Intelligent Design and the Logos of Creation

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What Is Intelligent Design?

Intelligent design is the study of patterns in nature that are best explained as the product of intelligence.
Example 1: Forensic Science

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Example 2: SETI

Example 3: Archeology
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Example 4: Cosmology
Example 5: Biology

A Kinesin motor protein carries a vesicle along a microtubule.
But Is Design in Biology Real?

- “Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose.”
  —Richard Dawkins

- “Biologists must constantly keep in mind that what they see was not designed, but rather evolved.”
  —Francis Crick

But Is Design in Biology Real?

“The illusion of purpose is so powerful that biologists themselves use the assumption of good design as a working tool.”

--Richard Dawkins (ROOE, 1995, p. 98)
Molecular biologists have themselves needed to introduce the language of high-tech engineering to describe the systems they are seeing:

- information storage, retrieval, and processing (genetic code)
- signal transduction circuitry
- high-efficiency nano-engineered motors
- automated parcel addressing (UPS labels / zip codes)
- transportation, distribution, and communication systems
- complex monitoring, error correction, and feedback mechanisms
- self-replicating robotic manufacture

“Apart from differences in jargon, the pages of a molecular-biology journal might be interchanged with those of a computer-engineering journal.”

--Richard Dawkins (ROOE, 1995, p. 17)
The Genetic Code

DNA (Gene) → mRNA (Gene message) → Protein (Gene product)

The origin of life itself... eh, it's not really my bag. The origin of species is where it's at!
The Cell in Darwin’s Day

The Proto-Cell in Darwin’s Day
Bathybius haeckelii

- animal cell
Cell Phone vs. Laptop Computer

The Collapse of Darwinian Explanations

There are presently no detailed Darwinian accounts of the evolution of any biochemical or cellular system, only a variety of wishful speculations.

– Franklin Harold
The Way of the Cell
(OxfordUP 2001)
The Collapse of Darwinian Explanations

There are no detailed Darwinian accounts for the evolution of any fundamental biochemical or cellular system, only a variety of wishful speculations. It is remarkable that Darwinism is accepted as a satisfactory explanation for such a vast subject — evolution — with so little rigorous examination of how well its basic theses work in illuminating specific instances of biological adaptation or diversity.

– James Shapiro, 1996
Review of DBB

The Collapse of Darwinian Explanations

Anybody who thinks they know the solution to this problem of the origin of life is deluded.

– Leslie Orgel, 2004
The Collapse of Darwinian Explanations

No serious scientist would currently claim that a naturalistic explanation for the origin of life is at hand.

– Francis Collins, 2006

The ID Challenge to Biological Evolution

Premise 1: If unguided evolutionary mechanisms adequately explain biological complexity and diversity, then intelligent design is superfluous.

Premise 2: Unguided evolutionary mechanisms adequately explain biology complexity and diversity.

Conclusion: Therefore, intelligent design is superfluous.
The Received Wisdom

By attributing the diversity of life to natural causes rather than to supernatural creation, Darwin gave biology a sound scientific basis.

— Campbell's BIOLOGY, 5th ed.

The Received Wisdom

He [Darwin] dismissed it [design] not because it was an incorrect scientific explanation, but because it was not a proper scientific explanation at all.

— David Hull
The Received Wisdom

Intelligent design is not science because it cannot be science.

Design Theorist?
Directed Panspermia
Directed Panspermia

Signature in the Cell
Craig Venter

Venter's Synthetic Genomics
Venter’s DNA “Watermarks”

The five coded messages embedded in the first synthetic genome:

VENTERINSTITVTE
CRAIGVENTER
HAMSMITH
CINDIANDCLYDE
GLASSANDCLYDE

--Wired, 28Jan08

How Do We Detect Design?
SETI: The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence

What persuaded the scientists that they had found an extraterrestrial intelligence?

The detection of a highly improbable or complex specified event!
The Explanatory Filter

start

contingency? no

yes

complexity? no

yes

specification? no

yes

design

necessity

chance

chance
"When future intellectual historians list the books that toppled Darwin’s theory, The Design of Life will be at the top."

Michael Behe
Author, Darwin’s Black Box
“Intelligent design is three things: a scientific research program that investigates the effects of intelligent causes; an intellectual movement that challenges Darwinism and its naturalistic legacy; and a way of understanding divine action.”

Evolutionary informatics merges theories of evolution and information, thereby welding the natural, engineering, and mathematical sciences. Evolutionary informatics studies how existing systems incorporate, transform, and export information. The Evolutionary Informatics Laboratory explores the conceptual foundations, mathematical development, and empirical application of evolutionary informatics. The principal theme of the lab’s research is teasing apart the respective roles of internally generated and externally applied information in the performance of evolutionary systems.
Is the Christian God a Designer?

- Short answer: Yes.
- Longer answer: The Christian God is the Creator of all that comes into existence. As such, he is the source of all being. But Scripture also clearly teaches that the Christian God brings order to being. The Christian God is therefore a designer. He is more than a designer, but he is at least a designer.
My Best Known Quote

“Intelligent design is just the Logos theology of John’s Gospel restated in the idiom of information theory.”


John 1:1-3

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
Colossians 1:16-17

By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Barry Lynn on 1997 Firing Line

“‘In the beginning was the word....’ Indeed that word just might turn out literally to have been a command: ‘Evolve!’”
[Identifying the Designer of ID] with ... the Logos of God, an inference supposedly based on special revelation, I hold to be illegitimate. For such an identification would force us to claim that the Logos of God directly attached the flagellum to the first bacterium, that the Second Person of the Trinity explicitly toggled a complex molecule to bring about the first act of self-replication,

and that the Deity immediately altered the architecture of one species, say a tiger, to lead to another conspicuously different species. For each and every one of these hypotheses (when they are not downright preposterous) the scientific evidence is exactly zero, the logic fallacious, and the theological implications grotesque.
Is Intelligent Design Creationism?

No. Creationism always implies a creator God who brings the world into existence and then orders or designs it. Intelligent design, in looking for signs of intelligence in the world, simply tries to understand an intelligence capable of working with existing materials and forming them into designed objects.

Christ as Designer and Redeemer
Why Is This Important?

1) Atheistic materialism requires Darwinian evolution.

2) Intelligent design convincingly refutes Darwinian evolution.

3) Therefore intelligent design convincingly refutes atheistic materialism.
What Can I Do About It?

Plenty of people wish well to any good cause, but very few care to exert themselves to help it, and still fewer will risk anything in its support. “Some one ought to do it, but why should I?” is the ever re-echoed phrase of weak-kneed amiability. “Some one ought to do it, so why not I?” is the cry of some earnest servant of man, eagerly forward springing to face some perilous duty.

--Annie Besant