

INTELLIGENT DESIGN

DELUSION, UNCERTAINTY, OR DIVINE REVELATION?

Denis O. Lamoureux DDS PhD PhD
St. Joseph's College, University of Alberta

Definition of Intelligent Design

Traditional belief that beauty, complexity, and functionality in nature point toward an Intelligent Being/Creator.
aka the argument from design for God's existence

NOT to be confused with:

Intelligent Design Theory

- Modern (1990s+) US evangelical anti-evolutionism
P. Johnson, M. Behe, Wm. Dembski, S. Meyer
- Claim ID is "scientifically detectable"

Irreducible Complexity:

Biological structures (*eg*, flagella) are so complex & they could not have evolved thru natural processes
Therefore: Divine interventions are needed in the origin of life (*aka* God-of-the-Gaps)

BUT

Intelligent Design Theory should be termed:
INTERVENTIONISTIC Design Theory

Intelligent Design a Delusion

Richard Dawkins

The problem is that of complex design. 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.
The Blind Watchmaker (1986), xi

Our world is dominated by feats of engineering and works of art. 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. *Ibid*, xvi

It is as if the human brain were specifically designed to misunderstand Darwinism & find it hard to believe.
Ibid, xv

Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist.
Ibid, 6.

Intelligent Design an Uncertainty

Charles Darwin

Another source of conviction in the existence of God, connected with the reason and not with the feelings, impresses me as having much more weight. This follows from the extreme difficulty or rather impossibility of conceiving this immense & wondrous universe, including man with his capacity of looking backwards and far into futurity, as a result of blind chance or necessity. When thus reflecting I feel compelled to look to a First Cause having an intelligent mind in some degree analogous to that of man; and I deserve to be called a Theist.
Autobiography of Charles Darwin (1876), 92-93

This conclusion was strong in my mind about the time, as far as I can remember, when I wrote the *Origin of Species*; and it is since that time that it has very gradually with many fluctuations become weaker. *Ibid*, 93

But then arises the horrid doubt—can the mind of man, which has, as I fully believe, been developed from a mind as low as that possessed by the lowest animal, be trusted when it draws such grand conclusions? *Ibid*, 93

The mystery of the beginning of all things is insoluble by us; and I for one must be content to remain an Agnostic.
Ibid, 94

It seems to me absurd to doubt that a man may be an ardent theist & an evolutionist ... I have never been an Atheist in the sense of denying the existence of a God. I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, that an Agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind.
Letter to Fordyce (1879) *Life & Letters of Darwin* (1888) 1:304

In the course of that conversation I said to Dr. Darwin, with reference to some of his own remarkable works on the 'Fertilization of Orchids' and upon 'Earthworms' and various other observations he made of the wonderful contrivances for certain purposes in nature—I said it was impossible to look at these without seeing that they were the effect and the expression of mind. I shall never forget Mr. Darwin's answer. He looked at me very hard and said, 'Well, that often comes over me with overwhelming force; but at other times,' and he shook his head vaguely, adding, 'it seems to go away.'
Conversation with Duke of Argyll in 1882. *Ibid*, 1:316.

Intelligent Design a Divine Revelation

Definition of Divine Revelation

Traditional belief that God communicates with humanity

Types of Divine Revelation

SPECIAL REVELATION God's Words (Verbal)

Incarnation Latin *verbum*: word
Biblical Revelation
Personal Revelation (also non-verbal)

GENERAL REVELATION God's Works (Non-Verbal)

Moral Revelation (our conscience)
Natural Revelation
aka Natural Theology → **Intelligent Design**

Features of Natural Revelation according to Scripture

Active

non-verbal "voice" in nature powerfully impacts humans

Intelligible

humans understand the revelation in nature

Incessant

never stops; experienced in every generation

Universal

everyone aware of it; like music, a universal "language"

Revelatory

points to God & reveals some of His general attributes

Relational

to God and the 1st & 2nd Commandments

Rejectable

humans free to dismiss the "voice" in nature

Accountable

humans "without excuse" if they reject natural revelation

Psalm 19:1-4

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.
⁴**YET** their voice [Hebrew *qaw*: chord of music]
goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.

Wisdom 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;
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.
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.
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.
⁵For from the greatness and beauty of created things come a corresponding perception of their Creator.
⁶Yet these people are little to be blamed, for perhaps they go astray while seeking God and desiring to find him.
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.
⁸Yet again, **not even they are to be excused.**
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?

Romans 1:18-23

¹⁸The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness & wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 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 are without excuse.**
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.

Intelligent Design Arguments

Skeptics of Design

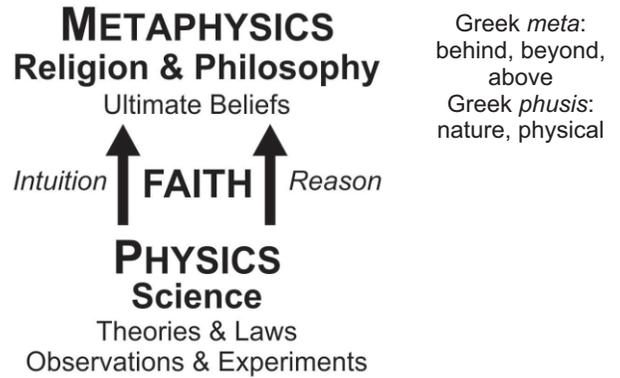
Sociological
believers brainwashed by traditional culture & Church
Psychological
"ID" a drug/crutch to deal with meaningless universe
Neurobiological
"ID brain cells" evolved by chance for survival

Believers of Design

Sociological
skeptics brainwashed by secular culture/education
Psychological
rejection of ID a drug/crutch to deal with reality of God
Neurobiological
God created thru evolution brain cells that were made to detect reflections of ID in nature

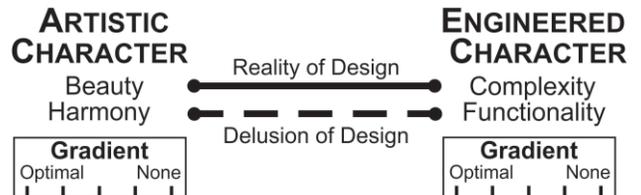
Toward A Model of Intelligent Design

Metaphysics-Physics Principle

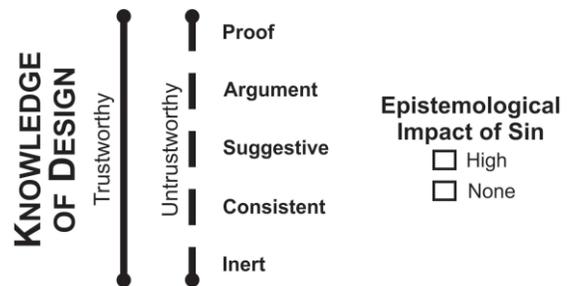


Parameters of Intelligent Design

ONTOLOGICAL Greek *ontos*: being (participle of 'to be')
What is the character of design?



EPISTEMOLOGICAL Greek *epistémé*: knowledge
How certain is knowledge of design?



Conclusions

- ID Powerful:** experienced by both skeptics & believers eg, conversion of famed atheist Antony Flew
- ID Limited:** only points to Something/s or Someone/s calls for special revelation (verbal) & Designer's Name
- ID Personal:** huge implications & controversial
1st Commandment Issue? Who is captain of the ship?
Creatorship → Relationship → Lordship → Worship
☛ Lifestyle change?
- ID & Accountability:** the "without excuse" clause
my speculation about the Final Judgment
- ID & Suffering:** nature heals & comforts us in our pain
God's response in Job 38-41 an ID argument