

Darwin's Secret Sex Problem, F. Lagard Smith

I recently read this book and found it to have merit. Smith's basic idea is that it is impossible to transition from asexual reproduction to sexual reproduction by incremental changes and natural selection. In asexual reproduction, mitosis exactly copies the chromosomal structure for each succeeding generation. In sexual reproduction both the male and the female go through a process of meiosis where the chromosomes are halved and then recombined in the sperm fertilizing the egg process. The problem that Smith notes is that this is impossible to produce by incremental changes. How do you incrementally change from asexual to a male and female by small changes selected gradually over a long period of time. The changes would not even be beneficial until they were accumulated to the point where there was a fully developed male and female, fully developed sexual organs, and the meiosis process where the chromosome number is halved.

It seems to me that Smith has correctly identified a major flaw in the Darwinian model. And he argues his point competently. On the other hand, the book in my judgment is rather tedious and repetitive. His point almost gets lost among the trees. And there is some semi technical information that is at times hard to assimilate. Nevertheless, I believe the book is worth reading and that the thesis would be hard to refute.