Intelligent Design vs. Evolution

The origin of life and the manner in which complex organisms were created has been a passionate debate for many decades. Researchers such as Michael Behe, William Dembski, and Michael Egnor are proponents of intelligent design: The theory that life, or the universe, cannot have arisen by chance and was designed and created by some intelligent entity.[1] Others, such as Richard Dawkins, support evolution: The change in genetic composition of a population over successive generations, which may be caused by natural selection, inbreeding, hybridization, or mutation or that all life evolves by the differential survival of replicating entities.[2] But what is the better theory to explain and understand the origins of life? Intelligent design leaves holes in the creation of species, leading to a "God of the gaps theory." This theory also revolves around the concept of "irreducibly complex" beings, which are usually not designed for optimal use and have accessory parts. Due to the flaws in this theory, evolution stands as the greater rationalization of life.

Many theists insist on intelligent design by God. Still, there are many grey areas that all expertise don't have a precise answer for. There is a large gap in how the first life form came about so clergymen believe it is best explained by acts of God. Instead of acknowledging a gap in human knowledge, theologians use the gap as proof that God exists and that God must have altered the organism in some way to fill the gap. This argument has no foundation besides the belief that God exists, which is disputable by itself. No one can completely refute intelligent design without proving or disproving Gods existence. And why must the filler must be God or supernatural? It may just be out

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[1] Webster Definition
[2] Richard Dawkins' book, "The Selfish Gene"
[3] Steve Stewart-Williams' book, "Darwin, God And the Meaning of Life."

of the realms of scientific understanding today and "…science has a nasty habit of filling gaps that once seemed unfillable."[3]

Intelligent design has no scientific evidence and is merely an end to an argument: a stopping point. Evolution is exactly the opposite: a starting point. "Black boxes"[4] are means to "hold" unknown information or ideas at the time that is understood with research and "opened." The concept of black boxes illustrates how science has isolated a problem deemed unsolvable, studied it, and found new information that leads the scientists to a new problem and a new box. Each new box is supposedly the farthest the scientists can go to understanding nature, but each time new data is found and answers are reached and a new starting point is created. Previously, angels were believed to have pushed the planets across the universe. However, through the work of Galileo and Newton, Kepler's model of planetary motion was refined and the law of gravity was introduced.[5] "God of the Gaps" and how life formed is today's black box: ready for research and new technology and ideas necessary to open it. The failure of science to explain an occurrence does not lead to proof of God's work; it merely directs the attention of researchers to where progress and attentiveness need to be made.

Since there are incompetent designs in nature, this also weakens the argument of intelligent design by an intelligent creator. Creationists and some Theistic Evolutionists believe that God was a hands-on creator who created all organisms in a perfect image, yet many parts lower the optimal output of the function and have accessory parts. Why would something perfect have mistakes? A panda does not have opposable digits for

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[3] Steve Stewart-Williams' book, "Darwin, God And the Meaning of Life."
[4] Michael Behe, "Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution."
[5] Andrew D. White, "A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Chistendom."

eating. Its thumb is extremely inefficient for stripping the stalks for food and consequently, it must spend an excessive amount of time preparing bamboo in order to eat it. An intelligent designer would have given the panda a thumb that sped up the process and helped the panda in its daily tasks. However, evolution and natural selection lead to traits that "…evolve to do a better job than alternatives that are actually present in the evolving lineage."[6] The slightly altered thumbs may have attributed to the largest or the strongest pandas, allowing them to survive over others. It may not be the best option, but the change gave those pandas survival skills, causing further alterations with descendants. Evolution (a change over time to help the specie survive) makes sense as to why this inefficiency occurs, while intelligent design (purposely designed inefficiently) leads to more questions about the creator and its motives.

Extra parts and over-complex systems further subside the argument for intelligent design. Blood clotting is a cascade of parts and patterns that heal a wound. It has a specific purpose and is irreducibly complex. These traits make clotting seem to fit into the qualifications of intelligent design, but it doesn't due to the functions and pathways of different portions. There are way too many pathways and some pathways don't seem to fill a specific function necessary for producing a clot.[7] Why would an intelligent designer create something so unreasonably complex with so many extra parts? Similarly, why do humans have a remnant of a tail? Fetuses in their early stages seems to begin to grow a tail that fails to develop, providing reasonable cause to believe that humans' primitive ancestors had a tail. This adds to the case for evolution since the slow gradual process from a different organism to a human could leave traces from the past; in intelligent

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[6] Elliott Sober, "Evidence and Evolution The Logic Behind the Science."
[7] Michael Behe, "Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution."

design, a tail is unnecessary for humans and therefore unnecessary to be placed in the design process for human function.

Intelligent design is not a convincing theory due to the holes in its argument and its reliance on faith and God. Evolution, on the other hand, provides a reasonable step-by-step process for the creation of organisms. It has fossil evidence, chemical and anatomical similarities of related life forms, homologies, and genetic records.[8] The abundance of facts over beliefs leads evolution to be the greater rational for life.

[8] Elliott Sober, "Evidence and Evolution The Logic Behind the Science."