

Keep up the good work. I give my compliments to the anonymous donor who made the 88-page issue possible.

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Intelligent Design Is Not Natural Science

The Intelligent Design (ID) movement has insisted that intelligent design is scientific. William Dembski, a prominent spokesperson for ID, wrote that intelligent design is "a fruitful scientific concept,"¹ "a full-fledged scientific theory,"² and "a scientific research program."³

In his article, "Is Intelligent Design 'Scientific'?" (*PSCF* 59, no. 1 [March 2007]: 55–62), Loren Haarsma twice points out that most people equate science with natural causes. Even so, he concludes his article by stating that ID is "partly science."

The intelligent manipulation of known characteristics of the physical universe is the hallmark of engineering and technology. The intelligent design (Lower case 'i' and lower case 'd') and the intelligent assembly of the components of biological origins are synonymous with supernatural genetic engineering and supernatural biotechnology. Whether they are the result of a supernatural design placed within the singularity, the result of supernatural intermittent activity within the physical universe or the result of a creative act cannot be determined scientifically.⁴

The intelligent design and the intelligent assembly of biological entities reside totally outside *natural science*. They are antithetical to natural events having natural causes. However, once existent, the components of biological origins function naturalistically and do not require ongoing supernatural intervention. Scientists can do their experiments and obtain results consistent with methodological naturalism.

The ID movement would be better served by dropping or ignoring all associations with "science" and, instead, assimilate the language of engineering and technology where intelligent activity is normative. The relationship between evolution and intelligent design is not one of science vs. religion but, rather, one of natural science vs. technology.

How should one respond to the question: "Is intelligent design scientific?" A reasonable response would be: "The classification of intelligent design within science is irrelevant. Let me explain why intelligent design belongs within engineering and technology."

The formal concept of Intelligent Design (Upper case 'I' and upper case 'D') is a totally different matter. ID is a process, which differentiates intelligent causation from naturalistic causation. Therefore, it lies wholly outside the natural sciences, outside technology and outside engineering. ID is based in the field of logic.

Proponents of ID use a logical algorithm to determine the probable causative agency, which gave rise to individual biological components. This algorithm, the Explanatory Filter, has three junction points where consecutive decisions are made concerning contingency, complexity

and specificity. This Filter is used to differentiate intelligent causation from natural causation. An activity or structure that is contingent, complex and specified is most likely due to intelligent design and activity. The origin of a specific biological component, which is contingent, complex and specified, lies within biotechnology and/or genetic engineering rather than within natural science.

Lastly, a scientific research program unique to Intelligent Design is a myth. Promoting such a program is counter productive. Intelligent design is advanced through quality scientific research, through the scientific method and through sound reasoning. Neither Michael Behe, author of *Darwin's Black Box*, nor Jonathan Wells, author of *Icons of Evolution*, based their books on an Intelligent Design scientific research program. Rather, both relied on quality research within natural science. A scientific research program from an alien culture should be able to determine that the Pioneer Space Craft is the result of intelligent causation rather than naturalistic causation. No special research program need be set up. The same can be said for the investigation of causative agency concerning biological origins.

Notes

¹W. Dembski, *The Design Revolution* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 34.

²*Ibid.*, 37.

³*Ibid.*

⁴F. Nelson, "Letters: RFE and ID Universe Are Both Supernatural," (*PSCF* 57, no. 1 [March 2005]: 76–7).

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Kudos for the March 2007 Issue

I have just read through the March 2007 issue of *PSCF*. It was the best edition yet. The article-response-author reply pattern added greatly to the clarity and quality of the discussions. I hope that pattern will be continued as much as possible.

Thanks.

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