

Is Intelligent Design a Scientific Theory?

Maury Middleton

Currently the theory of evolution is taught exclusively in the public schools of the United States. But today there are many challenges to this theory in many parts of the country. Most recently it was in Dover, Pennsylvania, where the judge ruled that Intelligent Design was nothing more than a religious explanation for the origin life and had no scientific basis. Unfortunately most of the articles we read in papers and magazines do not really address the scientific evidence for Intelligent Design. Just exactly how do you detect the act of an intelligent agent?

The best way to answer this question is to look at some practical applications. Many look at the sheer vastness of our universe and conclude that life must have formed by evolutionary processes in other places. One of the most popular places in the early part of the last century was the planet Mars. However, after extensive searches from different probes from NASA, no life has been detected. Since water is central for life, some feel there may still be a chance to find simple life forms in the polar ice caps of Mars, or at least evidence of life in the past. But to date, there is no evidence. The other planets are far too hostile to support any chance of life. But what is most intriguing is the possibility of not just life in other places, but the possibility of more advanced civilizations than ours.

In 1977 NASA launched the Voyager spacecraft probes that visited the outer Jovian planets of our solar system. In 1989, Voyager 2 reached the planet Neptune and now continues into deep space. The problem is that it will take about 100,000 years before Voyager 2 will reach the next nearest star in our Milky Way. Obviously the idea of us exploring other solar systems is way beyond our reach at this time. But that is not hindering scientists in their search for intelligent life. But if we cannot travel to the stars, how do you detect intelligence?

In the last half of the 20th century, the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Life (SETI) took a very scientific approach and has been continuing ever since then. This project, receiving millions of dollars a year from NASA and currently being funded by private organizations has made use of the most advanced technology we have available to us today. Radio telescopes are scanning the heavens looking for radio waves that are coming from distant galaxies. Computers are scanning the various frequencies of the radio waves that are collected, looking for unique patterns that would give them the evidence they need to prove their theory. Radio waves coming from space are abundant, but a unique pattern is not found. Let us suppose that we picked up a radio wave that was carrying binary information. And as we analyzed this information, we found that it consisted of a long list of the prime numbers in sequence. Clearly this cannot happen by random chance and therefore we must conclude that the source is intelligent beings. Now one person may ask the question; what do they look like, have you ever seen them, and other similar questions? The answer to these questions would obviously be no, but that does not negate the value of this scientific investigation. Clearly when we have a very

low probability event, and we can match it with a function or a purpose, then we can conclude it is from an intelligence source.

All types of forensic science, patent laws, copyright laws, insurance fraud claims, code making and code breaking are evidence of this principle. For example, suppose there was a fire which burned a building down. Immediately there would be an investigation to determine what the cause of the fire was. Now in their investigation they must be able to determine whether it was a result of a natural process or an intelligent process. Would it be reasonable to tell the investigators that science can not detect intelligence, so therefore any conclusion they draw must be a natural process?

A low probability event is not sufficient. One of the keys to determine the intelligent cause would be to recognize a function or purpose. DNA is an example of a code and its function can not be denied. There are four base pairs and each set of three base pairs represents a codon. This allows for 64 possible different codes. The red columns represent the 64 possible DNA codes and the yellow columns represent the rows of the keyboard. This code can be used to transform any written document into a coded system of letters. In a cell there are only 20 amino acids and so there is a lot of duplication of the code. For example, three differing codes could represent a single amino acid. But you can easily grasp how the DNA works when you recognize each letter as an amino acid and a group of letters, a sentence, as a protein. An illustration is below.

AAA	`	CAA	TAB	TAA	Cap Lock	GAA	SHIFT
AAC	1	CAC	Q	TAC	A	GAC	Z
AAT	2	CAT	W	TAT	S	GAT	X
AAG	3	CAG	E	TAG	D	GAG	C
ACA	4	CCA	R	TCA	F	GCA	V
ACC	5	CCC	T	TCC	G	GCC	B
ACT	6	CCT	Y	TCT	H	GCT	N
ACG	7	CCG	U	TCG	J	GCG	M
ATA	8	CTA	I	TTA	K	GTA	,
ATC	9	CTC	O	TTC	L	GTC	.
ATT	0	CTT	P	TTT	;	GTT	
ATG	-	CTG	[TTG		GTG	SHIFT
AGA	=	CGA]	TGA	ENTER	GGA	
AGC	Backspace	CGC	\	TGC	CTRL	GGC	
AGT	CTRL	CGT	SPACE	TGT	ALT	GGT	
AGG	ALT	CGG	ALT	TGG		GGG	

ThisCGTTATCAGGCTCCCCAGGCTGAGCAGCGTCATTACTATCGTCATC
 CCACTACCCCCCAGGCTCGTGCCCCTCGACCATACGCTTAGCTCGCGCGTGA
 GTCTTACGCTGAGCAG

If a student was to plagiarize a report, he or she could be taken before the Honor Council and expelled from Thomas Nelson Community College. However evolution teaches us that entire books could be written by random chance. Is it really a random

chance process or that of intelligent design? If we as educators withhold information and only present one viewpoint, we have not educated students. We have indoctrinated them. However, if we present all the information and allow the students to evaluate all the evidence and make their own decision, then we have educated the student.

Many cite small point mutations that occasionally are found to be favorable. But to extrapolate this to the creation of life is the equivalent of my cat stepping on the keys of my computer and spelling the word "as". Since the cat was successful on this small scale, we can extrapolate out to the possibility that the cat can type a book. Most would claim this to be preposterous, but this is what we study in evolution.