in Part III that will prove valuable not only to students and teachers, but also to those who use the Psalter for preaching. Especially noteworthy is the exposition of Ps 73, which offers an abundance of literary, theological, and homiletical insights. Each of the four expositions displays remarkable theological and homiletical insight and evidences the work of a skilled exegete. Crenshaw has selected his four Psalms well, as each one reflects a specific concern. He demonstrates how they tackle, respectively, the perennial questions of theodicy, the true essence of worship, the problem of aging, and encounter with the holy.

If there is any major weakness in this book, perhaps it concerns its length. As good as the book is, exposition of a few more Psalms would enhance its value. I can only hope that an accompanying volume will be forthcoming.

I cannot help but notice Crenshaw's evident reticence to grant authorship to the Psalms as stated in their superscriptions. He appears to hold the commonly accepted position that reinterprets the superscriptions as designations of collections rather than authorship. Such labels could carry several connotations, but that they indicate authorship cannot be simply written off. While Crenshaw does not entirely dismiss this idea, neither does he adequately explain his approach. Another issue I have with the book is the sudden and unexplained attribution of feminine authorship to Ps 24. I find this somewhat puzzling since nowhere does Crenshaw shed any light on this choice. Is it simply a question of political correctness, or does he possess some deeper but unexplained knowledge that would be of great interest to his readers?

In spite of my reservations regarding a few relatively minor issues, I find this book to be an excellent introduction to the Psalter and would strongly recommend its use for teaching and pastoral professionals.

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Dembski, William A. *No Free Lunch: Why Specified Complexity Cannot Be Purchased without Intelligence.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002. xxv + 404 pp. Hardcover, $35.00.

A mathematician and a philosopher, William A. Dembski is a leading proponent of intelligent design. In his earlier work, *The Design Inference: Eliminating Chance through Small Probabilities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Dembski argued that specified complexity reveals intelligence. However, his critics have claimed that evolutionary algorithms can convey specified complexity apart from intelligence. In answering this criticism, *No Free Lunch* proves the inadequacy of any naturalistic apparatus, in particular the Darwinian mechanism, to generate specified complexity.

According to Dembski, science unjustifiably eliminated design as an acceptable mode of explanation and gave exclusive rights to chance and necessity. He shows that design is empirically detectable if two features are present: complexity and specification. Thus the concept of specified complexity is used as a criterion for detecting design empirically. Against his critics, Dembski defends specified complexity as a well-defined, detectable, and testable concept.

In order to assess the Darwinian mechanism, Dembski translates intelligent design into an information-theoretic framework. In the theory of information, specified complexity is redefined as complex specified information. He presents a rigorous case for the law of conservation of information, which may lead to new scientific discoveries. Dembski proposes a "fourth law of thermodynamics" dealing directly with the conservation of complex specified information. He refers to those theorists who "hope to find in the fourth law an answer to how complex systems—especially biological systems—organize themselves and evolve"(167-168). However, "none of the formulations of the fourth law to date propose a naturalistic mechanism for generating order and complexity"(168).

The book received its title from a set of mathematical theorems elaborated in the past five years in the domain of evolutionary algorithms. Consistent with *No Free Lunch* theorems, evolutionary algorithms displace the problem of generating specified complexity but do not solve it. The displacement from the original-phase space to an information-resource space increases exponentially the complexity of the problem. In this way, the *No Free Lunch* theorems point out the insufficiency of evolutionary algorithms to account for all biological complexities. These theorems "show that evolutionary algorithms, apart from careful fine-tuning by a programmer, are no better than blind search and thus no better than pure chance" (212), and consequently "we are no longer entitled to think that the Darwinian mechanism can offer biological complexity as a free lunch" (213).

Following this fundamental result, Dembski proceeds to show how to identify specified complexity in a physical system. He insists that the concept of irreducible complexity as used by Michael Behe in biology is a special case of specified complexity. Dembski not only suggests that the use of probabilistic calculations may establish specified complexity in practice, but in his final chapter he confidently begins tracing the framework of a new scientific research program which readmits design to a full scientific status. He is confident that intelligent design conceptually encompasses more powerful tools for investigating nature than does Darwinism.

Dembski's book is the first part of a research project sponsored by the Templeton Foundation, while a follow-up volume intends to explore the metaphysics of information. The study is based on an impressive research, as shown by the endnotes of each chapter. However, the core of the book reveals the original thinking of the author, informed by the extensive ongoing dialogue he pursues with representative thinkers and scientists. In this way, Dembski is situated on the front line of cutting-edge scientific exploration.

Dembski's line of reasoning clearly and logically pursues what he proposes in the introduction of the book. The strength of his argumentation evidently results from his methodology. It seems that for the first time Dembski found in information theory the necessary tool to objectively and commensurably compare the conflicting claims of evolutionary biology and intelligent design. Applying the results of advanced mathematics to a neo-Darwinian naturalistic mechanism is a very provocative and highly revolutionary move.

No Free Lunch is addressed to everyone interested in studying the dialogue between Darwinism and intelligent design. The book has some highly technical

chapters with interesting mathematical demonstrations. However, the frustration of math phobics in not being able to enjoy the savor of mathematical discussions will be fully compensated by the clear explanations and applications in selected chapters recommended by the author in the introduction of the book. The valid philosophical arguments and historical examples make the study really agreeable to a large audience.

Is there any theological value in the book? At the beginning, the author states that "it is not my aim to force a religious doctrine of creation upon science" (3). Even the references to God are minimal in the study. However, those contemporary theologians who are in a large measure influenced by scientific theories and who have manifested an easy willingness to incorporate scientific claims in their theological edifice need to take a careful look at the on-going dialogue between naturalists and advocates of intelligent design. When Dembski considers that a paradigm shift is necessary in conceptual science, theologians may take it as a warning to not ground their work on a shifting base. The need is not for a new compass reading according to the wind trajectories of cutting-edge scientific dialogue, but a new look at the old Scriptures that are able to provide a more solid ground for an enduring theological understanding.

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Dundes, Allan. *Holy Writ as Oral Lit: The Bible as Folklore*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999. xii + 129 pp. Paper, $15.90.

Can one consider the Bible as folklore and still revere it as "holy"writ? This is the question Allan Dundes, Professor of Folklore at the University of California, Berkeley and one of the world's leading folklorists, attempts to answer in his well-researched and fascinating book.

In his Acknowledgment, Dundes claims: "This book combines a lifelong love of the Bible with a career in the study of folklore." In the Conclusion, he reiterates his main thesis: "1. Folklore is characterized by multiple existence and variation. 2. The Bible is permeated by multiple existence and variation. 3. The Bible is folklore." He underlines his conviction that the Bible indeed is folklore by assuring the reader of his belief that "Jesus would have understood my arguments."

In spite of all these assurances the question remains, can anyone who takes the Bible to be the infallible Word of God go along with calling the "Book of Books" "folklore"? The answer, of course, lies primarily in definitions of folklore, oral literature, and written folklore. Isn't the term "oral literature" an oxymoron? What happens when folklore is written down? Does it retain flexibility to be molded by its environment? Does labeling the Bible "folklore" say anything about its truth value? Didn't God write the Ten Commandments with his own hand? Dundes grapples with these questions.

In his discussion "What is Folklore?" Dundes puts to death the phrase "that's just folklore" by contending that folklore "is not synonymous with error or fallacy." In this context he develops his thesis about the nature of folklore and the biblical accounts, contending that all genres of folklore, whether oral or written, "are characteristic of multiple existence and variation which may be reflected in