

INTELLIGENT DESIGN

“If the ship-building art were in the wood, it would produce the same results by nature.” - Aristotle

“Natural selection allows the successes, but ‘rubs out’ the failures. Thus, selection creates complex order, without the need for a designing mind. All of the fancy arguments about a number of improbabilities, having to be swallowed at one gulp, are irrelevant. Selection, makes the improbable, actual.” – Michael Ruse, *Darwinism Defended* (1982) p. 308.

The tools of evolution:

1. 4 fundamental forces of nature: gravity, electromagnetism, strong nuclear, & weak nuclear; matter
2. Natural selection
3. Mutations
4. Long time periods

“Once human beings are on the scene, they act as designing intelligences to produce artifacts. But human beings are themselves natural. Art in Aristotle’s sense is therefore at most once removed from nature: Nature produces embodied rational agents like us, who in turn produce designed objects. To speak of nature herself being designed or to speak of natural objects (like biological systems) being designed seems therefore to commit a category mistake. To state the problem in the language of evolution: Nature in her evolution produces life, and some of those evolved forms of life produce designed objects. Yet to place design prior to the evolved forms that produce design is to misconceive design.” – William Dembski, *ID as a Theory of Technological Evolution*, *Metanexus*, August 10, 2001.



Can scientific criteria be applied to determine if something has been designed or not?

Can Intelligent Design be detected?

The three stage filter:

1. Does a law explain it?
2. Does chance explain it?
3. Does design explain it?

Example 1: *Republican Party of New Jersey vs. Nicholas Caputo.* – Election fraud?

Example 2: SETI (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence) Project – Radio telescope listening to space

Is intelligent design equivalent to biblical creationism?

Why are evolutionists against intelligent design studies?

Should intelligent design be discussed or taught in public schools?

“Although many details remain to be worked out, it is already evident that all the objective phenomena of the history of life can be explained by purely naturalistic or, in a proper sense of the sometimes abused word, materialistic factors. They [the objective phenomena of the history of life] are readily explicable on the basis of differential reproduction in populations [natural selection], and the mainly random interplay of the known processes of heredity [random mutation]. Therefore, man is the result of a purposeless and natural process that did not have him in mind.” - George Gaylord Simpson, *The Meaning of Evolution*

“The first thing to notice is that BWT and IDT both make definite assertions of fact. To see this, let’s get personal. Here you are. You had parents. They in turn had parents. They too had parents. And so on and so on. If we run the video camera back in time, generation upon generation, what do we see? Do we see a continuous chain of natural causes which go from apes to small furry mammals to reptiles to slugs to slime molds to blue green algae, and finally all the way back to a pre-biotic soup, with no event in the chain ever signaling the activity of an intelligent agent? Or as we trace back the genealogy do we find events that clearly signal the activity of an intelligent agent?” – William Dembski, *What every theologian should know about creation, evolution and design*

“To Him who by wisdom made the heavens, for His mercy endures forever.” – Psalm 136:5

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” – Romans 1:20

If evolution is true, do you have a soul/spirit?

For more on intelligent design: facultyinc.com {Faculty Offices – Dembski, William}

Design-Theoretic Research Problems

- (1) Detectability Problem--Is an object designed? An affirmative answer to this question is needed before we can answer the remaining questions. The whole point of specified and irreducible complexity is to make an affirmative answer possible.
- (2) Functionality Problem--What is the designed object's function? This problem is separate from the detectability problem. For instance, archeologists have discovered tools which they recognize as tools but don't understand what their function is.
- (3) Transmission Problem--What is the causal history of a designed object? Just as with Darwinism, intelligent design seeks historical narratives (though not the just-so stories of Darwinists).
- (4) Construction Problem--How was the designed object constructed? Given enough information about the causal history of an object, this question may admit an answer.
- (5) Reverse-Engineering Problem--In the absence of a reasonably detailed causal history, how could the object have come about?
- (6) Constraints Problem--What are the constraints within which the designed object functions optimally?
- (7) Perturbation Problem--How has the original design been modified and what factors have modified it? This requires an account of both the natural and the intelligent causes that have modified the object over its causal history.
- (8) Variability Problem--What degree of perturbation allows continued functioning? Alternatively, what is the range of variability within which the designed object functions and outside of which it breaks down?
- (9) Restoration Problem--Once perturbed, how can the original design be recovered? Art restorers, textual critics, and archeologists know all about this.
- (10) Optimality Problem--In what sense is the designed object optimal?
- (11) Separation of Causes Problem--How does one tease apart the effects of intelligent causes from natural causes, both of which could have affected the object in question? For instance, a rusted old Cadillac exhibits the effects of both design and weathering?
- (12) Ethical Problem--Is the design morally right?
- (13) Aesthetics Problem--Is the design beautiful?
- (14) Intentionality Problem--What was the intention of the designer in producing a given designed object?
- (15) Identity Problem--Who is the designer?