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In this month's issue:

- [The Death of Darwinism](#)
- [Note from the Secretary:](#)
- [Gemstone Therapy:](#)
- [A Note from Prasad Golla on Gemstone Therapy](#)
- [Skeptical Ink](#)

The Death of Darwinism

by John Blanton

Darwinism is dead!

Darwinism is dead!

Hi-ho, Darwinism is dead!

No. Wait. That's not the way the song goes. Where did this come from?

The latest issue of *Impact*, of course. *Impact No. 341* is from the Institute for Creation Research (ICR) in Santee, California. Their Web site at www.icr.org is a great source for creationist literature.

The group has been in business since before The Flood, and they are notoriously the granddaddy of all young Earth creationist (YEC) groups in the US.

The Institute for Creation Research was first established in 1970 and reorganized with its present name in 1972 to meet the need for an organization devoted to research, publication, and teaching in those fields of science particularly relevant to the study of origins. It was originally formed as the research division of Christian Heritage College (also established in 1970, but became separate and autonomous in 1981).¹

ICR Senior V.P. Duane Gish has long been notable for his debates with mainstream scientists. Although he holds a Ph.D. in biochemistry from the University of California at Berkeley, his debates have generally focused on aspects of geology, physics, paleontology, and astronomy that conflict with the tenets of creationism, and they reflect the agenda and tone of ICR publications. However, the latest *Impact* is about biology.

Impact No. 341 is titled *The Imminent Death of Darwinism and the Rise of Intelligent Design*, and it is by Gregory J.

Brewer. From the ICR Web site:

He has a B.S. in Biology from the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA. and a Ph.D. in Biology from the University of California San Diego (UCSD). He did postdoctoral work at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on membrane-mediated macro-regulatory effects of colicin K on *E. coli* under nobel laureate, Professor Salvador E. Luria. Dr. Brewer is current Professor of Neurology and Medical Microbiology at Southern Illinois University. He has published over 60 papers in refereed journals, over 70 presentations and abstracts at professional meetings, and is currently an ad hoc reviewer for the National Science Foundation.²

So what's a respected scientist like Brewer doing writing for ICR? Beats me. He must be a creationist. The ICR lists him as one of their *creation scientists*, but I could not readily find anything else by him among the ICR publications. Here is what he had to say about Darwinism:

According to Darwinism, all life on earth arose by natural variation and selection of the most fit. But many questions raised by Darwin's contemporaries remain unanswered today. These problems are compounded by the unique DNA sequence information now in from the human genome project (Venter, 2001; Lander, 2001) and our understanding of the irreducibly complex function of biological systems (Behe, 1996). Intellectual honesty will soon force many scientists to abandon Darwin's theory of the evolution of species in exchange for intelligent design or outright Biblical creation.³

The references cited by Brewer are Behe, M., *Darwin's Black Box*, Free Press (1996), Lander, E. S. *et al.* "Initial Sequencing and Analysis of the Human Genome." *Nature* 409 (2001):860-921, and Venter, J. C. *et al.* (2001) "The Sequence of the Human Genome." *Science* 291:1304-1351.

DNA stands for deoxyribonucleic acid, and RNA stands for ribonucleic acid. DNA is the stuff of chromosomes and the means by which parent organisms pass design information to their children. RNA is a tool used by cells to, among other things, copy information from DNA.

Brewer wants to make the point that modern biology is attempting to demonstrate common ancestry of living organism by pointing out the similarities in structure of cellular DNA. What biologists do is note that the DNA of organism A is just like the DNA of B, except that this segment is missing in A, or the DNA of C is just like that of D, except that that segment is different. If A, B, and C all have sequences in common, but A and B have something in common that neither has in common with C, then biologists reason that A and B have a common ancestor, and that common ancestor has a common ancestor with C.

Figure 1 illustrates the principle of Last Unknown Common Ancestor (LUCA). A, B, and C in the drawing are living organisms. D (now dead, obviously) is the LUCA of A and B. We may not know exactly what D was, but we know it must have existed because A and B inherited many common DNA sequences from some common ancestor. However, A and B have something in common among themselves but not in common with C. We reason that this difference came about after the split that occurred at E. E is the LUCA of A and C and also the LUCA of B and C.

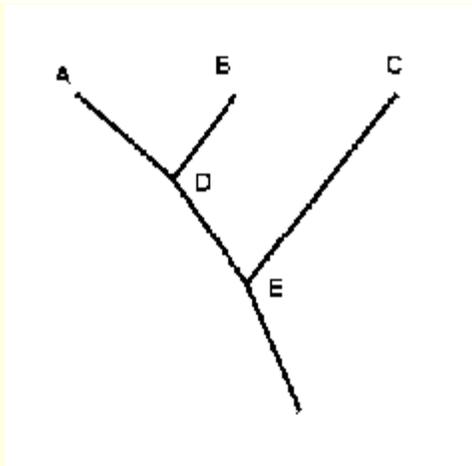


Figure 1. LUCA

This process goes on back until we ultimately demonstrate a LUCA of all living organisms. These modern developments have become a sledgehammer argument for Darwin's principle of common ancestry.

Brewer, however, begs us to pay more attention to the differences and not so much to the similarities.

...Many proteins and RNA's were similar from one life form to another, even between bacteria and man. However, these data support intelligent design by a single set of principles just as well. Furthermore, recent multi-gene comparisons of the amount of divergence between different organisms now provide better support for a complex relationship between different organisms, a relationship that first looked more like a shrub, with many more early branches (figure 2). Now the trend seems to be toward nearly independent origins, a model more like grass. This model is consistent with the independent origins of major kinds of plants, sea life, and animals described in the Genesis account.⁴

Brewer's figure 2 is a drawing from an article by W. F. Doolittle in *Science*. It shows a much more confused picture than my Figure 1. Doolittle was apparently showing the flow of heredity that resulted in modern bacteria, eukarya (organisms such as ourselves with complex cells), and archaea (ancient bacteria). The differences, Brewer argues, support separate ancestry.

Brewer presents a table of differences for a number of organisms, including numerous bacteria, plus two plants, plus humans. Brewer addresses a number of comparisons, but I can only touch on one.

In comparison to *Haemophilus*, *Synechocystis*, and *Mycoplasma* bacteria, of the 4,288 coded proteins in *E. coli*, there are only 111 proteins (2.6%) in common with these three eubacteria. Sixty percent of the *E. coli* sequences are completely unique, with less than 30% common to the sequences of these other bacteria. Thirty-eight percent of the *E. coli* genes have no known function. Examining all the organisms in table 1 shows a surprisingly high percentage of genes with no match in other organisms.⁵

How can someone like myself, who once made an A in a high school biology course, refute this argument from Brewer? The question really should be "why is it so easy to do?"

Brewer seems to be saying we have all these modern bacteria that should have so much in common because they all have the same LUCA with the eukarya. But they have all the differences among themselves. Hence, separate ancestry due to a playful creator (my choice of words).

What Brewer conveniently ignores is that we are looking at modern organisms. Let me redraw Figure 1. Figure 2 shows the complete tree of life, from the primordial soup to you, me, and the bacteria. I had to leave some stuff out.

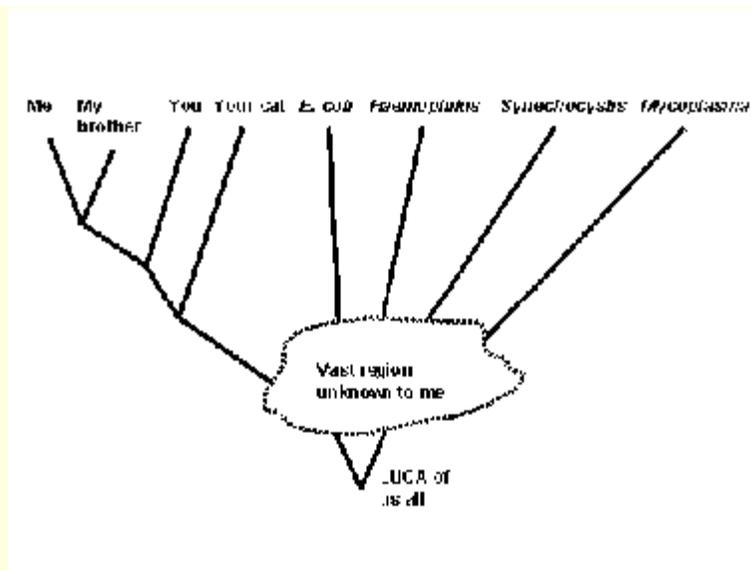


Figure 2. Tree of life

The bacteria LUCA goes back to approximately the LUCA of us all. Why should modern bacteria be similar to each other? Where did Brewer study biology again? Must have been sitting behind me in Mr. Hale's biology class.

Brewer's other argument is for intelligent design (ID). It's essentially Michael Behe's argument in his book *Darwin's Black Box*. See the previous review of this book in *The North Texas Skeptic*.⁶ Behe uses what he calls *irreducible complexity* to argue that certain inherited features could not have arisen by Darwinian evolution, because they are complex in a way that requires multiple, simultaneous random mutations. Even mainstream biologists agree that unrelated, multiple, simultaneous (and beneficial) mutations are rare enough to exclude them from consideration. Were the separate mutations to occur one at a time (the Darwinian view) the first result would be a non-viable organism that would not survive to encounter and pass on the remaining required mutations.

The previous review of Behe cites a number of rebuttals, including Donald C. Lindsay at —

<http://www.best.com/~dlindsay/creation/behe.html>.

It's hard to figure where Brewer is coming from scientifically. Maybe he's not. I will let him have the last word.

Theories are to be modified or abandoned when they are inconsistent with one significant fact. Based on relationships of similar genes, large numbers of unrelated genes and irreducible complexity, Darwin's evolution of species needs to be replaced by intelligent design. According to the Bible, the Designer was God with more than adequate intelligence and power to create all the major kinds of life in a short period of time. While we will never be able to prove the singularity of creation by God, the evidence better supports faith in God, rather than faith in Darwinism.⁷

References

¹ From the ICR Web site at <http://www.icr.org>

² Op cit

³ Brewer, G. J., *Impact No. 341: The Imminent Death of Darwinism and the Rise of Intelligent Design*, November 2001, ICR, Santee, CA.

⁴ Op cit

⁵ Op cit

⁶ J. Blanton, "Behe's black box," *The North Texas Skeptic*. The North Texas Skeptics, Carrollton, TX. November 1999. Also available on-line at — <http://www.ntskeptics.org/1999/1999november/november1999.htm>

⁷ Brewer

[\[Back to top\]](#)

Note from the Secretary:

With this issue we wind down the first year of the twenty-first century. And what a year it has been.

The article about gem therapy was submitted to us by a reader in India. Thanks to the Internet, what we do and say has the possibility to touch people all over the world. For example, while I was composing this we received a phone call from a doctor in Indiana. He said "keep up the good work." The converse is true, as well. We get much of our information from sources around the globe.

The gem therapy article is obviously not from a skeptical viewpoint. We are printing it, however, to illustrate the range of beliefs that are taken on faith with little skeptical review. NTS board member Prasad Golla has written a companion piece to go with Mr. Jain's article. Prasad is from India, and his participation in the NTS provides us a valuable resource and broadens our perspective, for which we are thankful.

We invite comments on this and other items we publish. We are a skeptical organization, and our main focus is on controversial issues that merit skepticism.

Happy New Year to all of you.

John Blanton

[\[Back to top\]](#)

Gemstone Therapy:

by **V.K.JAIN**

A Technique to Combat the Growth of Tumors

Tumors are one the most common killer in the world. Million of people die from some form of it. Tumors are complex in nature what causes the disorders are not clearly understood. Hence its prevention is most difficult.

Tumors are an abnormal growth, which contain solid or semisolid materials, develop on the any part of the body. Apparently, no reason of its growth appears. They can be either benign or malignant. Malignant spreads rapidly to other parts of the body where as benign (harmless) ones does not spread and thus has distinct boundaries. Malignant is cancer cells, which are wild, irregular and different from other body cells. It threatens life as they grow rapidly and gradually invade to other locations and fill the surrounding areas. They destroy healthy tissues so they can not function properly. These cancer cells appear to be toxic and poisonous waste producing in the body in abnormal way. The body organs in eliminating these wastes enable to purify with the rate of production that would result eventually in formation of tumors both benign and malignant. The process takes incubation period of years and sufferers are unaware.

There are hundred kinds of tumors and classifications are based on the organs. Each varies in its symptom and description of some important tumors are given below:

Uterus tumor: It is a growth in the walls of the uterus and sometimes it is attached to the outside of the uterus by a stalk. It can be as small as pea or as large as an orange. They are not ingeneral cancerous. However large size may cause pain or bleeding or difficulty in passing urine? There are several options: if there is no symptom, it is better to wait and watch. However be in contact with a doctor for the advice. Various medicines are available for its cure. Natural pathy

may also work.

Cysts and Polyps: These are growths of various size especially found in certain portions of the mucous membrane. These are benign and looks like small mushrooms. These may be due history in the family. Vitamin C rich, high water intake and good diet may help to get rid of.

Brain Tumors: They grow in the brain due to cells reproducing themselves in an uncontrolled manner. These can be benign or malignant. Malignant one may spread in other location of brain or spinal cord. If space is enough to accommodate it, people will not feel any problem. However when it exceeds beyond the limited space and then they create problems of pressure or displace normal brain tissues that can destroy the brain tissue. It may also cause blockage of fluids that flows around and through the brain. This situation may cause several problems. Therefore people with cancer tumor do not die of disease itself but secondary effects arisen of the tumors create many problems. Then a person needs treatment of its removal.

Breast cancer: Around 1 billion women worldwide suffer from it In most cases, lumps are firm and are pain free. It is a leading cause of malignant death among women. Women above 40 are likely to develop breast cancer than younger women.

Early detection and treatment is essential. In general it is seen, a cancer becomes noticed at the advanced stages. To detect the cancer, biopsy is carried out. This is done by slicing the tumor tissue, which is sent to a lab for microscopic examination. This may be dangerous because the suspected tumor tissue immediately releases its cancer cells in the body, where it can more rapidly spread. In most cases, the patients go for the authorized treatments available. These are surgery, radiation and chemotherapy and all have limitation and side effects. For example, Surgery removes the tumors completely but the processes of generation of toxin materials remain the same that would cause reoccurrence of tumor. The surgery with radiation is also not very helpful as the process of building remains the same. Further radiation burns many adjacent vital tissue of the system that may create many other problems. On the other hand, chemotherapy produces hair-loss, extreme nausea, vomiting, fatigue, weakness sterility and damage to the liver, kidneys and heart. The weakness of these vital organs will cause higher production of toxin materials in the body. At this stage, no one knows what should be done? In fact one has to decide oneself.

As said tumors develop due to toxic waste producing in the body system because the natural systems of the body organs such as liver, kidney, bowels, lungs and skin etc. capable of eliminating become less efficient or clogged or in adequate to take care the excess waste being produced. The body starts creating of toxin substances to a weakest place in the form of tumors as the container of these products.

The solution is to change your way of life. A complete change in diet and environment along with improved ways of eliminating waste from the body is needed. We have to see what we eat from years together such as tea, coffee, tobacco, cola, meat, liquor, fried food etc specially are harmful for the accumulation of poisons in such an area. Then the body tries to build garbage (tumor) to hold the waste materials or the cells in that area go wild from irritation, so cancer cell form and spread.

In this modern world, we also live in area where toxic substances are available in the air, water and soil. This makes situation more crucial. Further the vital organs whose jobs are to purify and eliminate wastes become less efficient, the whole system then becomes poisoned. It is thus, living, eating, sleeping coupled with stress weaken the body over the years and sometimes prolonged and negligence of mal functioning organs add the situation more worst to the system. The wholeness situation, therefore, provide the accumulation of poisoned materials around the weakest organs where the body has got injury. Therefore nourishment of the body, increasing the immune system and avoiding excess and debilitating substances enables the body to resist cancerous tumors.

Once the cancer is detected and before acting on it, it is better to facilitate strengthening and defensive mechanisms of the entire system Therefore the sufferer has to understand himself what is required and what must be done? Nobody can help him and he has to make out the entire program himself where to start? As the ultimate decision is yours. He has to follow the natural laws of God and learn to live accordingly. Whether it is followed or not but you should be aware of this fact.

As explained, the diet, environment and immune system appear to be the major causes of disorders. It is to be seen whether the gemstone therapy can play its crucial role in prevention of tumors or extension of one's life? The gemstone therapy is natural and ancient science, which functions with association of colors. The concept of the therapy is based on the planetary system existing in a galaxy. Seven planets in a solar system known as the sun, the moon, the Jupiter, the mercury, the Venus, the Saturn and the mars are emitting their self-rays of different color wavelength in the galaxy. The mixture of seven colors makes the white light that comes to our whole plane of the earth. Each color has specific influence on the human body in behavior and action. The reasons for the influence of rays are due to existence of corresponding planetary system as centers in the body. These centers are interrelated via a central center known center of the Saturn planet. When these centers interred balanced, a human being can have good health.

Any deficiencies or excess of color energy on the centers would cause disorders depending on the kind of center efficiency. It is thus possible to rebalance the centers by providing the outside help. This can be facilitated through the application of gemstones capable of giving the color rays to the specific centers. The gemstone will block all the colors except to allow passing the designated color as per employed gemstones.

Selection of stones is a difficult task for which the theory of colors in relation to planetary system is essential that would provide the possible cause of disorders. The specific stones then can be chosen and these are to be borne on the specific locations.

Having considered this concept and the cause of tumor formation, the author performed various experiments in limited way to examine the possibility of control of tumors through the gemstone therapy. In the treatments of tumors, two methodology simultaneously were applied: - to isolate the existing tumors for prevention against growing further and secondly, to improve the immune system of the body with respect to improvement in essential organs for better functioning to get rid over the production of toxin materials in the body. Isolation of tumors was done through the help of blue stone and white artificial diamond while the task for the improved immune system was taken up with the help of several stones. It was interesting to observe that unexamined tumors (no cutting of a slice piece from the tumor) were restored to normal conditions. The time schedule for the recovery varied from 6 to 36 months depending on the type and size of tumors. These were in stomach, breast, brain, and uterus. However in these cases, the patients were advised to have a regular monitoring for any further growth. If growth is visible, then they were advised to get the opinion of doctors for further course of action.

The cases of reoccurrence of cancerous tumors, which are in far-advanced stages with poor chance of recovery, were treated through gemstone therapy. Limited success has achieved. Initial study shows that the gemstone therapy is quite helpful in getting rid of tumors particular during initial development stages and this application coupled with regular medical check up for monitoring would be better choice.

V.K.JAIN
Dehradun, India

[\[Back to top\]](#)

A Note from Prasad Golla on Gemstone Therapy

My initial reluctance to publish this article in the NTS newsletter was because its publication might unwittingly provide legitimacy and validity to these pseudo-scientific claims. As is the wont of quacks any publication (even negative ones) will suit their needs. Mr. Jain apparently for the purpose of legitimacy, listed a lot of medical information about tumors. This information can be found in readily available medical books and journals (or even the Internet).

The first question that is to be asked is "What makes Gems medically valuable?" As far as I know, there is nothing that is scientifically explained to date of their medicinal value (they could as well be dust). Gems' chemical composition and structure can be stated as follows [1]:

A gemstone may be a pure chemical element (diamond is essentially pure carbon), a relatively simple chemical compound (quartz is silicon dioxide, SiO₂), or a more complex mixture of various compounds and elements (the garnet family includes a highly variable mix of iron, magnesium, aluminum, and calcium silicates). The great majority of familiar gem materials are oxides or silicates (i.e., they contain oxygen and perhaps silicon) and formed as crystals during the cooling of the earth's crust over past millennia.

Gemstones may be formed in single or multiple discrete crystals (such as diamond), in massive collections of microscopic crystals (cryptocrystalline) (such as chalcedony), or in amorphous (non-crystalline) masses (such as opal). In general, larger crystals were formed in areas of slow cooling of molten rock, and smaller crystals in areas of more rapid cooling. There are several classes of crystal structure based on symmetry of the resulting crystals, and there are also noncrystalline (amorphous) minerals used as gem materials. In addition, there are some organic materials (such as shell and bone) that have been used traditionally as gem materials.

In essence the only unique thing about gems compared to the other metals and compounds is their structure. And as such there is no evidence that their structure gives them any additional or otherwise extraordinary powers so as to effect living tissues or humans. Neither is there any scientific evidence that the structure of these elements (diamonds) and compounds (gems) radiate or influence anything extraordinary.

Mr. Jain seems to know neither that metal reduces the effects of gemstones nor that an "alternate" explanation for gemstone therapy is also available (I am sure you could find alternate explanations from the other therapists) [2]:

Gemstone therapy is an alternative technique for strengthening the body and resolving issues and patterns. The theory is that gemstones carry vibrational rates. By placing these vibrational rates within the aura - your aura's vibrational rates also change. Often the effects are indirect but very potent. Other times, the effects are very direct and repeatable. The easiest way to do gemstone therapy is to wear high quality round beads around the neck. Intention strengthens the process but is not necessary. Metal inhibits the process. If metal surrounds the gemstone, its affects are often greatly reduced (and sometimes eliminated).

A worthy point to note is the ubiquitous nature of these elements and compounds around us in extremely high quantities all through our existence. Starting from your spectacles, to the watch you might probably be wearing or your silicon breast implants (if you are one of those daring types) these elements and compounds are all around you, not to mention that living tissues are made of these. If you are still on earth, as you are reading this, you might be on a lot (I mean a lot) of Silica. The only difference, possibly, between the material around you and the gems is their chemical structure.

The technique of color compensation that cures the tumors that Mr. Jain explains is achieved by compensating the self-rays of the "planets". For this to be true you have to first "believe" astrology. First of all, there are more than seven planets in the solar system. Sun and the Moon are wrongly listed as planets. And none of these "planets" have self-rays (or 'sight' as they call in astrology).

Besides, we have no indication that colors radiating from anywhere make a direct influence on our organs or us. Especially the color of a small gem, which we wear it, would have insignificant influence on us compared to our color-rich surroundings. The interaction or compensation of the color of the gem and the self-rays has no scientific basis. Any evidence of which would be well deserving of a Noble prize of the finder. Such a theory would effectively setback years of my optical engineering training and most of the optical startup companies have to modify their business plans.

Though I agree that a proper hygiene is essential to ward off unwanted diseases, an idea of abiding to natural laws of God to strengthen the purifying capability of our vital organs is ambiguous to me. Since I am not aware of these laws. And besides the arguments for the cause, the effect, and the symptoms are so confusingly intermixed by Mr. Jain that I cannot make head or tails of them.

Having lost a very dear grandmother (I used to mistakenly call her 'mother') to a tumor this issue strikes close to my heart. Mr. Jain concedes that limited success was achieved (using gemstone therapy). Don't let dear relatives grieve for someone lost to ailments that have a traditional cure (a possible surgery). In case of my grandmother, her tumor was so advanced that even surgery couldn't save her. Tumors are possibly some of the most dangerous ailments we can ever have. Don't look for "alternative" treatments. The only people benefiting from the gemstone treatment are the people

who are selling the gemstones.

— Prasad Golla

References

[1] <http://www.tradeshop.com/gems/classify.html>

[2] <http://www.gems4friends.com/therapy.html>

[[Back to top](#)]

Skeptical Ink

By Prasad Golla and John Blanton

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[[Back to top](#)]