

## Supporting Information

### Pd-Catalyzed C-H Activation in Water: Synthesis of Bis(Indolyl)methanes from Indoles and Benzyl Alcohols

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**General procedure:** A mixture of indole **1** (0.5 mmol), palladium(II) acetate (6 mg, 0.025 mmol), sodium diphenylphosphinobenzene-3-sulfonate (TPPMS, 18 mg, 0.05 mmol) and benzyl alcohol **2** (1.5 mmol) in H<sub>2</sub>O (2 mL) was heated at 60 °C for 16 h in a sealed tube. After cooling, the reaction mixture was poured into water and extracted with EtOAc. The organic layer was washed with brine, dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated in vacuo. The residue was purified by flash column chromatography (silica gel, hexanes/EtOAc) to give desired product **3**.

**Bis(5-methoxyindol-3-yl)(phenyl)methane **3a**<sup>1</sup>**

Following the general procedure, **3a** was obtained as a white solid. 77 mg (81%); mp 213-216 °C; IR (KBr) (cm<sup>-1</sup>) 3392, 3319; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 3.69 (s, 6H), 5.77 (s, 1H), 6.66 (dd, *J*=4.0, 2.0 Hz, 2H), 6.78-6.84 (m, 4H), 7.18-7.30 (m, 5H), 7.33-7.37 (m, 2H), 7.81 (brs, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>): δ 40.3, 55.8, 102.0, 111.7, 111.9, 119.3, 124.4, 126.1, 127.5, 128.2, 128.7, 131.9, 143.9, 153.7; MS (EI): *m/z* (%) 382 (M<sup>+</sup>, 100).

**Bis(5-methoxyindol-3-yl)(4-methylphenyl)methane **3b**<sup>2</sup>**

Following the general procedure, **3b** was obtained as a pale yellow solid. 59 mg (60%); mp 202-204 °C; IR (KBr) (cm<sup>-1</sup>) 3348; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 2.32 (s, 3H), 3.69 (s, 6H), 5.73 (s, 1H), 6.66 (s, 2H), 6.80 (m, 4H), 7.08 (d, *J*=8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.20-7.25 (m, 4H), 7.80 (brs, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ ; 21.1, 39.9, 55.9, 102.0, 111.6, 111.8, 119.5, 124.4, 127.5, 128.6, 128.9, 131.9, 135.4, 140.9, 153.7; MS (EI): *m/z* (%) 396 (M<sup>+</sup>, 100).

**Bis(5-methoxyindol-3-yl)(4-ethylphenyl)methane **3c****

Following the general procedure, **3c** was obtained as a white solid. 100 mg (97%); mp 180-182 °C; IR (KBr) (cm<sup>-1</sup>) 3402; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 1.21 (t, *J*=8.0 Hz, 3H), 2.62 (q, *J*=8.0 Hz, 2H), 3.68 (s, 6H), 5.73 (s, 1H), 6.66 (d, *J*=4.0 Hz, 2H), 6.78-6.84 (m, 4H), 7.10 (d, *J*=8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.20-7.28 (m, 4H), 7.79 (brs, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 15.6, 28.5, 39.9, 55.8, 102.0, 111.6, 111.8, 119.6, 124.4, 127.6, 127.7, 128.6, 131.9, 141.1, 141.9, 153.7; MS (EI): *m/z* (%) 410 (M<sup>+</sup>, 100). Anal. Calcd for C<sub>27</sub>H<sub>26</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>: C, 79.00; H, 6.38; N, 6.82. Found: C, 78.83; H, 6.43; N, 6.71.

**Bis(5-methoxyindol-3-yl)(4-methoxyphenyl)methane **3d**<sup>3</sup>**

Following the general procedure, **3d** was obtained as an off-white solid. 67 mg (65%); mp 186-188 °C; IR (KBr) (cm<sup>-1</sup>) 3332; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>): δ 3.59 (s, 6H), 3.71 (s, 3H), 5.68 (s, 1H), 6.65-7.00 (m, 8H), 7.20-7.30 (m, 4H), 10.6 (brs, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>): δ 54.9, 55.2, 101.5, 110.4, 111.9, 113.3, 118.0, 124.2, 127.0, 129.2, 131.8, 137.0, 152.6, 157.3; MS (EI): *m/z* (%) 412 (M<sup>+</sup>, 100).

### Bis(5-methoxyindol-3-yl)(3-methylphenyl)methane **3e**

Following the general procedure, **3e** was obtained as a white solid. 93 mg (94%); mp 193-195 °C; IR (KBr) ( $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) 3394;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  2.29 (s, 3H), 3.69 (s, 6H), 5.72 (s, 1H), 6.66 (dd,  $J=2.0, 0.4$  Hz, 2H), 6.80-6.84 (m, 4H), 7.01 (t,  $J=6.8$  Hz, 1H), 7.10-7.20 (m, 3H), 7.20-7.26 (m, 2H), 7.80 (brs, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  21.5, 40.2, 55.9, 102.0, 111.6, 111.8, 119.4, 124.4, 125.7, 126.9, 127.6, 128.1, 129.4, 131.9, 137.6, 143.8, 153.7; MS (EI):  $m/z$  (%) 396 ( $\text{M}^+$ , 100); HRMS-EI:  $m/z$  ( $\text{M}^+$ ) calcd for  $\text{C}_{26}\text{H}_{24}\text{N}_2\text{O}_2$  396.1838, found 396.1837.

### Bis(5-methoxyindol-3-yl)(4-fluorophenyl)methane **3f**<sup>4</sup>

Following the general procedure, **3f** was obtained as a pale yellow solid. 73 mg (73%); mp 145-147 °C; IR (KBr) ( $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) 3461, 3405;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  3.69 (s, 6H), 5.75 (s, 1H), 6.63 (d,  $J=2.0$  Hz, 2H), 6.77 (d,  $J=4.0$  Hz, 2H), 6.84 (dd,  $J=8.0, 4.0$  Hz, 2H), 6.96 (t,  $J=8.0$  Hz, 2H), 7.20-7.35 (m, 2H), 7.83 (brs, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  39.5, 55.9, 101.9, 111.7, 112.0, 114.8, 115.1, 119.1, 124.4, 127.4, 130.0, 130.1, 131.9, 139.6, 139.6, 153.8, 160.2, 162.6; MS (EI):  $m/z$  (%) 400 ( $\text{M}^+$ , 100).

### Bis(5-methoxyindol-3-yl)(2-methylphenyl)methane **3g**

Following the general procedure, **3g** was obtained as a white solid. 86 mg (87%); mp 177-179 °C; IR (KBr) ( $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) 3419;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  2.38 (s, 3H), 3.69 (s, 6H), 5.89 (s, 1H), 6.57 (d,  $J=2.0$  Hz, 2H), 6.76 (d,  $J=2.4$  Hz, 2H), 6.83 (dd,  $J=8.8, 2.4$  Hz, 2H), 7.00-7.15 (m, 3H), 7.15-7.25 (m, 3H), 7.79 (brs, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  19.6, 36.4, 55.9, 102.0, 111.6, 111.7, 118.7, 124.7, 125.8, 126.1, 127.6, 128.4, 130.2, 131.9, 136.0, 141.9, 153.7; MS (EI):  $m/z$  (%) 396 ( $\text{M}^+$ , 100); Anal. Calcd for  $\text{C}_{26}\text{H}_{24}\text{N}_2\text{O}_2$ : C, 78.76; H, 6.10; N, 7.07. Found: C, 78.49; H, 6.11; N, 6.83.

### Bis(5-methoxyindol-3-yl)(2-thienyl)methane **3h**

Following the general procedure, **3h** was obtained as an off-white solid. 54 mg (56%); mp 190-192 °C; IR (KBr) ( $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) 3390, 3325;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  3.71 (s, 6H), 6.05 (s, 1H), 6.80-6.86 (m, 4H), 6.88 (d,  $J=2.4$  Hz, 2H), 6.90-6.95 (m, 2H), 7.15 (dd,  $J=4.4, 1.6$  Hz, 1H), 7.24 (dd,  $J=8.4, 0.4$  Hz, 2H), 7.84 (brs, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  35.4, 55.9, 101.8, 111.8, 112.0, 119.3, 123.6, 124.0, 125.2, 126.4, 127.2, 131.8, 148.6, 153.8; MS (EI):  $m/z$  (%) 388 ( $\text{M}^+$ , 100); Anal. Calcd for  $\text{C}_{23}\text{H}_{20}\text{N}_2\text{O}_2\text{S}$ : C, 71.11; H, 5.19; N, 7.21. Found: C, 70.76; H, 5.09; N, 6.98.

### Bis(indol-3-yl)(phenyl)methane **3i**<sup>5</sup>

Following the general procedure, **3i** was obtained as a brown solid. 47 mg (58%); mp 141-143 °C; IR (KBr) ( $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) 3398;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  5.87 (s, 1H), 6.59 (s, 2H), 6.99 (dd,  $J=8.0, 8.0$  Hz, 2H), 7.15 (dd,  $J=8.0, 8.0$  Hz, 2H), 7.18-7.40 (m, 9H), 7.78 (brs, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  40.2, 111.0, 119.2, 119.7, 119.9, 121.9, 123.6, 126.1, 127.1, 128.2, 128.7, 136.7, 144.0; MS (EI):  $m/z$  (%) 322

(M<sup>+</sup>, 100).

### Bis(5-methylindol-3-yl)(phenyl)methane 3j<sup>6</sup>

Following the general procedure, **3j** was obtained as a brown solid. 65 mg (74%); mp 183-185 °C; IR (KBr) (cm<sup>-1</sup>) 3422; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 2.34 (s, 6H), 5.82 (s, 1H), 6.57 (d, J=4.0 Hz, 2H), 6.99 (d, J=8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.15-7.40 (m, 9H), 7.79 (brs, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 21.5, 40.0, 110.7, 119.3, 119.5, 123.5, 123.9, 126.0, 127.3, 128.2, 128.4, 128.7, 135.0, 144.2; MS (EI): m/z (%) 350 (M<sup>+</sup>, 100).

### Bis(5-fluoroindol-3-yl)(phenyl)methane 3k

Following the general procedure, **3k** was obtained as an off-white solid. 50 mg (56%); mp 169-171 °C; IR (KBr) (cm<sup>-1</sup>) 3465, 3424; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 5.73 (s, 1H), 6.72 (s, 2H), 6.90 (td, J=9.2, 2.4 Hz, 2H), 6.98 (dd, J=9.2, 2.4 Hz, 2H), 7.20-7.35 (m, 7H), 7.93 (brs, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 40.2, 104.7, 104.9, 110.3, 110.5, 111.6, 111.7, 119.5, 119.5, 125.2, 126.4, 127.3, 127.4, 128.4, 128.6, 133.2, 143.2, 156.4, 158.7; MS (EI): m/z (%) 358 (M<sup>+</sup>, 100); HRMS-EI: m/z (M<sup>+</sup>) calcd for C<sub>23</sub>H<sub>16</sub>F<sub>2</sub>N<sub>2</sub> 358.1282, found 358.1283.

### Bis(5-cyanoindol-3-yl)(phenyl)methane 3l<sup>7</sup>

Following the general procedure, **3l** was obtained as an off-white solid. 84 mg (90%); mp 246-249 °C; IR (KBr) (cm<sup>-1</sup>) 3319, 2220; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 5.84 (s, 1H), 6.81 (s, 2H), 7.25-7.35 (m, 5H), 7.40-7.45 (m, 4H), 7.67 (s, 2H), 8.34 (brs, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 40.0, 102.7, 112.2, 119.9, 120.7, 125.2, 125.5, 126.6, 127.0, 128.4, 128.7, 138.4, 142.2; MS (EI): m/z (%) 372 (M<sup>+</sup>, 100).

### Bis(5-carbomethoxyindol-3-yl)(phenyl)methane 3m

Following the general procedure, **3l** was obtained as an off-white solid. 92 mg (84%); mp 226-228 °C; IR (KBr) (cm<sup>-1</sup>) 3325, 1689; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>): δ 3.76 (s, 6H), 6.02 (s, 1H), 6.88 (s, 2H), 7.21 (dd, J=7.2, 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.30 (dd, J=7.6, 7.6 Hz, 2H), 7.35 (d, J=7.2 Hz, 2H), 7.45 (d, J=8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.70 (dd, J=8.4, 1.2 Hz, 2H), 8.02 (s, 2H), 11.3 (brs, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>): δ 51.6, 111.5, 119.4, 119.8, 121.7, 122.1, 125.6, 126.1, 126.1, 128.2, 139.3, 144.2, 167.2; MS (EI): m/z (%) 438 (M<sup>+</sup>, 100); HRMS-EI: m/z (M<sup>+</sup>) calcd for C<sub>27</sub>H<sub>22</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub> 438.1580, found 438.1579.

### Bis(2-methylindol-3-yl)(phenyl)methane 3n<sup>5</sup>

Following the general procedure, **3l** was obtained as a brown solid. 86 mg (98%); mp 251-254 °C; IR (KBr) (cm<sup>-1</sup>) 3395; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 2.06 (s, 6H), 6.00 (s, 1H), 6.85 (dd, J=8.0, 8.0 Hz, 2H), 6.97 (d, J=8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.03 (dd, J=8.0, 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.20-7.30 (m, 7H), 7.73 (brs, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100

MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 12.4, 39.3, 109.9, 113.4, 119.1, 119.3, 120.6, 126.0, 128.1, 129.0, 129.1, 131.8, 135.0, 143.7; MS (EI): *m/z* (%) 350 (M<sup>+</sup>, 98.8), 130 (100).

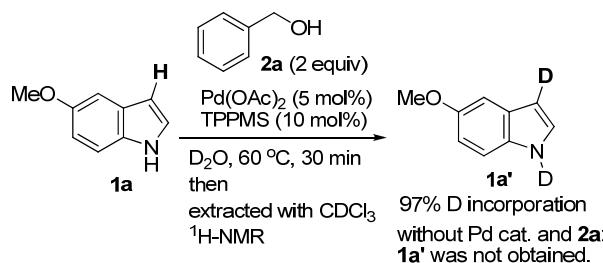
**Bis(1-methylindol-3-yl)(phenyl)methane 3o<sup>5</sup>**

Following the general procedure, **3l** was obtained as an off-white solid. 64 mg (73%); mp 199-201 °C; IR (KBr) (cm<sup>-1</sup>) 1473; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 3.66 (s, 6H), 5.88 (s, 1H), 6.52 (s, 2H), 6.98 (dd, *J*=8.0, 6.0 Hz, 2H), 7.16-7.30 (m, 7H), 7.32-7.40 (m, 4H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 32.7, 40.1, 190.0, 118.2, 118.6, 120.0, 121.4, 126.0, 127.4, 128.2, 128.2, 128.7, 137.4, 144.4; MS (EI): *m/z* (%) 350 (M<sup>+</sup>, 100).

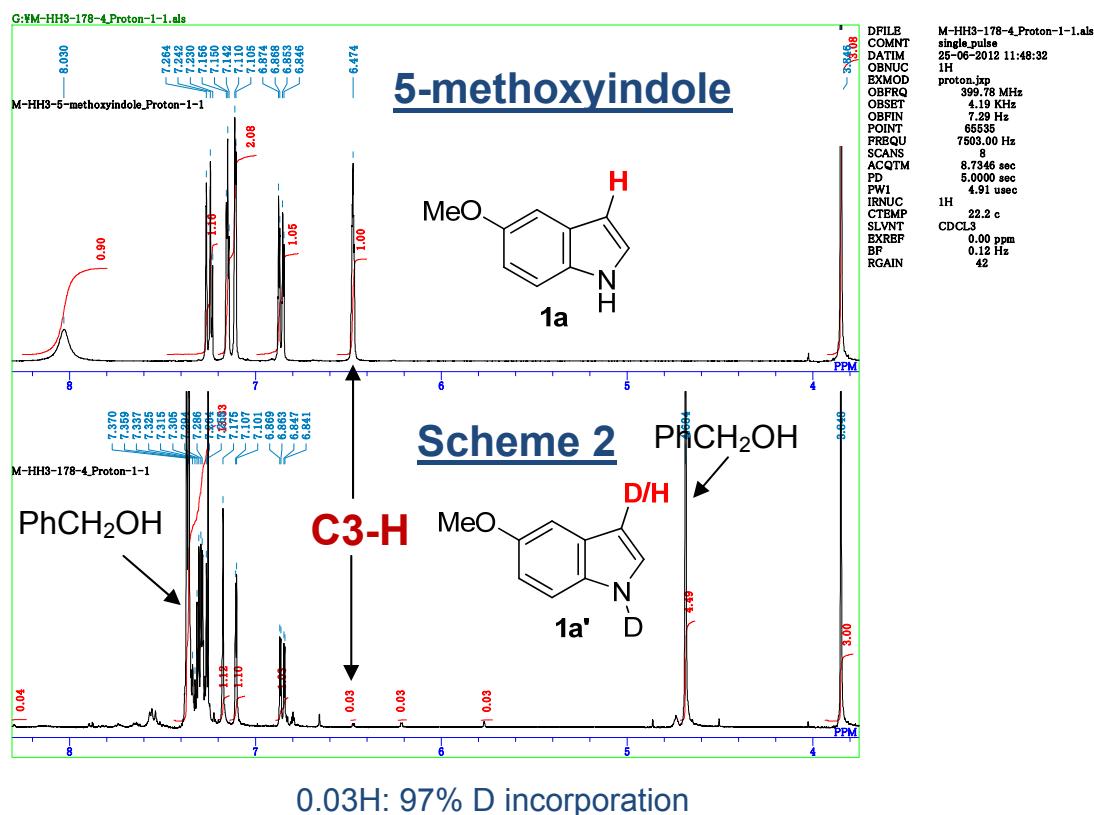
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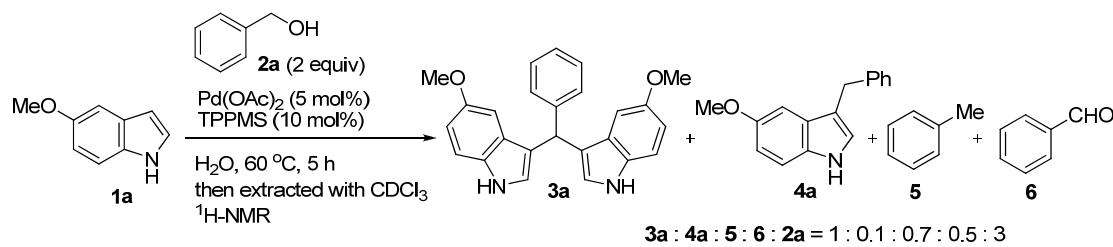
**Scheme 2. C-H bond Activation at the C3-position of indole 1a.<sup>a</sup>**



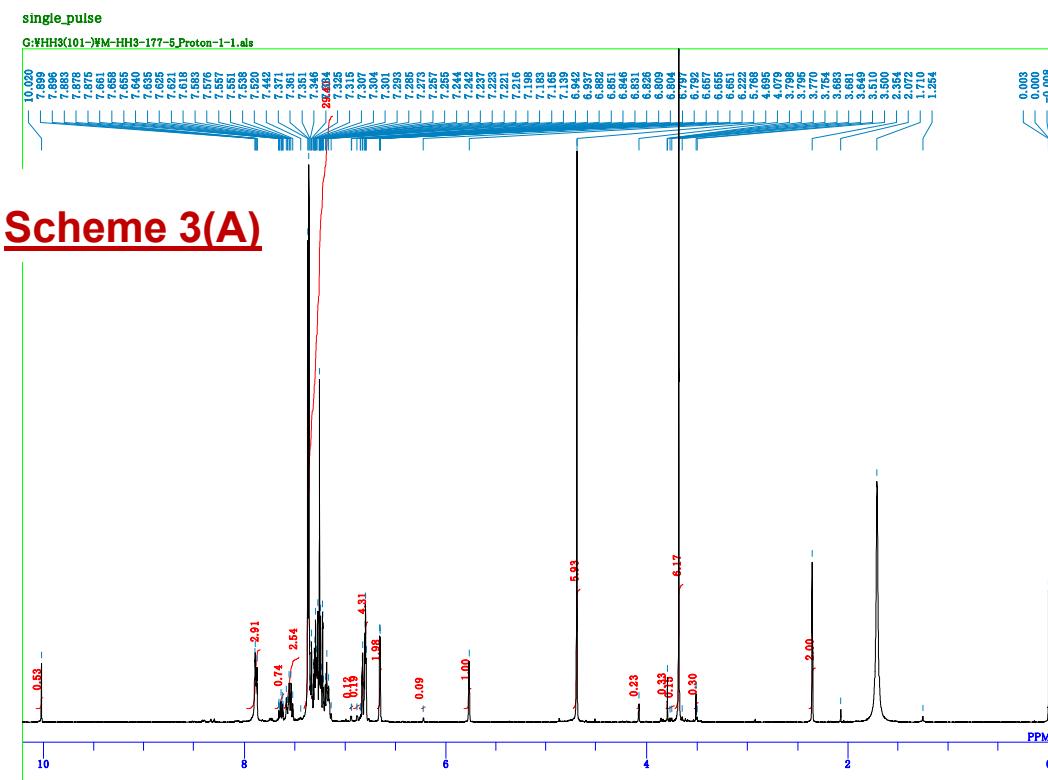
A mixture of **1a** (37 mg, 0.25 mmol), palladium(II) acetate (3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), sodium diphenylphosphinobenzene-3-sulfonate (TPPMS, 9 mg, 0.025 mmol) and benzyl alcohol **2a** (54 mg, 0.5 mmol) in D<sub>2</sub>O (0.75 mL) was heated at 60 °C for 30 min in a sealed tube. After cooling, the reaction mixture was extracted with CDCl<sub>3</sub> (8 mL), then the organic layer was analyzed by <sup>1</sup>H-NMR spectroscopy.



**Scheme 3 (A).**  $^1\text{H}$  NMR experiments to monitor the reaction.

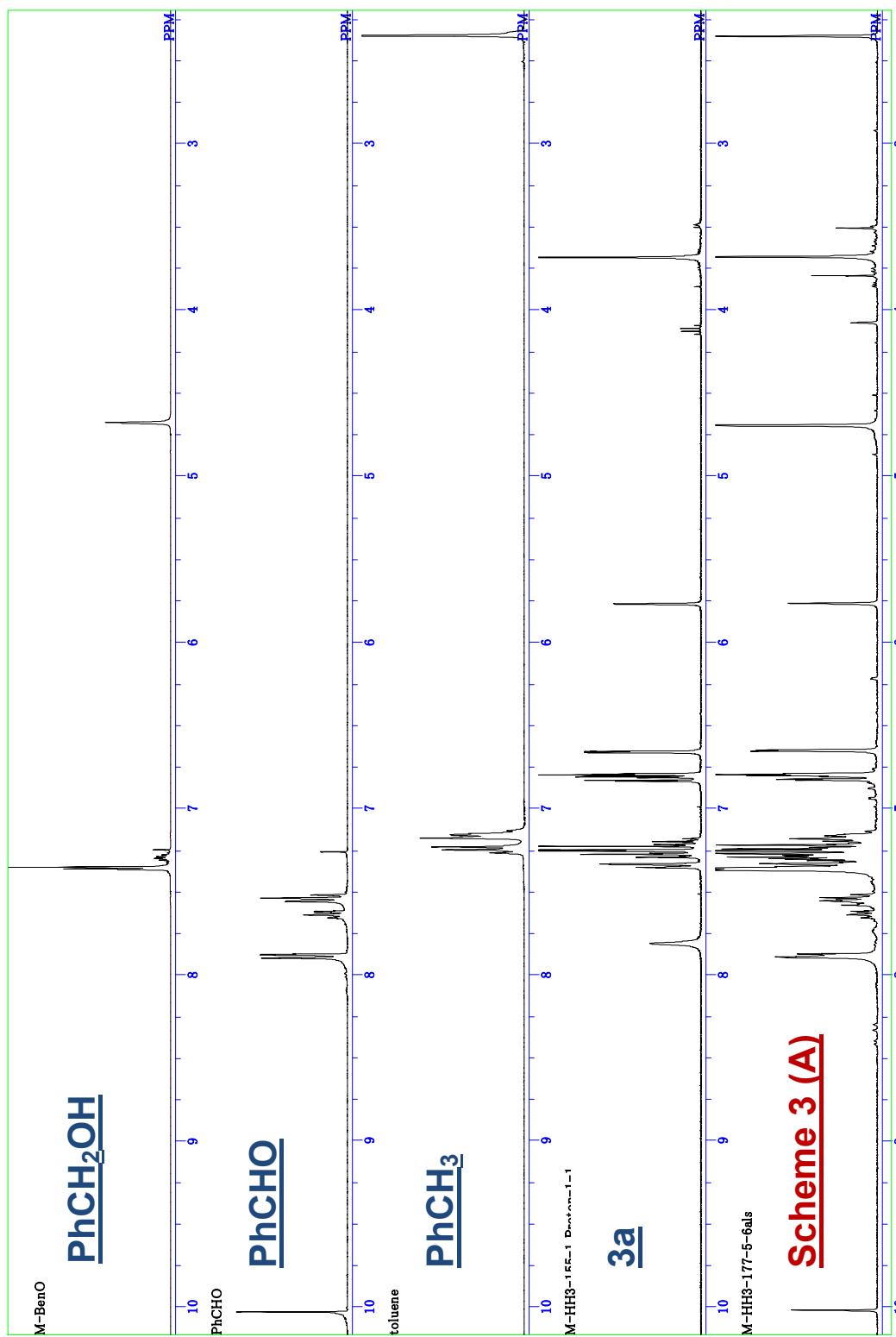


A mixture of **1a** (74 mg, 0.5 mmol), palladium(II) acetate (6 mg, 0.025 mmol), sodium diphenylphosphinobenzene-3-sulfonate (TPPMS, 18 mg, 0.05 mmol) and benzyl alcohol **2a** (108 mg, 1.0 mmol) in  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (2 mL) was heated at 60 °C for 5 h in a sealed tube. After cooling, the reaction mixture was extracted with  $\text{CDCl}_3$  (8 mL), then the organic layer was analyzed by  $^1\text{H}$ -NMR spectroscopy.



Product ratio was determined by integration.

	desired <b>3a</b>	3-benzylated <b>4a</b>	toluene <b>5</b>	benzaldehyde <b>6</b>	$\text{PhCH}_2\text{OH}$ <b>2a</b>
Signal $\delta$	5.76 (methine- $\text{H}$ )	3.79 ( $\text{OCH}_3$ )	2.35 ( $\text{CH}_3$ )	10.0 ( $\text{CHO}$ )	4.69 ( $\text{CH}_2$ )
Integral value	1.00 (1H)	0.33 (3H)	2.00 (3H)	0.53 (1H)	5.93 (2H)
Calculated ratio	1	0.1	0.7	0.5	3



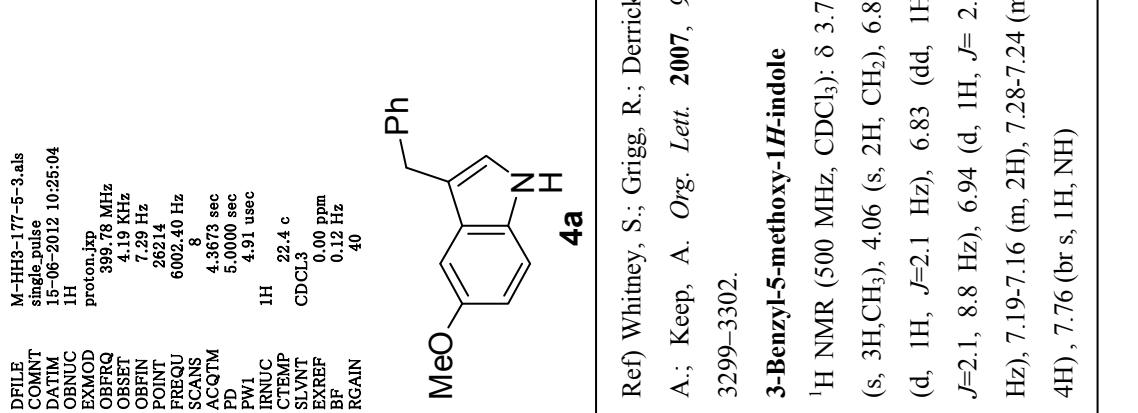
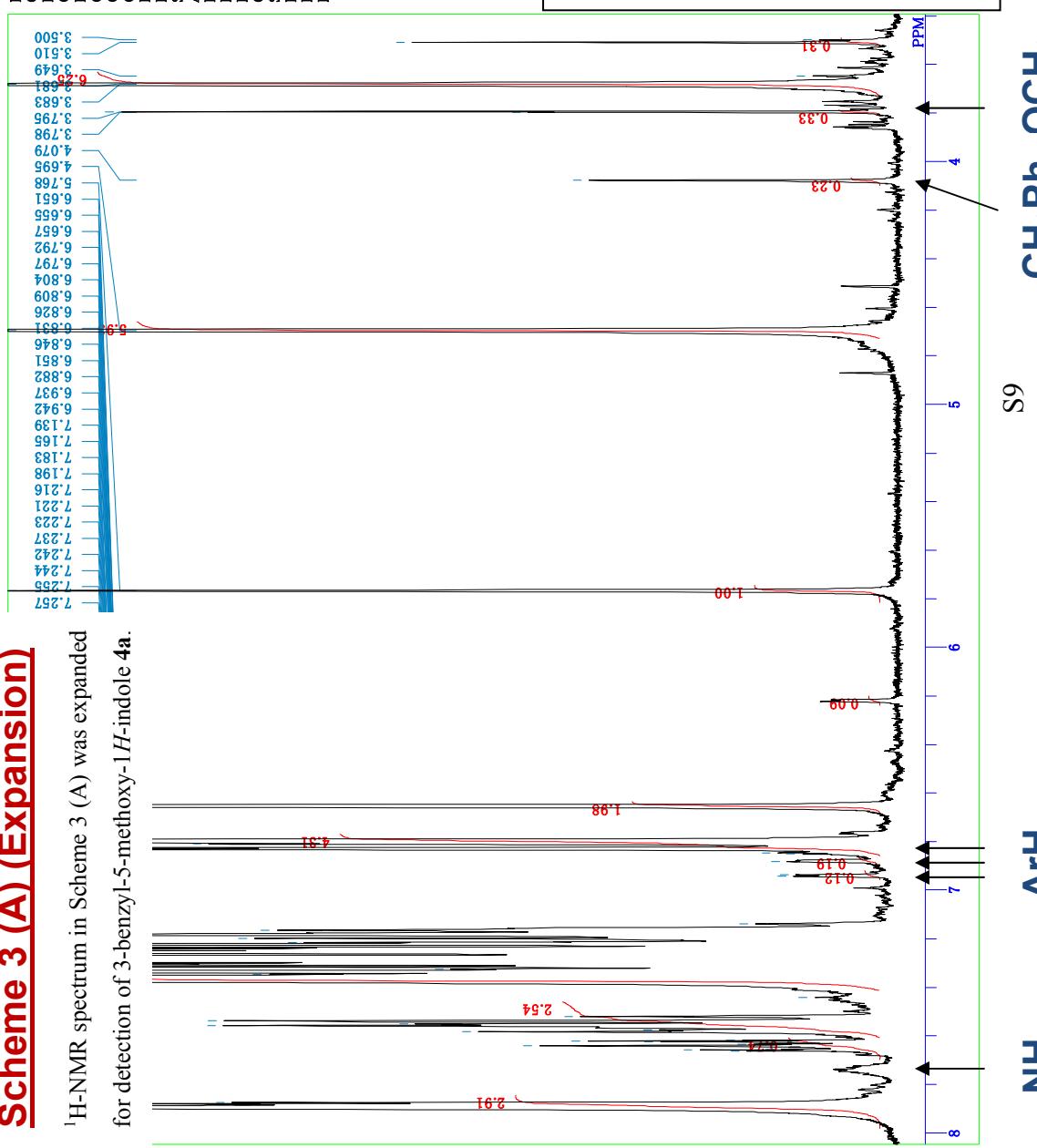
3 (ppm)

S8

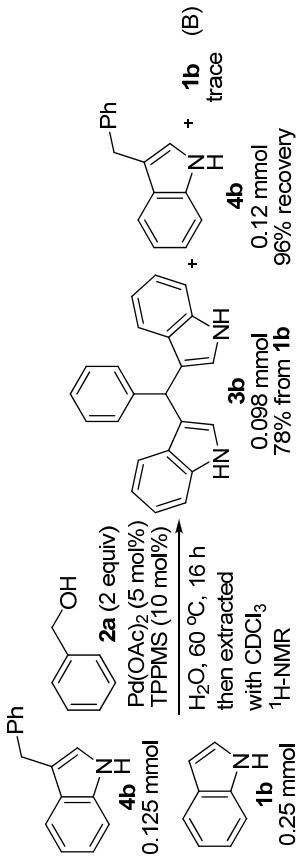
10

### Scheme 3 (A) (Expansion)

<sup>1</sup>H-NMR spectrum in Scheme 3 (A) was expanded for detection of 3-benzyl-5-methoxy-1*H*-indole 4a.



Scheme 3 (B).  $^1\text{H}$  NMR experiments to monitor the reaction.



A mixture of 3-benzylindole (**4b**) (26 mg, 0.125 mmol), **1b** (30 mg, 0.25 mmol), palladium(II) acetate (3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), sodium diphenylphosphinobenzene-3-sulfonate (TPPMS, 9 mg, 0.025 mmol) and benzyl alcohol (**2a**) (77  $\mu\text{L}$ , 0.7 mmol) in  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (2 mL) was heated at 60 °C for 16 h in a sealed tube. After the reaction mixture was cooled, *p*-nitroanisole (19 mg, 0.125 mmol, internal standard) was added to the reaction mixture, which was extracted with  $\text{CDCl}_3$  (10 mL), then the organic layer was analyzed by  $^1\text{H}$ -NMR spectroscopy.

Conversion yield and recovery were calculated by integration.

	desired <b>3b</b>	3-benzylindole <b>4b</b>	<i>p</i> -nitroanisole internal standard
Signal $\delta$	5.89 (methine- $\underline{\text{H}}$ )	4.12 ( $\text{CH}_2$ )	8.21 (Ar- $\underline{\text{H}} \times 2$ )
Integral value	0.78 (1H)	1.92 (2H)	2.0 (2H)
Calculated ratio	0.098 mmol 78% from <b>1b</b>	0.12 mmol 96% recovery	19 mg (0.125 mmol)

