

Intelligent Design vs. Evolution

Defending God's Creation

John 1:1-3

- 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- 2 He was in the beginning with God.
- 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Intelligent Design

- “Even reduced to the barest essentials, this template must have been very complex indeed. For this template and this template alone, it appears it is reasonable at present to suggest the possibility of a creator”
 - » Jay Roth, nucleic acid expert

Origins Review

- Fail to explain origins of early proteins
 - Presupposes DNA and vice versa
 - “Chicken and the egg”
- DNA not good as first step
 - Need complex proteins to copy itself

RNA world

- 1980's RNA shown can act like enzyme
- How could form before living cells?
- Experiments to produce nucleotide bases use unlikely prebiotic conditions
 - High concentrations of chemicals that also reactive to other chemicals
 - Still need sugar ribose and phosphate group
- Even if could be produced in realistic conditions it is highly reactive and unlikely to survive – too unstable

RNA world

- Infuse Intelligence
- Few enzymatic functions long way from complexity needed
 - Nothing like what are in living systems
- To self replicate would need two exact complimentary strands
- Only shifts what needs to be explained-the origin of information

RNA world

- RNA is not a plausible candidate for the first building block of life “because it is unlikely to have been produced in significant quantities on the primitive earth.”
- “The most reasonable interpretation is that life did not start with RNA.”
 - Gerald Joyce, biochemist
- from *Design of Life*, page 239

RNA world

- “So the evidence that there was once an RNA world is growing ever more convincing. Only a few dissenters remain.”
– Michael Marshall, *New Scientist*, August 2011

RNA world

- “You have to build straw man upon straw man to get to the point where RNA is a viable first biomolecule”
 - Gerald Joyce, biochemist
- From Dembski and Wells, *the Design of Life*, page 240

Metabolic Pathways

- Some have proposed these as first steps
 - Example citric acid cycle
- None have been demonstrated to occur under realistic prebiotic conditions
- No explanation for proteins, DNA, RNA, etc.

“The problem of the origin of life is clearly basically equivalent to the problem of the origin of biological information”

Origin of Life researcher **Bernd-Olaf Koppers**

From Meyer, *Signature in the Cell*, page 13

Evolution's Theology

- “It turns out that the main scientific issue is not the absence of any plausible explanation for the origin of life – which used to be the case – but an embarrassment of riches. There are many plausible explanations; the difficulty is to choose among them. That surfeit causes problems for the question “How did life begin on Earth?” but not for the more basic issue, which is “Can life emerge from nonliving processes?”

Ian Stewart

- Quoted from *the Design of Life*, page 240.

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

Watson and Crick

from Meyer, *Signature in the Cell*, page 12

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

Richard Dawkins

from Dembski and Wells, *The Design of Life*, page 264

Computer Simulations

- Infuse Intelligence
 - Give computer a “target”
- *Avida*
 - far simpler than any biological function
 - Presupposes information

Evidence for Intelligent Design

- Irreducible Complexity
 - Need cell membrane
 - DNA and its machinery (60 enzymes)
 - Ribosome and its machinery (50 enzymes)
- Origin of Information
 - i.e., the “code” of DNA

- “All the components of the cell, including all the RNA and protein molecules, are continuously communicating with each other. It is recognized that there are hundreds of thousands of different types of interactions within the cell’s “interactome,” and most of these interactions in one way or another involve communication. In this sense the amazing communication network within a cell can very reasonably be compared to the internet.
- from Biological Information, Cornell University Symposium 2011

Junk DNA

TABLE I. SOME MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE HUMAN GENOME
Approximate percentages of several types of DNA in the human genome.¹⁰

OPEN READING FRAMES (“GENES”)	27%
Exons (Protein-coding regions)	2%
Introns (Non-protein-coding regions)	25%
REPETITIVE NON-PROTEIN-CODING DNA	50%
LINEs	21%
SINEs	13%
Retroviral-like elements	8%
Simple sequence repeats	5%
DNA-only transposons	3%
OTHER NON-PROTEIN-CODING DNA	23%

From Wells, *The Myth of Junk DNA*, page 59

“We have to wonder why the Intelligent Designer added to our genome junk DNA, repeated copies of useless DNA, orphan genes, gene fragments, tandem repeats, and pseudogenes, none of which are involved directly in the making of a human being. In fact, of the entire human genome, it appears that only a tiny percentage is actively involved in useful protein production. Rather than being intelligently designed, the human genome looks more and more like a mosaic of mutations, fragment copies, borrowed sequences, and discarded strings of DNA that were jerry-built over millions of years of evolution.”

skeptic Michael Shermer

Pseudogenes “are genes that once did something useful but have now been sidelined and are never transcribed or translated.... What pseudogenes are useful for is embarrassing creationists. It stretches even their creative ingenuity to make up a convincing reason why an intelligent designer should have created a pseudogene...unless he was deliberately setting out to fool us.”

Richard Dawkins

Junk DNA

- Most DNA is transcribed into RNA
 - Sense and antisense strands both transcribed
- Introns involved in splicing recognition sites and some proteins in machinery
- Involved in Gene Regulation
 - Competing RNA
 - Shape of Chromatin
- Even now argued that evolution would predict a function
 - “conserved” sequences
- More function is being elucidated all the time

Junk DNA

- Recent Oxford University researchers
 - Only 8.2% of DNA is functional
- ENCODE project – September 2012
 - 80% or more of our DNA is functional

Function – How defined?

- Evolutionists- a DNA segment is functional if it is subject to natural selection
- “Our approach is largely free from assumptions or hypotheses” Gerton Lunter
- ENCODE – functional if it “participates in at least one biochemical RNA- and/or chromatin-associated event in at least one cell type.”
- We know the as much as 30% of the protein-coding DNA in every organism bear little or no similarity to DNA sequences in other organisms – so called “orphan genes”

“No Designer worth His salt would have created” the features that we actually find in nature. “It would be hard to exaggerate the importance of this argument,” Radick wrote, “from Darwin’s day to our own, as a means of disqualifying the Designer explanations and making room for Darwinian descent with modification”

Gregory Radick

From Wells, *The Myth of Junk DNA*, page 103

“Whatever the validity of this theological claim,” Scadding concluded, “it certainly cannot be defended as a scientific statement, and thus should be given no place in a scientific discussion of evolution.”

Steven Scadding

From Wells, *The Myth of Junk DNA*, page 103

- “If the human genome is indeed devoid of junk DNA as implied by the ENCODE project, then a long, undirected process cannot explain the human genome. If, on the other hand, organisms are designed then all DNA or as much as possible, is expected to exhibit function. If ENCODE is right, the Evolution is wrong.”

– Dan Graur, University of Houston, atheist

- “The existence of evil. This, to me, is the most powerful of Barash’s arguments for incompatibility between science and religion. Theists must perforce explain evil – both “moral” evil (humans doing bad things to other humans) and “natural” evil (diseases like childhood cancer, earthquakes, and other stuff that kills innocent people) – as part of God’s plan. There’s no easy way to reconcile these with a loving and all-powerful god, though the entire discipline of theodicy is devoted to the effort. I haven’t yet seen a successful reconciliation, and theists know, deep in their hearts, that the problem remains. But such “evils” are, as Barash explains, easily understandable in a naturalistic universe: they’re an inevitable result of either evolution, physics, or geology.”

– Jerry Coyne, on David Barash’s recent op-ed in *New York Times*

Job 38:4

- “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.”