

INTELLIGENT DESIGN & NATURAL REVELATION S2

I. KEY THOUGHTS S3

1. Definition of Intelligent Design S4

DEF: BELIEF that the beauty, complexity, and functionality in nature reflect rationality and the creative work of an Intelligent Designer

BELIEF THAT nature reflects design, not HOW design arose in nature

2. ID is the Classic Complementary Relationship between Science & Religion S5

reflects the Metaphysics-Physics Principle S6 H18

features reciprocal Steps of Faith between Intelligent Design & nature

Requirement of Faith: S7

1. “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command.” Heb 11:3

☛ By faith we understand that the universe *reflects God’s intelligent design*. S8

ID is not a **proof**, but at best an **argument**

☛ EVERYONE—believers & skeptics of ID—takes a step of faith/intellectual leap

3. ID is a Powerful, but Limited Non-Verbal Revelation S9

at best ID only points to a teleological reality:

Someone, Someones, Something, or Somethings

II. INTELLIGENT DESIGN ARGUMENTS S10

Two basic arguments:

ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN TO NATURE (Downward Arrows) S11 H18

Presuppositional Approach → often overlooked & not acknowledged

BEGINS with the belief in God & design,

THEN uses this belief as a Metaphysical Filter to view nature

EG **Cardinal John Henry Newman** S12

famous 19th century Roman Catholic theologian

2. “I believe in design because I believe in God; not in God because I see design.”

C Dessain & T Gornall, eds. *Letters & Diaries* 25
(Oxford: Clarendon, 2006), 25:97

ARGUMENT FROM NATURE TO DESIGN (Upward Arrows) S13 H18

Evidential Approach → ID often limited to this argument

aka: argument from design for God’s existence

BEGINS with the natural world,

THEN looks for physical evidence to argue for belief in design & God

EG **Antony Flew** S14-15

famous atheist who became a deist because of ID in biology

3. “Biologists’ investigation of DNA has shown, by the almost **unbelievable complexity** of the arrangements to produce life, that **intelligence** must have been involved ... **The only satisfying explanation** for the origin of such ‘end-directed, self-replicating’ life as we see it on earth is an **infinitely intelligent Mind.**”

A Flew, *There Is a God: How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind* (NY: HarperOne, 2007), 123, 132

III. RICHARD DAWKINS & INTELLIGENT DESIGN

The Blind Watchmaker (1986) famed book that rejects ID S2
 title mocks William Paley & his watchmaker argument S3
 Blind Watchmaker = blind evolutionary processes

4. “The **problem** is that of complex design ... every single one of more than a trillion S4
 cells in the body contains about a thousand times as much precisely-coded digital
 information as my entire computer. The **complexity** of living organisms is matched
 by the **elegant efficiency** of the **apparent design**. If anyone doesn’t agree that this
 amount of complex design **CRIES OUT for an explanation, I give up ...**
 Our world is dominated by [1] feats of **engineering** and [2] works of **art**. S5
 We are entirely accustomed to the idea that **complex elegance** is an indicator
 of **premeditated, crafted design**. This is probably the **most powerful reason**
 for the **belief**, held by the **vast majority of people** that have ever lived, in some
 kind of **supernatural deity** ... It is as if the human brain were **specifically designed**
to misunderstand Darwinism, and find it hard to believe.”

R Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (London: Penguin, 1986), xiii, xvi, xv; my capitals

COMMENTS: S6

- despite being only “apparent” design (not real & nothing but an illusion):
 nature powerfully **IMPACTS** Dawkins
 “cries out for an explanation”
- impact of nature is the “most powerful reason for the BELIEF” in God S7
 an argument from nature to design
 “held by the vast majority of people”
 an admission that nearly everyone has a religious impulse
 confirmation → 90% believe in teleology
- Characteristics of ID: S8
 - (1) engineered → “complexity” & “efficiency” (functionality)
 - (2) artistic → “elegance”
 combines both characteristics in the terms:
 “elegant efficiency” “complex elegance”
- common definition of “Darwinism” S9
 Darwinism = Atheism = Dysteleological Evolution
 BUT is this Darwin’s view? **NO!** more anon

DAWKINS ANTI-THESIS S10

“It is as if the human brain were **specifically designed** [by God]
to UNDERSTAND Darwinism [atheistic evolution], and find it
 hard to believe.”

- ☛ our brain has been designed by God to say:
 “You can’t possibly believe in atheistic evolution”
 confirmation → 90% of teleologists today

Excursus: The 3rd Hypothesis—ID, Evolutionary Psychology & Evolutionary Creation S11

God created through evolution (teleological) a set of neurons that are sensitive to reflections of ID in nature.

- God hardwired the brain with *ID sensitive neurons* for *seeing* ID in nature
- We have the freedom to close our *ID sensitive eyes* & not *see* in ID in nature

☛ **GOD’S EVOLUTIONARY HARDWIRING** is behind Intelligent Design S12 H2

IV. SCRIPTURE & INTELLIGENT DESIGN

S2

NB: term “Intelligent Design” does not appear in the Bible
BUT the concept of ID is definitely there

The Classic Passages:

S3

- (1) Psalm 19 (Old Testament)
- (2) Romans 1 (New Testament)
- (3) Wisdom of Solomon 13 (Deutero-Canon or Apocrypha)

Characteristics of the Revelation in Nature according to Scripture:

S4

- Active
the creation powerfully impacts humans
- Intelligible
humans are fully equipped to understand the revelation in nature
- Incessant
natural revelation never stops
- Universal
natural revelation is heard by everyone (both religious & non-religious people)
- Non-Verbal
natural revelation is like music → it does not use words, but it definitely communicates
- Revelatory
natural revelation reveals general attributes of the Creator
- Rejectable (Rom 1 & Wis 13)
humans have the freedom to reject natural revelation
- Accountable (Rom 1 & Wis 13)
humans “are without excuse” if they reject natural revelation

S5

S6

1. PSALM 19:1-6

S7

features two parallel panels reflecting the Two Divine Books & concludes with a meditation

Book of God’s Works

- ¹The heavens declare the glory of God;
the firmament proclaims the work
of his hands.
- ²Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they display knowledge.
- ³They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.
- ⁴Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun, S10
- ⁵which is like a bridegroom coming forth
from his pavilion, like a champion
rejoicing to run his course.
- ⁶It rises at one end of the heavens
and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is hidden from its heat.

S8

Book of God’s Words

- ⁷The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.
- ⁸The precepts of the Lord are right,
giving joy to the heart.
- ⁹The commands of the Lord are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.
- ⁹The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever.
The ordinances of the Lord are sure
and altogether righteous.
- ¹⁰They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;
They are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the comb.
- ¹¹By them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.

COMMENTS:

- note all the verbs in the Active Voice (subject does an action) S2
 Heavens: “declare” “proclaim” “pour forth” “display”
Dawkins: “complex design CRIES OUT for an explanation”
- note all the terms related to intelligent communication S3
 “speech” “knowledge” “language” “words” “voice”
 Hebrew *qaw* (translated as “voice” in v. 4) means “line”
 can be rendered “a chord of music”
 ☛ nature is like a heavenly hymn
- Non-Verbal Revelation S4
³They have no speech, they use no words;
 no sound is heard from them.
⁴Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
 their words to the ends of the world.
- Ancient Astronomy S5 H86
 “firmament” “ends of the heavens” movement of sun & tent metaphor
- Message-Incident Principle** S6 H5
 Message: the heavens are a Natural Revelation
 they reveal: God’s glory
 that they were created by God
 Incident: ancient astronomy → 3-tier universe
 it is the vessel that transports the spiritual truths

2. ROMANS 1:19-23

S7

Book of God’s Works

S8

¹⁹Since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, **so that men and women are without excuse.**

Epistemological Impact of Sin

S9

²¹For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their **thinking became futile** and their **foolish** hearts were darkened. ²²Although they claimed to be wise, they became **fools** ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

COMMENTS:

- Nature reveals some of God’s general attributes S10
 “his eternal power and divine nature”
- Natural Revelation & ID are connected to Commandments #1 & #2 S11
 reject: “immortal God” S12 H4
 replace God with: idols of “mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles”
- Sin Impacts Thinking S13
 “their thinking became futile” → “they became fools”
 in the Bible the words ‘fool’ & ‘foolish’ do not mean intellectually stupid
 a fool is someone who is missing out on the best part of life → GOD
- Natural Revelation makes all humans accountable S14
The Without Excuse Clause:
 “so that men and women are without excuse”

3. WISDOM OF SOLOMON 13:1-9

- ¹For all people who were ignorant of God were **foolish** by nature;
and they were unable from the good things that are seen to know
the one who exists, nor did they recognize the Artisan while paying
heed to his works; S2
- ²but they supposed that either fire or wind or swift air, or the circle of
stars, or turbulent water, or the luminaries of heaven were the gods
that rule the world. S3
- ³If through delight in the beauty of these things people assumed them
to be gods, let them know how much better than these is their Lord,
for the Author of Beauty created them. S4
- ⁴And if people were amazed at their power and working,
let them perceive from them how much more powerful is the One
who formed them. S5
- ⁵For from the greatness and beauty of created things come a
corresponding perception of their Creator. S6
- ⁶Yet these people are little to be blamed, for perhaps they go astray
while seeking God and desiring to find him. S7
- ⁷For while they live among his works, they keep searching,
and they trust in what they see, because the things
that are seen are beautiful. S8
- ⁸Yet again, **not even they are to be excused**. S9
- ⁹For if they had the power to know so much that they could investigate
the world, how did they fail to find sooner the Lord of these things? S10
- COMMENTS:
- Nature reveals some of God’s general attributes
“greatness and beauty” → “corresponding perception of their Creator”
☛ 4 references to beauty S8
 - Natural Revelation & ID are connected to Commandments #1 & #2
reject:
“Creator” “Artisan” “Author of Beauty” “Lord of these things”
replace God with:
idols of “fire or wind or swift air, or the circle of stars, or turbulent water,
or the luminaries of heaven” → thought to be gods S9
 - Natural Revelation makes humans accountable
The Without Excuse Clause: “not even they are to be excused” S10
 - Verse 9 updated with Antony Flew in mind (**Quote 3**):
⁹ For if *we today* have the power to know so much about *molecular biology*
that we *can open* and investigate the *cell and DNA*, how *do we* fail to find
sooner the Lord of these things? S11

V. CHRISTIAN TRADITION & INTELLIGENT DESIGN

S2

Pope John Paul II

S3

5. “Developing a **philosophical argument** in popular language, the apostle [Paul] declares a **profound truth**: Through all that is created, the ‘**eyes of the mind**’ can come to know God. Through the medium of creatures, God stirs in **reason**, an **intuition** of his ‘power’ and his ‘divinity’ (Rom 1:20) ... By discoursing on the data provided by the senses, reason can reach the cause which lies at the origin of all perceptible reality. In philosophical terms, we could say that this important Pauline text affirms the human capacity for **metaphysical inquiry**.”

Pope John Paul II, “Faith & Reason” *Origins: CNS Documentary Service* 28 (15 Oct 1998), 324

COMMENTS:

- reflects the Metaphysics-Physics Principle S4 H5
creatures (physics) → intuition & reason → God’s attributes (metaphysics)
☛ “his ‘power’ and his ‘divinity’”
 - Argument *from Nature to Design* S5 H18
this is the most common design argument
 - God hardwired the brain with *ID sensitive neurons* for *seeing ID* in nature S6
“the ‘eyes of the mind’”
6. “This is to recognize as a **first stage of divine revelation** the marvellous ‘**book of nature**,’ S7 which, when read with the proper tools of human reason [ie, science], can lead to knowledge of the Creator. If human beings with their intelligence **fail** to recognize God as Creator of all, it is **not because they lack the means to do so**, but because their **free will** and their **sinfulness** place an impediment in the way.” Ibid., 324

COMMENTS:

- accepts The Two Divine Books S8 H2
two stages of divine revelation:
1st Stage → Book of Nature → Works point toward God
2nd Stage → Book of Scripture → Words reveal who exactly is God
- humans have “free will” & can reject ID & Natural Revelation S9
- epistemological Impact of Sin with regard to ID & Natural Revelation
sinfulness “an impediment”

VI. CONCLUSION: NATURAL REVELATION & INTELLIGENT DESIGN

S10

1. ID & Natural Revelation are Powerful

S11

experienced even by skeptics (Dawkins) & former skeptics (Flew)
affirmed by Biblical Texts & Christian Tradition

2. ID & Natural Revelation Require Reciprocal Steps of Faith (or Epistemological Jumps)

S12

ALL skeptics of ID & ALL believers of ID make a leap of faith

☛ whether they are aware of it or not → so be aware!

ID is a metaphysical BELIEF

ID is not a **proof**, but at best an **argument**

3. ID & Natural Revelation are Limited

S2

only points to Someone, Someones, Something or Somethings

only reveals general attributes of the Intelligent Designer/s

ID is Non-Verbal

calls for a **Verbal Special Revelation** (eg Bible) → fuller revelation of the Intelligent Designer/s

4. Christian Views of ID & Natural Revelation Informed by the Bible & Include Spiritual Factors

- sufficiency of nature to reveal God S3-4

- proficiency of humans to understand natural revelation

☛ everyone is impacted by nature

BUT not everyone wants to accept this revelation

- requirement of faith S5

By faith, we believe nature reflects ID

- epistemological impact of sin

ID connected to Commandments #1 & #2

- humans have the freedom to accept or reject ID S6

- humans accountable regarding the message of ID

The Without Excuse Clause

VII. TOWARD A WORKING MODEL OF INTELLIGENT DESIGN Lamoureux S7

NB: a model includes as many positions on ID as possible, including those that reject ID

PARAMETERS OF INTELLIGENT DESIGN S8

Ontological Parameter Greek ONTOS (*ontos*): participle of the verb “to be” S9

Asks the question: What **IS** Intelligent Design?

- Character:

ARTISTIC & ENGINEERED

- Gradient:

(1) Artistic → OPTIMAL to NONE

(2) Engineered → OPTIMAL to NONE

- Integrity:

REAL or an ILLUSION

EXAMPLES S10-11 H19

Epistemological Parameter S12

Asks the question: How **CERTAIN** is knowledge of intelligent design?

- Range:

Proof—Argument—Suggestive—Consistent—Inert

- Epistemological Impact of Sin (1st Commandment): S13

YES or NO

- Integrity:

TRUSTWORTHY or UNTRUSTWORTHY

EXAMPLES S14-15 H19

POSITIONS ON INTELLIGENT DESIGN

S2

intersection of the two parameters results in a countless number of positions

EXAMPLES

Richard Dawkins	S3-4 H20
ID is an illusion	
Intelligent Design Theorists	S5-6 H20
ID can be proven scientifically	
Lamoureux	S7- 8 H20
ID is real & we are accountable	
ID → Beyond a Reasonable Doubt	

WHY IS INTELLIGENT DESIGN SUCH A CONTROVERSIAL TOPIC?

S9

My Answer: the implications of ID are **DEEPLY PERSONAL**

If intelligent design is real: S10

THEN it points to an Intelligent Designer/s

 raises the question of our **relationship** to this Designer/s

 ☛ is the Intelligent Designer/s ultimately in charge over our life?

 are we accountable to Someone/s or Something/s greater than ourselves?

THEN nature is an incessant reminder forcing us to deal with Commandment #1 S11

 raises the question, “Who or What is #1 in our life?”

MIDTERM EXAM

is on material up to here

FINAL EXAM

is on material from next section (Galileo) to the end