

Summary

Thesis: Intelligent design is not a scientific theory, but is rather creationism in disguise.

Argument: Each letter represents a different paragraph in this outline.

- a) ID originated in the 1990's when the biochemical limits to evolution were elucidated, since its inception the identity of the designer has been unknown.
- b) Michael Behe classifies Intelligent Design as a scientific theory and a mechanism of evolution.
- c) Behe's main reason for categorizing ID as a scientific theory is because all attempts to provide an evolutionary or scientific explanation for the origin of life have failed, evolution is backed by strong evidence on the microscopic scale, Behe's theory utilizes an intelligent designer to bridge the gap between primordial ooze and simple organisms.
- d) Behe's unidentified designer is very similar to the creator of religious texts; the additional mechanism of evolution ("design") adds nothing to the theory itself.
- e) The methods Behe uses to reach his conclusion are not scientific, ID fails to meet the convergence of evidence principle and the hypothetico-deductive method, thus it is essentially a God of the Gap theory.
- f) Introduction to the concept of irreducible complexity with a focus on the blood clotting cascade.
- g) Definition of irreducible complexity is obscure at best, therefore ID is irrefutable because it cannot be attributed to certain principles, combining evolution and design is illogical (example of the eye).
- h) Designer must intervene frequently because organisms are becoming more complex, designer could be natural or supernatural.
- i) First choice: Natural designer is an alien. Still no answers as to where the extraterrestrial comes from (origin of life), which is the question that ID intends to answer in the first place.
- j) Although Behe avoids the topic of the identity of the designer, it must be investigated; the activities of the intelligent designer imply that it is supernatural.
- k) ID has historical ties to creationism, discussion of Kitzmiller vs. Dover court case; "Of Pandas and People" ID text is almost identical to a creation biology book with the exception of a few word changes.

Conclusion: Although ID has good intentions and seeks to trigger meaningful discussion, it should be properly characterized as creationistic so public school education will be free of the influence of religion.

Style and Structure

The paper is very well structured and you did an excellent job of taking the reader through your ideas. After the introduction paragraph, you talk about the origins of ID and its ambiguity regarding the designer, then you move to Behe's hypothesis and his justification. Next, you attack Behe's arguments and show that ID is not a scientific theory. Finally, the last few paragraphs take a closer look at ID's designer and convincingly illustrate that its activities imply a supernatural character. You effectively conclude by discussing the implications of the Kitzmiller vs. Dover court case, further tying ID to creationism. The order in which you present your information is very effective.

Your writing style uses clear, concise, sentences sometimes ("The identity of the designer is unknown") but also incorporates longer and more elaborate sentences with several commas. The majority prescribe to the former technique (clear, concise structure) which helped me understand your argument. The paper is devoid of almost any serious grammatical errors, but curiously you made a host of minute grammatical errors (see "Specific Suggestions" section). Although I am sure you spent a great deal of time on your paper, maybe try proofreading a bit closer next time. Quotes and citations look professional and are incorporated seamlessly into your sentences. Transitional phrases such as "If Behe's claim is true," are very effective in introducing your next points.

Thesis and Arguments

The thesis you chose expresses a widely held notion, yet that does not make it easy to defend. In fact, its simplicity may help readers by immediately letting them know what they are in store for. You took on a large topic for your paper, yet whittled it down to a persuasive six page paper. Well done.

I like how you present your evidence without getting emotionally involved in the argument. Sometimes it is easy to discern an author's opinion on this subject matter (i.e. is evolution or Intelligent Design a better theory) but for you it is not readily apparent because you stay focused on proving the thesis.

In the paragraph about how Behe's methodology is not scientific, further explanation can be given. When talking about the convergence of evidence principle, you only identify this concept and say that "no single clue could prove conclusively." What is the single clue that ID points to? At least from Behe's book, he has several chapters devoted to different biochemical processes that are purported to be irreducibly complex. Other proponents of ID draw evidence from statistics and probability theory. There is certainly not one piece of evidence or clue that supporters of ID point to as justification. You should develop further on this point.

In the same paragraph, I'm not sure I understand your explanation for the hypothetico-deductive method. This method requires that a theory, in order to be held valid, must "successfully predict later-observed phenomena." In other words, the theory must predict events in the future that are observed and documented by mankind. Does evolution really stand up to this scrutiny? Although microevolution, such as changes in the coloration of moths and adjustments in bird beak size, can readily be observed, macroevolution has not been observed in human history. Perhaps it will be at some point, but at this stage in our development no large changes or progressions from one species to the next have been documented. This is the sort of leap that Behe is addressing when discussing the origins of sufficiently complex structures from the first organic chemicals. Either clarify that the "ample evidence from different fields" is observed *future* phenomena predicted by evolution, or consider restructuring this section.

Specific Suggestions

Intro:

- “Counterargument provided by..” -Just begin this sentence with an A.

Body:

- “Michael Behe is one of the handful scientists..” -Insert an “of” between handful and scientists.
- “...he published a short article, called..” -This comma could be eliminated to help the sentence flow better.
- “This additional “mechanism” is no ways improves...” -Change ways to way.
- “Even when one, following what Behe instructed,...” -Change instructed to “instructs.” As far as I know Michael Behe is still alive and advocating his theory, so it is best to stay in the present tense. The same is true with the word “failed” in this sentence (change to fails). Also in this sentence, the phrase “..religious text,…” should be changed to “religious texts,.”
- “..fallacy, so problematic because...” I don’t think the “so” is necessary here, unless you are using it to say that ID is highly problematic, rather than using it to introduce your next idea. Either way, this construction is a little awkward and you might want to take another look at it.
- “..blood clotting system in human is an..” -Human should be plural here.
- “Behe suggests the probability that they are developed..” -I think you need a second “that” after the word “suggests.”
- “..concept is so blurry that even the creator is unable..” -Surely not all advocates of Intelligent Design are creators of the concept of irreducible complexity. Consider changing this phrase to something like “even its adherents are unable to give definite boundary.”
- “..more advanced ones are designed: a face..” -Capitalize the a after the semicolon.
- “..necessary time period.” -Period should be plural here.
- “Both indicated that the designer..” Explain what you mean by “both” in this sentence, as it reads now it is very unclear. Try something like, “The diversifying of both the environment and animal species require that the designer be present to create the scene during this era.”
- “..the identity of designer, so it could..” -You need a “the” before designer.
- “..the world human perceive..” -Human should be plural.
- “..None of the designer’s primary characteristics is compatible with..” -Change is to are.
- “..the underlying assumption in Intelligent Design hypothesis is by default limits the designer..” -Just eliminate the words, “is by default.” The sentence sounds much better this way. You may want to restructure the rest of this sentence as well because it approaches run-on length.
- “Behe defended..” -Explain what role Behe played in the case, rather than just saying he “defended it.” Readers may get confused here if they don’t know about the details of the case.

- “..in this district public schools.” –Change district to “district’s.”

Conclusion:

- “..Social Darwinism was so prevalent that it started to question and undervalue humanity.” -What is the “it” in this sentence? Is it Social Darwinism or ID? It is not immediately clear because you use “it” for ID in the first part of the sentence but then shift to talking about Social Darwinism. Also, I’m not sure I understand the connection between Social Darwinism and ID. Are you saying that Social Darwinism started to undervalue humanity and thus people were drawn to ID because they would rather be the product of design/creation than the product of the cruel, random process of evolution? Since this idea is completely novel in your paper (you haven’t mentioned it elsewhere) I would further develop it or eliminate it. In the first body paragraph you talk about how a lack of evidence showing biochemical transition led to the development of ID. You could reiterate this point here if you wish. Other than that, the conclusion is thought provoking and excellent.