEV
5. ME NRQWFVITVVT LLOPNW GZLBEV
6. MEXNRQWFVITVTT LLKPNW GZLBEV
7. MEXNRQKFVITVTT LLKPTW GZLBEV
8. MEXNRRKFVITVTT LLKPTW CXLBEL
9. MEXNRRKFVIT TT LLKETW CXYBEL
10. MEXNRIKFVIT TT LLKETW CEYBEL
11. MEXNRIKFVIT TT LLKETA CEYBEL
12. MEXNRIKFVIT TT LLKETA CEABEL
13. MEXNRIKFVIT TT LIKERA REABEL
14. MEXNRIKFVIT TS LIKERA REABEL
15. MEKNRIKFVIT TS LIKERA REASEL
16. MEKNRIKSVIT TS LIKERA REASEL
17. MEKNIIKSVIT TS LIKERA REASEL
18. MEKNINKSVIT TS LIKERA REASEL
19. MEKNINKSVIT IS LIKERA REASEL
20. MEKNINKS IT IS LIKEDA REASEL
21. MEKNINKS IT IS LIKE A REASEL
22. MEKHINKS IT IS LIKE A REASEL
23. MEKHINKS IT IS LIKE A REASEL
24. METH**I**NKS IT IS LIKE A **R**EASEL
25. METH**R**NKS IT IS LIKE A **W**EASEL
26. METHRNKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL
27. METHHNKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL
28. METHHNKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL
29. METHHNKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL
30. METHHNKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL
31. METHHNKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL
32. METHHNKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL
33. METHHNKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL
34. METHHNKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL
35. METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL

_____

Observe the reversion at 24/25, and the time it took to recover. indeed, the reverted letter was the last one to go correct inthe end.

Case C exhibits Quasi latching, with letter reversion and recovery, with a high pop size per gen and a high per letter mutation rate. >>

+++++++++++

We may add that the case also shows a substitution effect at 24/25, one of the tail of distribution effects discussed.

GEM of TKI

196

Blue Lotus

08/25/2009

2:30 pm

kairosfocus,
Thank you for taking the time to type that lengthy run to illustrate your point.

I have but a single, simple question.

Finally, I did a 500 pop at 4% run as run no 2. In 31 gens it hit target, i.e the tail effect shows up.

Would it be possible for you to do the same with Dembski's version and show the output also?

My question is related to that you see, what I don't understand currently is why the string in generation 2 of Weasel

1. HIMMITFEBTIYEVJHKWLSQZBWWZHW
2. MIMMITFEBTIYEVJHKWLSQZBWWZHW

is almost identical to generation one. From the output I've seen of Dembski's version the generation 1 and 2 strings are totally different.

If they are the same, apart from one latches and one does not would it be possible for you to explain to me why the strings across a single generation show very little change in "Dawkins Weasel" but appear to be essentially random strings in "Dembski's latching Weasel".

I would not expect such different outputs if the only difference was one latched the correct letters when found.

Thanks in advance.

197

Indium

08/25/2009

2:39 pm

Yes, kf, I guess everybody knows quite well how weasel works, thanks. I am happy that you are so excited about how well Weasel latches without explicit latching. Dawkins pedagogical intention seems to work well for you!
The point, however, is that Dembski and Marks describe a completely different algorithm.
No population, no selection. Just 100% mutation rate of incorrect letters from a single string.

198

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

2:52 pm

Indium:

All M & D do in the published paper is they discuss the effect of ratcheted, latched searches.

Cf the text, p. 1055:

_____

>> **Partitioned search [12] is a "divide and conquer" procedure best introduced by example.** Consider the L =28 character phrase
METHINKS ? IT ? IS ? LIKE ? A ? WEASEL. (19)
Suppose that the result of our ?rst query of L =28 charac-
ters is

SCITAMROFN ? IYRANOITULOVE ? SAM. (20)

Two of the letters {E, S} are in the correct position. They are
shown in a bold font. **In partitioned search, our search for these
letters is ?nished.** For the incorrect letters, we select 26 new
letters and obtain

OOT ? DENGISEDESEHT ? ERA?NETSIL. (21)

Five new letters are found, bringing the cumulative tally of
discovered characters to {T, S,E, ?,E, S,L}. **All seven char-
acters are ratcheted into place.** The 19 new letters are chosen,
and the process is repeated until the entire target phrase is
found . . . >>

_____

Observe:

> **Partitioned search** [12] is a "divide and conquer" procedure best introduced by example . . . . Two of the letters {E, S}
> are in the correct position. They are shown in a bold font. In partitioned search, **our search for these letters is ?nished** . . .
> . Five new letters are found, bringing the **cumulative tally** of discovered characters to {T, S,E, ?,E, S,L}. All seven char-
> acters are **ratcheted into place.** The 19 new letters are chosen, and the process is repeated until the entire target phrase is
> found.

I remind, the printed off runs above demonstrate that implicitly latched search is a real, observable phenomenon.

And since BOTH explicitly latched and implicitly latched searches will have this partitioned search effect [and will follow the same
associated mathematics], the discussion of the M & D "algorithm" that you make such heavy weather of is tilting at a windmill of your
own manufacture.

GEM of TKI

[199](#)

jerry

08/25/2009

2:56 pm

"Yes, kf, I guess everybody knows quite well how weasel works, thanks. I am happy that you are so excited about how well Weasel
latches without explicit latching. Dawkins pedagogical intention seems to work well for you!"

I guess you are right. Everybody here now agrees that Dawkins used a meaningless algorithm (WEASEL) on a meaningless topic
(cumulative selection) to fill up part of his book with drivel.

I am glad we are finally all on the same page.

The question is if this part of his book is drivel, is the rest of it? Is everything that he says, drivel? Would anyone buy a used car from
him?

[200](#)

yakky d

08/25/2009

3:08 pm

Jerry,

> I guess you are right. Everybody here now agrees that Dawkins used a meaningless algorithm (WEASEL) on a meaningless
> topic (cumulative selection) to fill up part of his book with drivel.

> I am glad we are finally all on the same page.

Except apparently D & M, who maintain that their critique of weasel amounts to a pro-ID argument.

201

DeLurker

08/25/2009

3:09 pm

kairosfocus#197

> And since BOTH explicitly latched and implicitly latched searches will have this partitioned search effect [and will follow the same associated mathematics],

It would be more accurate to simply admit your error and use the term "unlatched" rather than "implicitly latched."

Be that as it may, it is by no means obvious that the two, very different, algorithms "follow the same associated mathematics." Consider the case of a varying target, which is much more biologically realistic. The partitioned search described by Dembski and Marks will fail as soon as the target changes with respect to any latched letter. The Weasel algorithm described by Dawkins will begin to converge on the new target. Quite different behavior because they are different algorithms.

> the discussion of the M & D "algorithm" that you make such heavy weather of is tilting at a windmill of your own manufacture.

You seem not to understand the importance placed on accuracy in the peer reviewed literature. Dembski and Marks have misrepresented Dawkins' algorithm. While it might be minor in terms of its impact on their conclusions, it does warrant a public correction.

202

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

3:11 pm

Onlookers:

I see Indium is now indulging in the tactic of conceding a case on the merits while claiming victory.

That is sad.

Let's review the basic case, as can be seen form the long since linked:

1 –> Weasel c 1986 is by CRD's admission in BW, tartgetted, cumulatively progressive search that rewards mere proximity to a preset target built intothe program, without reference to a reasonable threshold of funcitonality.

2 –> As such, it is irrelevant to the claimed blind watchmaker, random ariation and natural selection, and it does not create de novo information. So, as CRD concedes, the program is fundamentally misleading and it is my considered opinion on the evidence of what CRD said and the impact it has plainly had for 23 years, that it serves only the rhetorical purpose of creating the IMPRESSION that small increments in changes in genomes can account for complex function.

3 –> One remarkable feature of the showcased 1986 runs is tha they seem to latch the leters once they go correct.

4 –> On the evidence, one reasonable explanation thereof is EXPLICIT latching, as say by use of a mask register (which can also double as a distance to target metric).

5 –> Another is IMPLICIT latching due to co-tuning of pop size, mut rate per letter and filter characteristics.

6 –> on Mr Elsberry's report, we have accepted that c. 2000 CRD claimed that Weasel 1986 was not explicitly latched, leaving the implicit latching model as the best explanation on preponderance of evidence.

7 –> Strong and even strident objections were made above tot he idea of implicit latching, and attempts were made — are still being made or hinted at — to suggest that implicit latching is a non-phenomenon, regardless of evidence. And, to suggest that Weasel is a credible simple model of what chance variation and natural selection — Dawkins' blind watchmaker — can do.

8 –> one hopes that at last, the force of the correctives will be taken to heart, and that the resort on the part of Darwinists to distractions, distortions and demonisation of those who differ with them will be abandoned.

GEM of TKI

203

DiEb

08/25/2009

3:14 pm

Comparison M&D (Mark and Dembski) and D (Dawkins)

Fitness Function
M&D: position of correct letters
D : number of correct letters

Mutation Rate
M&D: up to 100%
D : works best with 4% – 5%

Monotony
M&D: it's impossible that a current generation is less fit than the previous one
D : it's improbable that a current generation is less fit than the previous one

Population
M&D: 1
D : >1 (it is worse than random search on a population of 1…)

kf, I give up, you are right, both M&D and D are describing the same algorithm!

204

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

3:14 pm

YD:

Please read 78 above on just what the concept of active information and associated concepts do for ID.

Then, revisit your comment just now, please.

GEM of TKI

205

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

3:29 pm

DL;

Pardon, your cognitive dissonance is also showing. Yours is another case of conceding the case on the undeniable merits while claiming victory.

Kindly look at the cases reproduced at 193 and 195 [and long since linked onlookers], comparing with the published Weasel o/p c. 1986.

You will see that once letters go correct, they are credibly retained in certain ACTUAL cases, and you can see that this is an effect of pop sizes and mut rates that cause there to be at least one unchanged member in the pop per gen almost all the time, so that once there is a dominance of single mutations otherwise, we will see holds or single step advances, i.e. latching shows up implicitly based on the set-up of the algor and its parameters.

And, once we have effectively partitioned search,t eh D & M observations and calculations are applicable. That is, BOTH explicitly latched and implicitly latched searches follow the math of partitioned search.

And, D & M do not give a detailed algor, they describe what partitioned search is and then analyse its mathematical consequences. As tot whether Weasels will move towards set targets, that is irrelevant to the point.

As to the mantra that M & D have somehow "misrepresented" Dawkins' algor, saying that 50 time does not make it true in the teeth of the easily accessible evidence. They have drawn from the CRD-claimed cumulative approach to target, have looked at the published o/p and have assessed on the effect, partitioning of the search into [1] active search part and [2] already home part.

The only clear inaccuracy I can therefore see is yours, I am afraid; so kindly refrain from projecting such to me.

GEM of TKI

206

DeLurker

08/25/2009

3:56 pm

kairosfocus#203
I fear you have Morton's Demon sitting on your shoulder. Any objective reader of this and past related threads can see that Dembski and Marks have mischaracterized Dawkins' algorithm. Your protracted attempts to distract from this core issue, succinctly summarized by Indium at #14 (among several others), suggests that further discussion of this topic with you will be fruitless.

207

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

3:59 pm

DL:

You are simply wrong. Demonstrably so.

Indeed, demonstratedly so.

Denial will not change that.

Good day.

GEM of TKI

208

kairosfocus

08/25/2009

4:10 pm

PS: Onlookers, let's snip out the first few sentences of Indium at 14 and again see what is their accuracy in light of what has been shown:

_____

>> The wording in the Blind Watchmaker gives no hint of latching.

–> false, cf 78: cumulative selection that rewards the slightest increment to target is about latching

–> Similarly, the print runs as shown show evident latching

–> first claim is a demonstrated falsehood

A video of Dawkins presenting the algorithm shows no latching.

–> Algor o/p c 1986 is the relvant o/p being discussed, and it credibly shows latching

–> that of 1987 was demonstrably quite different, and we have across this thread shown why that is likely to be so: detuning of the parameters which materially affects behaviour.

Dawkins says there is no latching.

–> I believe his reported claim was tha there was no EXPLICIT latching.

–> We have demonstrated implicit latching to be not only possible but instantiated

Latching is not needed for the algorithm to work

–> in the abstract, this is quite true: explicitly latched, implicitly latched, implicitly quasi-lat5ched and fully unlatched runs are all very possible, and all will eventually converge on target.

–> in practice, CRD in 1986 showcased runs that latched and glowingly described their cumulative progress to target

–> And, lest we get olost on this side issue: teh fundamental problem with Weasel is that it showes targetted, artificially selected progress on mere proximity without refere3nce to function

–> And, relevant to M & D, the program does not CREATE novel information, it simply replicates a stored — thus already existing — target.

–> That is, it is based on active information and the advantage it creates for the particular search in view.>>

_____

We could go on, but the point is made.

209

Indium

08/25/2009

4:12 pm

I am amazed. I have never experienced something like this. Watching it is funny, but being part of such a conversation is simply amazing. Everybody should try this once in a while.

So, I will start again, just for the fun of watching you, kf, avoiding my points again completely:

The wording in the Blind Watchmaker gives no hint of latching. A video of Dawkins presenting the algorithm shows no latching.

Dawkins says there is no latching. Latching is not needed for the algorithm to work (as kf has replicated). The algorithm is more complicated when it uses latching. Explicit latching is not something biologists would implement when modelling evolution: Mutation rate is supposed to be independent of the resulting fitness. The only argument FOR latching I have seen is the fact that no mutation of correct letters is shown in the BW tables, which is easily explained by the fact that only the best members of a few generations were shown. There is no reason to believe one should see fitness reducing mutations in this case.

So, let´s compare the examples given by Dembski and Marks and Dawkins again, shall we?

1. Correct letters
Correct letters don´t stay fixed in the algorithm as intended by Dawkins. Demski and Marks fix correct letters explicitly. I think everything has been said about this latching behaviour. I will just add again that the Dawkins version is much more representative of biological evolution.

2. Incorrect letters
Dembski and Marks replace *every* wrong letter with a new random letter. This means that subsequent search results are completely different at the beginning:
1: SCITAMROFN*IYRANOITULOVE*SAM
2: OOT*DENGISEDESEHT*ERA*NETSIL

Dawkins algorithm works in a completely different way: From the parent search string he computes a population of daughter strings which are exact copies except for a fixed (and low) mutation rate per letter:
1: WDLTMNLT*DTJBKWIRZREZLMQCO*P
2: WDLTMNLT*DTJBKSIRZREZLMQCO*P
This is of course much more in line with biological evolution.

3. Population
This is related to point 2:
Dembski and Marks have a population size of one (not really a population at all). From a parent string exactly one daughter string is computed. There is no selection involved!
Dawkins generates a large population of daughter strings and selects the best one as the parent string for the next generation.
Again, while it is an extremely simplified model of evolution it at least models the selection part.

Summary:
The two algorithms are completely different in almost every aspect. The one that Dawkins said he used (and everybody can reproduce the results easily) is a much better model of biological evolution:
- Correct letters are not fixed: Mutation rate is independend of resulting fitness: Dawkins: ca. 5% for every letter, Dembski and Marks use an extremely unrealistic rate of 0%/100% for correct/incorrect letters.
- Selection is modelled
- The effect of population sizes is modelled in the Dawkins version.
- The correct Weasel can follow a moving target

So, once again, the algorithms are completely different and the latching behaviour is only a small part of this difference.

And still you insist that the two algorithms are equivalent? Did I extract this correctly from your recent word-salads?

210

R0b

08/25/2009

4:35 pm

kairosfocus:

> And, once we have effectively partitioned search,t eh D & M observations and calculations are applicable. That is, BOTH explicitly latched and implicitly latched searches follow the math of partitioned search.

No. D&M's math applies only to "explicitly latched" searches. The math assumes one offspring per generation and 100% mutation rate. "Implicit latching" cannot occur under those conditions, so the math does not apply to Dawkins' WEASEL or any other "implicitly latched" search.

211

R0b

08/25/2009

6:14 pm

Clive @ 185, I'll try to lay this out more explicitly. Consider three different fitness measures for cumulative selection:

A) Similarity to a long-term fixed ideal.

B) The outcome of a dice roll (rolled every time fitness is evaluated).

C) A function of time, calculated using a complex combination of feedback and feedforward loops.

Option A is WEASEL and B is "anything goes," but those aren't the only options. Unlike A, C has no long-term target, and unlike B, it doesn't produce random noise. A and C both produce results that single-step selection cannot.

212

BillB

08/26/2009

2:09 am

KF, Thank you for answering my question at 165:

> Do you honestly believe that when a woman wears clothes that you disapprove of, an accusation of rape made by her should be disregarded?

I am glad to hear that you do not believe this.

When you said:

> She discredted herself in the courtroom by showing up in stilettos, stockings and a tight micro-mini.

You gave no indication that this was not just your own opinion, so I am relieved to hear that it was actually someone else's.

Needless to say a simple "No, this is not what I believe" would have been sufficient, and more polite.

213

DiEb

08/26/2009

2:52 am

I took the string
SCITAMROFN*IYRANOITULOVE*SAM
and calculated a next generation using Dawkins's algorithms with populations of 10,50 and 100 – and mutation rates of .04, .05 and .1. The tenth string in the list is the second generation given in the paper of Mark and Dembski. The differences with the first generation are in bold face:

1. SCITAMROFN*IYRANOI**E**ULOVE*SAM
2. SCITAMROFN*IYRANOITULO**G**E*SAM
3. **E**CITAMR**I***N*IY**Z**ANOITULOVE*SAM
4. SCITAMROFN*IYRANOITUL*****VE*SAM
5. SCITAMROFN*IYRANOITULOVE*S**E**M
6. SCITAM**OOL**N**O**IYRAM**O**ITULOVE*S**E**M
7. SCITA**N**ROFN*IY**Y**ANOITULOVE*SAM

8. SCIT**I**MROFN***J**YRANOITULOVE*SAM
9. SCITAMROFN*I**CR**H**NOITS**LOW**E***SA**V**
10. **OOT*DENGISEDESEHT*ERA*N**ETSIL

Can anyone spot a difference in the design of the strings? Anyone? KF? Anyone?

214

Blue Lotus

08/26/2009

2:57 am

kairosfocus,

Since my post at #196 there have been several long posts.

Could I refer you back to it? Would you be able to answer the question, which in summary is:

If the two methods (M+D, Dawkins) are the same but for latching then why do the outputs of each differ so much? I.E Dawkins printed runs generation one to two are almost identical, generation one to two of Dembski/Marks is totally different.

Why is that the case? And why does that not indicate these methods differ in their methods?

215

kairosfocus

08/26/2009

3:00 am

Onlookers:

1] Re Rob @ 210:

Once partitioning is effectively achieved in the o/p run of generational champions as they move to the target on mere proximity, the M & D analysis of the probability constraints of cumulative, partititoned ratcheting (thus latched) search applies, as does the discussion on active information. And, beyond reasonable doubt Weasel 1986 was partitioned as is shown by the evident latching on o/p.

Onn balance of evidence, it was probably achieved implicitly through matching of pop per generation, mutation rate per letter and filter characteristics.

2] re Indium @ 209:

Simply repeats the same already corrected errors, starting witht he denial of the obvious latchign in the showcased Weasel runs of 1986 and in CRD's enthusiastic discussion of same. [Cf. e.g. 78 above.]

Fallacy of the closed mind as a manifestation of cognitive dissonance.

3] re BillB:

Still, sadly, beyond the pale of responsible, civil discussion.

G'day.

GEM of TKI

216

[BillB](#)

08/26/2009

3:10 am

Clive:

This scenario below may help (or not) It is something I plan to make, or at the very least write in simulation one day. It is I think an embodiment of R0b's C example in 211 and could, if one were so inclined, be said to contain 'implicit targets' and 'implicit fitness functions'.
——

You have a large, tall, tank of water with some lights shining in at points near the top, and a funnel at the bottom. The tank is a few meters around and maybe five meters tall.

You have some fairly simple robotic fish – they have motorised tails and fins so they can, if correctly controlled, swim around the tank (assume they are waterproof BTW)

Each has a solar cell and some light sensors and a small power store (a battery or capacitor) so that, when they are close enough to the light, their power store will accumulate energy which can then power their brains, and allow the motors to move. There is sufficient light near the top of the tank so that a fish can power its various parts, and trickle charge its energy store, using only the energy coming from its solar panel.

Each also has a small embedded computer to control all its parts, and a device for reprogramming the chip wirelessly over a short distance (probably by an infra red link)

Each is slightly less than neutrally buoyant – it will slowly sink

—-
You start by programming each robot fish (maybe you have about 30 of them) with a randomly configured neural network programme, and then you drop them into the tank. The fish start to sink. Maybe some of them twitch a bit, it depends on how their random brains work.

When a fish reaches the funnel at the bottom it is sucked out and transported up to the top of the tank. On the way is is re-programmed with a new neural network, one which is a slightly mutated copy of a programme from a randomly selected fish that is still in the tank. (you have kept a record of all the random brains you generated at the start)

The 'new' fish is then dropped in at the top of the tank (and your records are updated).

—

In simple terms, when a fish falls to the bottom it 'dies' and (solely because of the finite number of fish we can reasonably make) this allows one of the still 'living' fish to reproduce.

Any idea what will happen when you let the system run for a few months?

What ought to happen is that the fish's brains will 'evolve' to allow them to swim towards the light, which provides them with power, which keeps them moving, and stops them sinking, and stops them dying. The longer a fish can do this the greater the probability that it will 'reproduce' and the greater the number of offspring it will have – these offspring will 'inherit' some of the traits that helped the 'parent' survive for long enough to reproduce.

Now the important questions:
Where is the target?
Are the fish (or rather their brains) gathering 'information' from their environment?

And a note to KF in case he misunderstands:

This example is designed to deal SOLELY with the concepts of fitness functions and targets. It is constructed to serve this purpose and this purpose alone. It is NOT about how this simulacrum of self replicating agents came to exist, or how biological life first arose – it assumes self replicators exist, as we can observe in nature.

[217](#)

Blue Lotus

08/26/2009

3:12 am

KF

> And, beyond reasonable doubt Weasel 1986 was partitioned as is shown by the evident latching on o/p.

And this is why my question is so important to me. If there is no difference between Weasel 1986 and Dembski/Marks 2009 then why are the outputs across generations so wildly divergent on Dembski/Marks and almost identical Weasel 1986?

> Fallacy of the closed mind as a manifestation of cognitive dissonance.

Then I have high hopes you will address my query.

218

kairosfocus

08/26/2009

3:20 am

PS: BL:

While I know there is a new set of "standard" Darwinist idea hit-man talking points on this, they are on the usual strawman distortion. (And note that while much digital ink has been spilled on a side issue, the main point from 78: the implications of the new phase of development of ID theory, are being distracted from. And unsurprisingly, the idea hit-men want to demonise and dismiss those they object to. but meanwhile we now have a tool for explaining the impact of intelligence on search: active information fits horses for courses and gives a substantial gain on the average/yardstick random walk search. A gain that can in some cases be quantified and turned into an information metric. Moreover, as this is in an area of interest to engineers, the power games played out over the past decade to lock ID research from official "Science" journals are suddenly irrelevant.)

I should also immediately note that the version of Weasel used in the demo runs as printed off again above, was **Atom's adjustable weasel.**

This is of course produced under the auspices of the M & D EIL, and is hosted by them. One part does a strict random walk. One, in parallel, an explicitly partitioned search. The third, an adjustable parameter search based on set pop no, set per letter mut rate and I believe now filter type and even clustering of groups of letters 1, 2, 4 etc [at my request].

Since this is an official product of the EIL, it can fairly be said to be *the* Dembski-Marks model of Weasel, and it covers the ballpark.

Why not try a few runs yourself and see the in-parallel results?

M & D, on p. 1055 of the recent IEEE paper are doing a very different thing from CRD's development of a program of even their own hosting of the adjustable Weasel; so, one must not compare guavas and soursops.

For, on p. 1055, M & D are analysing the probability implications of partitioned search; in the context of the impact of active information on search. (The evidence that Weasel credibly 1986 exhibits this class of search is accessible in 78 and 134 above. Remember, cumulative, ratcheting, latching of already correct letters search is achievable explicitly or implicitly, as shown by *actual* o/p. Once the observable ratcheting effect occurs, partitioning has been achieved and the analysis applies regardless of whether the pathway was explicit or implicit.)

219

kairosfocus

08/26/2009

3:30 am

PPS: BL, you are confusing a pedagogical example of what partitioning is and does [p. 1055, IEEE paper] with showcased "good" runs of Weasel c. 1986.

Guavas and soursops.

EIL DOES have a program that implements in parallel runs of Weasels, with adjustable parameters.

That is where the runs I put up above come from [and you will see runs that bracket the 40 - 60 "good runs" produced by CRD c 1986: 130+ for a 4%, 50 run and 31 for a 500 pop run].

On the original page I have one run at 22, when rates and pop are pushed to extremes. Another ran to something like 2500, most of that being in the tail end as odd effects kept it bouncing around. You will see that as parameters shift, different population (mutation distribution tail . . . recall the filters reward the closest per CRD's specification, not the average on distance to target) effects dominate — indeed, my own analysis suggests that different factors and dynamics dominate as a run progresses.

220

kairosfocus

08/26/2009

3:41 am

PPPS: Onlookers:

BillB's fishy funnel model is of course an intelligently designed simulation, which has in it a lot of already built in functionality, as is implicit in robotic fish with solar panels swimming around. That is, it begs the key questions of the origin of basic information-rich, complex functionality, which is relevant to BOTH origin of life and origin of novel body plans and major features otherwise. Until you get tothe shoreline of an island of complex function by chance variation and natural selection, hill-climbing is irreelvant as an algorithm to illustrate the power of evoltuionary mechanisms. For, per argument, we are perfectly willing to concede huill climbing for the moment. the issue is getting from the sea of non-function to the shorelines of islands of function within teh credible resources of the cosmos as we observe it [if 10^150 random walk moves are too small a fraction of the config space, the proposal is not credible; and 1,000 bits of required info storage for function will put you well into that territory], as has been repeatedly stated and just as repeatedly dodged.

221

Indium

08/26/2009

3:50 am

kf, you still go on about this latching stuff that has long ago been sorted: Your rethoric trick to call "non latching" algorithms "implicitly latching" is long known.

Also, whatever the EIL has on it´s website is not really under discussion. The question is wether the Dembski and Marks paper misrepresents Dawkins Weasel. And the answer is yes. I will copy my arguments again, so that I can again watch you ignore them (and still typing a few thousands words):

So, let´s compare the examples given by Dembski and Marks and Dawkins again, shall we?

1. Correct letters
Correct letters don´t stay fixed in the algorithm as intended by Dawkins. Demski and Marks fix correct letters explicitly. I think everything has been said about this latching behaviour. I will just add again that the Dawkins version is much more representative of biological evolution. The fixation of correct letters that can be seen when high population numers and low mutation rates are used is just what was to be demonstrated by Weasel: The power of mutation/selection.

2. Incorrect letters
Dembski and Marks replace *every* wrong letter with a new random letter. This means that subsequent search results are completely

different at the beginning:
1: SCITAMROFN*IYRANOITULOVE*SAM
2: OOT*DENGISEDESEHT*ERA*NETSIL

Dawkins algorithm works in a completely different way: From the parent search string he computes a population of daughter strings which are exact copies except for a fixed (and low) mutation rate per letter:
1: WDLTMNLT*DTJBKWIRZREZLMQCO*P
2: WDLTMNLT*DTJBKSIRZREZLMQCO*P
This is of course much more in line with biological evolution.
Blue Lotus makes the same point and you evade by talking about an algorithm from EIL. I am talking about the paper of Dembksi and Marks. Instead of a "Proximity Reward Search" Dembski presents it as a "Partioned Search" in the paper. The funny thing is that the differences are immediately visible in the EIL software.

3. Population
This is related to point 2:
Dembski and Marks have a population size of one (not really a population at all). From a parent string exactly one daughter string is computed. There is no selection involved!
Dawkins generates a large population of daughter strings and selects the best one as the parent string for the next generation.
Again, while it is an extremely simplified model of evolution it at least models the selection part.

Summary:
The two algorithms are completely different in almost every aspect. The one that Dawkins said he used (and everybody can reproduce the results easily) is a much better model of biological evolution:
- Correct letters are not fixed: Mutation rate is independend of resulting fitness: Dawkins: ca. 5% for every letter, Dembski and Marks use an extremely unrealistic rate of 0%/100% for correct/incorrect letters.
- Selection is modelled
- The effect of population sizes is modelled in the Dawkins version.
- The correct Weasel can follow a moving target

So, once again, the algorithms are completely different and the latching behaviour is only a small part of this difference (but maybe the one that can be misrepresented most easily).

222

BillB

08/26/2009

4:13 am

KF:

In your post at 193 and 195 you provide a series of examples that demonstrate exactly what myself and others have been arguing. I am going to try a slightly different tack to see if it makes any difference.

You state this about the 1986 output of WEASEL

> Onn balance of evidence, it was probably achieved implicitly through matching of pop per generation, mutation rate per letter and filter characteristics.

This is correct and precisely what we have been arguing. It seems to describe the algorithm dawkins described but with some unnecessary new terminology. Note that this output does not require that the algorithm locks any correct letters out of the mutation process – how recall Dembskis description:

> Consider the L = **28** character phrase
> …
> Two of the letters {E, S} are in the correct position. They are shown in a bold font. In partitioned search, **our search for these letters is finished.** For the incorrect letters, we select **26** new letters and obtain
> …

Notice how the algorithm explicitly requires that the correct letters are removed from the search (the randomisation) process as evidenced by both his phrasing and the highlighted numbers. In the process you describe there is no such requirement. This is the issue we have been addressing, at least as far as the latching point goes. Merely choosing to call the observation of a behaviour an 'implicit

latch' does not really deal with the point – Dembski and Marks explicitly describe a **mechanism** that prevents correct letters from **ever** reverting, Dawkins describes a mechanism that allows any letter to randomly change.

In order to produce the latching described by D and M you have to explicitly include it in the code, with Dawkins algorithm you do not need this **extra mechanism**

It is worth noting also that from Dawkins description you cannot have a mutation rate of zero, or one hundred percent. If it is zero then they are not 'mutant progeny', they are identical clones, and if it is one hundred percent then they are also not mutant progeny (they inherit nothing, they are just new randomly generated strings).

Now can you answer this question:
Is a latch that doesn't always latch the same as a latch that will always latch?

Or more specifically:

Is something who's observed output looks like it sometimes latches, the same as a device that latches?

—-

Moving on to your more recent comments:

> Since this is an official product of the EIL, it can fairly be said to be the Dembski-Marks model of Weasel, and it covers the ballpark.

Absolutly not, Atoms system can be configured to reproduce the WEASEL algorithm, it can also be configured to reproduce the Dembski/Marks algorithm along with a host of different algorithms. The mere fact that Atoms application requires re-configuring in order to meet the published criteria for each algorithm (and to produce all the results you have generated) indicates that they are **two different algorithms**.

Remember – a computer programme is typically a collection of many algorithms.

—

Finally, you still have not addressed the issue of a population, or the issue of randomisation and locking vs equal probability of mutation (as noted above). Dawkins description only holds if you have a mutation rate **between** zero and one hundred. Dembski and Marks **demands** a mutation rate of one hundred percent for incorrect letters and zero for correct letters.

Can you now answer this question (yes or no will do):

Is an algorithm that implies a mutation rate **between** zero and one hundred percent the same as one that **requires** a rate at zero or one hundred percent depending on the letter being examined?

Remember, the issue is whether Dembski and Marks have portrayed WEASEL accurately. Now that we appear to be agreeing that Dawkins algorithm does not **require** a specifically designed latching mechanism to produce the observed behaviour. we seem to be close to agreeing that their algorithms differ on this point, so can you now address the issue of poulations and mutation.

223

BillB

08/26/2009

4:18 am

KF:

> That is, it begs the key questions of the origin of basic information-rich, complex functionality,

LOL ROTFL:

> This example is designed to deal SOLELY with the concepts of fitness functions and targets. It is constructed to serve this purpose and this purpose alone. It is NOT about how this simulacrum of self replicating agents came to exist, or how biological life first arose – it assumes self replicators exist, as we can observe in nature.

I addressed this to Clive and it specifically dealt with the notion of imposed targets versus implied targets which he was discussing with R0b. This is not avoiding the issue, this is merely discussing the issue being discussed.

224

BillB

08/26/2009

4:24 am

Correction to 222:

"I addressed this to Clive "

should have been:

"I addressed the post to Clive "

The disclaimer was intended for you, it is a shame you didn't bother to read it.

225

kairosfocus

08/26/2009

5:49 am

BillB:

Perhaps you have not got the memo: YOU HAVE MOVED BEYOND THE PALE OF CIVIL CONDUCT, AND KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO MAKE AMENDS — BUT REFUSE TO DO SO.

Beyond that, you are simply closed-mindedly recycling fallacious talking points [as long since corrected], and are now insisting that the key questions being begged must not be pointed out.

This thread is plainly over on the merits.

Good bye.

GEM of TKI

226

kairosfocus

08/26/2009

5:51 am

Indium:

While, thankfully, you have not been uncivil, it is unfortunately the case that you are recycling already corrected errors.

Good day

GEM of TKI

227

Indium

08/26/2009

6:10 am

kf, point me to the corrections of my points in #220 please.

Thanks.

228

BillB

08/26/2009

6:15 am

KF:

Please stop inventing excuses to address the issues, which are:

1-> Is an explicit, required, latching mechanism **the same** as a non-explicit, non-required, not-always-latching mechanism?

2-> Is a mutation rate that has to be **between** zero and one hundred percent **the same** as a mutation rate that has to be **either** zero **or** one hundred percent?

3-> Is a population of one, where no selection can occur **the same** as a population of many from which one is selected?

I anticipate three one word answers, each of which can either be YES or NO.

——

On the topic of your civility, I am still waiting for you to answer this:

> KF, why mention Nazis, the holocaust and the defenders of rape in a diatribe aimed at me if you were NOT trying to associate me with these actions?

I also note that after pointing out that these actions of yours are very offensive, you then accuse me of lying (again) and of only pretending to be offended.

faux or manipulated outrage? Let he who is without sin . . .

229

BillB

08/26/2009

6:38 am

BTW, and for the record, If anything I wrote on this page has been interpreted as an accusation of dishonesty then I apologise for not expressing myself clearly.

When I make such an accusation its meaning and nature will be crystal clear!

230

kairosfocus

08/26/2009

8:00 am

Onlookers:

I see the ever so sad spin games continue.

I must observe thusly, for the record:

1 –> It is in another thread that BillB accused me of "gutter politics" for pointing out the now habitual Darwinist pattern of distractions, distortions and demonisation. Above, he seems to have contented himself with loaded insinuations and distortions. He knows how to make amends.

2 –> The point on "mentioning . . ." is a capital example in point. I have long since pointed out that the above polarising and atmosphere-poisoning darwinist rhetorical pattern critically undermines civility, and so the order of justice and liberty: if we refuse to learn from historical exemplars, we will repeat sad chapters from the past through refusing to heed its lessons in good time. And I have underscored that repeatedly. There are many, many examples ranging from Alcibiades onwards [and Alcibiades as noted long since is the prime example in this thread].

3 –> As to "rape defendants", BillB knows or should know that I have corrected him on the specific twisting of my words above on turnabout accusation as a compounding form of demonisation of the victim: the sleazy courtroom tactic — used by shysters — of blaming the victim. I must draw the sad conclusion that this is willful, as he is far too too intelligent and educated for this to be accidental.

4 –>Indium, if s/he would simply read responses above, will see corrections aplenty.

_____

There is much more than enough above to address the main matter cogently on the merits, and to correct the various side tracks, fallacies and distortions that so sadly charactersised the darwinist arguments above.

++++++++++

And, see how the distraction, distortion, demioonisation polarisation tactic poisons the atmosphere, frustrating serious dialogue? for instead of addre4ssing the significance of a signal achievement of an advance in design theory, we are now reduced to correcting willful distortions and demonisations [which of course will drive away those who want to find out the facts and the balance on the merits]. For such, I suggest you look up at 78 above.]

in short, the above is a commentary on precisely the dangers I have been warning against, and for which I was unjustly threatened or actually reported to the US Homeland Security Dept as a terrorist threat.

For shame!

Good day

GEM of TKI

231

IRQ Conflict

08/26/2009

8:28 am

kairosfocus, Thank-you for your time, wisdom and patience with this.

P.S.
Someone threatened you and/or reported you as a terrorist? Sounds like someone needs to get a life/girlfriend.

232

Indium

08/26/2009

8:58 am

It would be much easier to just point me to your answer to my points in #220, kf…
Or copy and paste the relevant points here. Otherwise I will just take this response as another sad red-herring-oil-soaked-smokescreen distraction.

233

DiEb

08/26/2009

9:39 am

I try to get involved in the discussion, but my last edit (#213) is now in moderation for nearly **seven** hours…

234

Clive Hayden

08/26/2009

11:56 am

R0b,

> C) A function of time, calculated using a complex combination of feedback and feedforward loops.
>
> Option A is WEASEL and B is "anything goes," but those aren't the only options. Unlike A, C has no long-term target, and unlike B, it doesn't produce random noise. A and C both produce results that single-step selection cannot.

How do you know it doesn't produce random noise? What are you using to determine that, what are you comparing it to? Random noise, if it is to be considered anything else, must be compared to something that isn't noise, such as music. What is your comparison?

235

R0b

08/26/2009

12:08 pm

kairosfocus, since you're insistent that M&D's math applies to "implied latching", let's apply it.

With a population of 200 and a mutation rate of 5%, the median number of generations is 45, with correct letters being lost only rarely. (This is in line with the WEASEL results in TBW.) Let's see if M&D's math agrees that there is a 50% chance of succeeding within 45 generations.

So, what do we plug into Q? 45 or 45*200?

236

R0b

08/26/2009

12:48 pm

Clive, I'm afraid we're talking past each other. What makes you think a comparison is needed? There are several established tests for randomness, none of which require comparison with a non-random sequence.

237

Clive Hayden

08/26/2009

1:15 pm

R0b,

> Clive, I'm afraid we're talking past each other. What makes you think a comparison is needed? There are several established tests for randomness, none of which require comparison with a non-random sequence.

Okay, then the "established tests" are the comparison. What are these tests, and how do they distinguish randomness from non-randomness?

238

Indium

08/26/2009

1:36 pm

Clive, one good randomness test is to check the compressibility.

239

R0b

08/26/2009

1:38 pm

Clive, we're clearly not understanding each other. How is a non-comparative test a comparison? As for randomness tests, here's a start.

240

Clive Hayden

08/26/2009

1:54 pm

R0b,

> Clive, we're clearly not understanding each other. How is a non-comparative test a comparison? As for randomness tests, here's a start.

The test is not a comparison itself, but the test uses a comparison, otherwise, it isn't a test. In a test of any sort, there has to be something used as a standard.

241

R0b

08/26/2009

2:16 pm

Clive, okay. I take it that your questions in 234 are answered.

242

Clive Hayden

08/26/2009

3:05 pm

R0b,

Yeah, they're answered in the respect that there are tests to determine what is random or not by comparison to intelligent discernment of intelligently constructed standards, such as the gcd test:

> "All we need do is compare the sample distribution from a particular RNG with the standard provided by a number of presumably good RNG's, 'presumably good' meaning that they produce results so close to a single one that the single one may be used as a standard."

But remember the first contention, there is no standard in the Weasel illustration, because nothing exists for comparison if not the phrase itself as a target. Remove it, and you'll have to invent another standard or target of comparison. This is an insurmountable problem.

243

BillB

08/26/2009

3:27 pm

I'm still waiting for some answers KF, no more excuses, answer the questions, they are simple enough:

1-> Is an **explicit, required,** latching mechanism **the same** as a **non-explicit, non-required, not-always-latching** mechanism?

2-> Is a mutation rate that has to be **between** zero and one hundred percent **the same** as a mutation rate that has to be **either** zero **or** one hundred percent?

3-> Is a population of one, where no selection can occur **the same** as a population of many from which one is selected?

244

Indium

08/26/2009

3:49 pm

Clive, it is just a *model*. In this model a certain kind of fitness function is implemented. You could define fitness using other functions. In nature fitness of course is a much more complicated function of many things (fertility, viability, survivability, you name it). That´s why people use models: They reduce a problem to certain core points and make them easier to understand. Somehow it doesn´t work for some people though.

Anyway, the Weasel algorithm captures a few important points:
- Mutation probability is independent of the resulting fitness
- Selection is simulated
- The effect of different population sizes can be examined
etc.
But it is still just a *model*. A very simple one. Other genetic algorithms use far more sophisticated inheritance schemes (with deletions, insertions, crossover etc) and fitness evaluations, even without a specific target (avida).

245

Clive Hayden

08/26/2009

4:10 pm

I know it's just a model, I'm trying my best to get a clear picture of how the Weasel analogy corresponds to life, what it's supposed to evidence or illustrate, if "life's not really like that" as Dawkins said. I'm not trying to be difficult. I suspect there is a breakdown in communication or understanding, or both, somewhere. I'm having a conceptual difficulty with the random or non-random efficacy of the affair if there is no standard of comparison. It seems that without a test, based on a standard, anything goes, que sera sera, whatever will be will be.

246

Blue Lotus

08/26/2009

4:28 pm

Kariosfocus

> Why not try a few runs yourself and see the in-parallel results?

Could I suggest you do the same? Then print both runs here and you'll see for yourself what I mean.

> On the original page I have one run at 22, when rates and pop are pushed to extremes. Another ran to something like 2500, most of that being in the tail end as odd effects kept it bouncing around. You will see that as parameters shift, different population (mutation distribution tail . . . recall the filters reward the closest per CRD's specification, not the average on distance to target) effects dominate — indeed, my own analysis suggests that different factors and dynamics dominate as a run progresses.

Of the two posts I believe that were addressed directly to me I don't believe you addressed my actual question in any way whatsoever.

The runs differ so much in generation 1 to 2 that they clearly are not generated by the same method.

Yet rather then explain why that is the case you have created issues of you own (I believe strawmen is the proper word) and talked about them instead. Please feel free to do so, but as a proponent of the view that Dembski/Marks correctly describe Weasel I'd just like to hear from you why the two types generate very different strings in sequential generations??

247

Blue Lotus

08/26/2009

4:31 pm

Clive

I'm trying my best to get a clear picture of how the Weasel analogy corresponds to life, what it's supposed to evidence or illustrate, if "life's not really like that" as Dawkins said.

Could I suggest you consider reading the book, The Blind Watchmaker? It's very good.

248

Blue Lotus

08/26/2009

4:36 pm

Clive

It seems that without a test, based on a standard, anything goes, que sera sera, whatever will be will be.

How about whatever reproduces most wins?

Whatever survives longest wins?

How that might be measured and determined might well differ from moment to moment, but as long as the enviroment does not change too fast….

249

R0b

08/26/2009

6:48 pm

Clive, obviously selection entails criteria that must be met in order to reproduce. When Dawkins says that life has no "distant ideal target" or "long-term goal" or "long-distance target" or "final perfection", does that mean in your mind that life has no fitness criteria?

250

Indium

08/27/2009

1:17 am

I feel that we are quite close to a conceptual breakthrough here, Clive, but, and I am honestly sorry about that: I admit that I fail to understand what your problem really is.

251

kairosfocus

08/27/2009

4:31 am

Footnote:

I refer onlookers and interested parties to my comment in a follow up thread here.

BillB is still well out in the zone beyond the pale of civil discourse and knows what he needs to do to make amends.

Good day.

GEM of TKI

PS: IRQ 231. Thanks for the kind words. And indeed I was threatened/falsely reported to HSD in an earlier thread [by TM English], in the context of pointing out the dangerous implications of the breakdown of civility by Darwinists. On my takign the threat seriously — it was said tha tit was itnended to get me on travel ban watch lists and a claimed phone conversartion with a HSD agent was reported, it was claimed that it was just a joke and I was a poor sport. Sorry, you don't play THAT kind of joke. And, I have had to point out that he claimed parallel to the WmAD report on Pianka in 2006 is not parallel, for instance by the time Dembski got to HSD, OTHERS had reported the incident in which he gleefully speculated over Ebola killing off 90% of humanity. And you are right, a significant lady in one's life — mother, aunt, sister, wife, girlfriend or just good friend and counsellor — does tend to civilise men.]

252

BillB

08/27/2009

6:39 pm

KF:

Lying and deceit are closely related, they both involve deceiving.

You have a rhetorical device that you employ on a consistent and regular basis that, when dealing with other peoples attempts to argue against a position that you hold, you will claim that rather than debating the issue they are actually deploying red herrings, making personal (argumentum ad hominem) attacks and trying to distract from the issues under discussion. You also frequently invoke unpleasant historical figures and groups, like the Nazis, and try and link their actions to those who would argue against you.

Gutter politics is an ill defined term but, as I understand it, it involves trying to discredit your opponents in the eyes of onlookers by accusing them of deceit, and trying to link their actions to the unpleasant actions of others to whom they have no real relation.

I make no apology for making this observation of your behaviour. I believe it is you who owes apologies to, in all probability, the majority of people who have disagreed with you on these forums for your constant accusation of deceit, of lying.

Can I suggest that you get a copy of this book called The Bible, there are some really interesting life lessons in there about the value of tolerance, forgiveness and of humility.

You now know what you have to do to make amends.

Now, can you answer these questions:

1-> Is an explicit, required, latching mechanism the same as a non-explicit, non-required, not-always-latching mechanism?

2-> Is a mutation rate that has to be between zero and one hundred percent the same as a mutation rate that has to be either zero or one hundred percent?

3-> Is a population of one, where no selection can occur the same as a population of many from which one is selected?

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