

Life: Design or Natural Processes?

Introduction

Creation Research has received the following question about design:

Richard Dawkins claims the giraffe is so badly designed it can't have been created, but surely bad design is still design and not a random arrangement, so my question is how can we recognize design anyway, good or bad, and how would it differ from random or natural arrangement?

A sceptic challenged John Mackay to a debate with the following topic:

'Natural process is all you need to explain life. You don't need a Creator!'

These challenges bring up two questions:

Is it possible to recognise design?

If design is recognisable, is it seen in living things?

Below is John Mackay's answer to these questions.

A Designed Object

Take a simple object such as a matchstick, with its usual red head of flammable material on one end of a slender elongated piece of squared pinewood. Nobody believes it happened by itself.

We could wave our hands and make up an unreasonable scenario how natural processes could square pine wood into matchsticks (falling rocks hitting a pine tree) which somehow got blown by the wind into a phosphorus/sulphur/pine pitch deposit to make a matchstick but no-one would believe that. It is just not a believable mechanism no matter how long you wait.

Everyone knows the matchstick was designed by somebody intelligent. The End Product (the match) is anything but natural. But when you ask how they know it was designed – few can answer with any great illumination though the answer is relatively simple.

Signs of Design

A **first** and basic definition is that intelligent, creative Design is readily recognisable whenever an End Product has properties that could never come from the properties of the parts it is made of, no matter how long you had at your disposal.

Second: The evidence for Design doesn't even depend on whether the end result has a function or not. One of the craziest bits of artwork ever painted, which also provides proof that governments seem to think they are licensed to waste tax payers money, is a controversial work called Blue Poles. But to give credit where credit is due – though it looks like a huge canvas that had paint thrown at it, motorbikes driven over it, people rolling on it or whatever – it was all done intentionally. It didn't happen by itself. It was designed at the very least to extract money from the Australian Government. Whether you appreciate the artistic design is a different matter. Since paint never does paintings, and the property of creativity is possessed by neither paint nor canvas, artist Jackson Pollock is undeniably the creator of Blue Poles. It shows all the evidence of manipulated design, and is recognisable as a process that did not happen naturally. Again the end product has properties that could never come from the properties of the parts it is made of. But the second key second point in this illustration is that design is just as real, regardless of how much intelligence the viewer perceives has been involved. Good design or bad design – neither happens by itself.

There's a **third** design factor that shows in the old Australian joke: What do you call a boomerang that won't come back? Answer – A stick!

There is no doubt that the most fascinating property of the well known returning Boomerang is its ability to come back, but this property does not come from the wood it is made of.

This is easy to prove. Wood comes from trees, yet when you throw a tree it doesn't come back. My Scottish ancestors discovered that ages ago when for sport they threw cabers (large wooden poles). Coming back is not a natural property of wood.

The returning property has been added by the boomerang maker, to make wood do what wood won't by itself. Returning comes from shaping the wood in a particular way as well as throwing it. Fail to get the shape right, and you must send the dog to fetch your boomerang. The creator of the returning boomerang has taken parts which includes wood (Matter) shaped by the use of Energy over Time as he skilfully added the right Design Information to make the End Product (Boomerang).

We can say this another way:

A Boomerang is a 100% returning object made from 100% non-returning parts.

That is why you can manufacture a returning boomerang from plastic, as the returning ability has nothing to do with whatever material the boomerang is made from. So the most obvious part of the boomerang that proves it didn't happen naturally (by itself), is the design information which has been deliberately added to the original materials by the Maker of the boomerang – the intelligent someone who existed before the wood, is exterior to the wood and is far smarter than the wood could ever hope to be.

Evidence for Design

A brief summary thus far: when looking for the evidence of Creation or non-natural, intelligent Design, go search for:

- 1) Something that couldn't happen by itself,
- 2) An end product which has properties that don't come from the parts it is made of, and
- 3) Something where the useful properties have been added to the original materials by somebody intelligent who was, and is, exterior to the product system.

Did you notice: Whether the boomerang maker took one day or one year – the time involved in making the product is irrelevant to the evidence the product was designed. The time involved does however tell you how smart the maker was, because the smarter you are the faster the job gets done.

More Design Features

A **fourth** characteristic of design: If we again apply this to our match, a fourth factor appears. Mankind has always been able to pick up splinters of pinewood and light them fairly easily, yet it took someone's desire to market an easy burning match that would light under almost any circumstances in order for man to go looking for a semi-explosive phosphorous compound and put it on the end of a shaped pine stick. But, since the original phosphorous based matches would combust almost spontaneously – a problem if they were in your back pocket –the invention of the safety match meant someone really intelligent went looking for a safe, much less combustible compound, and found it.

Design also involves *intent* or *purpose*. It gives meaning. Lack of design means lack of purpose whether it is molecules or man. Therefore, can we give you a safe sure formula to use distinguish creative Design from natural results? Yes! And provably so.

Can We Recognize A Creation?

You can reduce the statement about the origin of the matchstick, i.e. Pinewood plus Phosphorous plus Time plus Energy with the application of intelligent creative Design, i.e. information, makes the match, into the statement:

Matter (pinewood + phosphorous) + Time +Energy, with application of *Design Information* results in a Product (match)

This can be further reduced to:

parts (M+ T +E)  Product

This can be further reduced to:

parts  Product

Since there was no Design Information in the pine or the burnable compound which determined it would be a safety match, all the Design Information was added from *outside*.

Thus, the Information in the Product (match) is greater than the Information (in the parts (wood, flammable compound).

Therefore:

Whenever the Information in the Product is *greater* than Information in the parts, then the Product has been created.

And this leads to a trustworthy statement:

Complex information comes from creative intelligence every time.

No exceptions known!

Design Formulae

The definition of design can be written in several ways:

Information in the *Product* is *greater* than *Information* in the *parts*, or:

$$I_{Product} > I_{parts}$$

This can be further shorthanded into several forms:

$$I_{Product} > I_{parts}, \quad \text{or} \quad I_{Product} - I_{parts} > 0; \quad \text{or} \quad I_{Product} / I_{parts} > 1$$

This is as true for the boomerang maker as it is for the Maker of Man from dust.

Therefore, a general **Creation Formula** reads:

Whenever $I_{Product}$ is greater than I_{parts} a creation has occurred, and the origin of this product is not natural.

This formula can be applied to both non-living and living systems, to see whether it has been naturally generated or intelligently created.

Time and Creation

The Time factor provided no Information to the end product. Time or age is irrelevant to detecting evidence of a creation.

The evidence that a three thousand year Egyptian Hieroglyphic was created, would be just as obvious as the evidence of intelligent code from a three billion year Hieroglyph, if such existed. Time is also irrelevant to the information in DNA code

preserved in a cell. Design is all that matters. The evidence of a creation lies in the intelligent information which provably does not come from the system itself.

And since available time is certainly beyond the reach of those waiting to observe evolution, and all observed time-based processes only remove information from life and non-life, we could allow the evolutionist 10 times the current life span they claim for the universe, and predict still nothing would evolve - whether match or man.

The simple formula listed above works equally well whether it is applied to hydrogen, match sticks, the DNA of the first living creature, or any of its descendants who have inherited such non-natural information as exists in the DNA code.

Natural Objects

How do you recognise a Natural product, i.e. one that could happen by itself and didn't need an outside creator? The answer is simple:

A natural product occurs whenever the properties of the end Product are the results of the interactions of the properties of the parts alone. i.e. the Information is from within the system

Therefore whenever $I_{Product} = I_{parts}$, or $I_{Product} < I_{parts}$ it is the result of a natural processes and no intelligent creator was involved.

Design in Living Things

The structure and function of all living things is determined by their DNA.

Therefore, in our search for design we need to ask:

Is there evidence of creative design in DNA?

Properties of DNA

DNA is the most sophisticated code known. It has incredible stability, but has been observed to lose information when subjected to degenerative processes.

There has been no observed evolution of the DNA of one kind of living organism into another kind.

Now let us apply our definition of design to DNA by comparing the information in the *parts*, i.e. atoms, and the *Product*, i.e. DNA code.

Information in DNA

DNA parts are atoms of Carbon, Hydrogen, Oxygen, Nitrogen and Phosphorus.

Atoms do not produce codes by any natural process, no matter how long you give them. Therefore, the DNA *parts* are information poor.

However, the information level in DNA *Product* is incredibly high. In fact, scientists are still searching this out and finding more information.

Note Well:

The information in DNA *Product* is greater than the information in DNA *parts*.

Therefore, we can apply our formula: $I_{Product} > I_{parts}$ to DNA.

This is a characteristic of all known created codes.

Furthermore:

DNA is observed to be incredibly stable, and this stability is coded for. This coded information has therefore been transmitted by the inbuilt coded process ever since the first strand of DNA existed in every kind of living organism.

Therefore the original DNA in each kind of living thing is provably not the result of natural processes. According to evolutionary theory natural process stated from zero coded hydrogen!

Saying it another way:

Just as a boomerang is a 100% returning *Product* made from 100% non-returning *parts*,

DNA is 100% coded *Product* made from 100% non-coding *parts*.

Therefore present day DNA is the long term reproductive result from an original *creation* by a Creator.

DNA could never arise itself.

A Timely Comment

If a DNA creator has not finished making DNA by the first coffee break of the day, *including* placing it in a preformed protective system cell, *which is also* part of a pre-made environment in which all factors needed for the further supply of Carbon, Hydrogen, Oxygen, Nitrogen and Phosphorus already exist – it will neither survive nor work .

Proving Design

The ultimate proof of whether something is created is to try to make some yourself from scratch. Whoever does this is sure to win a Nobel prize.

Dawkins' Giraffe?

To get back to Dawkins' giraffe: you can expose his fallacy and arrogance by simply asking him how many giraffes he has successfully designed. Since we all know he has not designed any giraffe that works, then he is totally unqualified to comment on what constitutes good giraffe design, especially since all known giraffes are doing very well, without a single thanks to Richard Dawkins.

Created DNA

Since the DNA Code is in the *arrangement* of the parts, and is not caused by any properties of the parts, artificial DNA is a possibility if you are a smart enough creator!

However, DNA is observed to lose information, i.e. degenerate, when it is subjected to natural physical or chemical interactions. Therefore, observed natural changes in DNA are from lots of information to less information. No natural mechanism ever found can produce DNA from its components by any natural process without the aid of an intelligent Creator.

Is there a coded message for us in DNA?

The creator is a lot smarter than we are. Try making life in test tube and find out.

This creator likes 3s – each chemical word in DNA has three chemical letters

We should also note: Since creativity is a characteristic of human kind, it also provides one of the best evidences mankind was made in the image of the Creator God as stated in Genesis.

We love to create things because He created us, but we are just not as good at it as He is!

Moral Implication

The Creator has the Right to make the rules

We have no right to break them.

The Creator, who is Christ, has every power to impose penalties as Maker and Judge of all the earth

The Real Problem in Modern Science

The following definition of science for science teachers illustrates a basic assumption often used in the creation/evolution debate.

Scientific theories are therefore explanations about aspects of nature without reference to God.”

The Science Teacher, November 2003, p34

This is, in essence, another way of saying that no matter what the truth is, science is defined in such a way that only agnostic or atheist answers are allowed.

Finally

Any person who claims there is no way you can identify the product of intelligent creation *vs* a natural event is sorely misinformed.

A thought for all you young researchers out there:

Prejudice prevents scientific progress. Evidence enables it!

John Mackay

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