JELLYFISH, KIWIS, AND MOA

DNA analysis continues to be a problem for evolutionists.

DNA analysis, once expected to be the proof evolutionists needed to prove their theory, routinely presents difficult problems for evolutionists. Several recent articles about jellyfish in the journal *Nature*, and an article on southern hemisphere birds in *Science*, are two of the latest examples. The articles about the DNA analysis of a jellyfish contradict the traditional evolutionary belief about the evolution of the nervous system. The *Science* article attempts to reconcile DNA analysis with the evolutionary myth about continental breakup and the evolution of flightless birds. Let's start with the jellyfish.

JELLYFISH

The evolutionary trouble with jellyfish has been around for years. In 2011, the headline of an article in a refereed technical journal said,

*Ancient sea jelly makes tree of life wobble*

Fossil suggests evolutionary order requires revision. ¹

The ancient sea jelly in question is called, *Eoandromeda octobrachiata*. That article said,

A 580-million-year-old fossil is casting doubt on the established tree of animal life. The invertebrate, named *Eoandromeda octobrachiata* because its body plan resembles the spiral galaxy Andromeda, suggests that the earliest branches in the tree need to be reordered, say the authors of study in *Evolution and Development*. ²

Those scientists said the problem was related to symmetry.

That evidence comes from the fossil's shape: it has octoradial symmetry, meaning its body can be sliced into eight identical pieces. This is in stark contrast to modern comb jellies, which, like humans, flies and sea anemones, have biradial or bilateral symmetry — their body plan can be sliced into only two identical pieces.

If *Eoandromeda* appeared after the cnidarians, the authors argue, bilateral symmetry would have to have evolved twice — once for the cnidarians and again for the bilateral organisms that came after *Eoandromeda*. Far simpler is the idea that *Eoandromeda* evolved first (see ‘Simplest solution’). "This model of animal relationships calls for the least number of origins of bilateral symmetry," says Bengtson. ³

It is hard to believe that a miraculous evolutionary innovation happened by chance once—and it is even harder to believe the same innovation happened by chance twice. Bengtson argues it is improbable that bilateral symmetry (that is left and right sides that mirror each other) could have evolved twice.

This seems like a rather weak argument to us. If you believe in evolution, it might not be too difficult for you to believe that a simple mutation caused a mirror image to evolve. That seems to be a rather simple change for an evolutionist to believe.

On the other hand, it is much harder to believe that something as complex as a fully-functional nervous system evolved by chance once, and incredibly hard to believe that two radically different nervous systems evolved by chance. That brings us to the jellyfish articles in last

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² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*
month’s issue of Nature. The headline and subheading of one of the articles about jellyfish pretty much says it all.

**Jelly genome mystery**

Publication of the draft genetic sequence of a sea gooseberry [jellyfish] reveals a nervous system like no other. 4

According to the article,

The genome of the Pacific sea gooseberry (Pleurobrachia bachei), which Moroz and his team report online today in Nature, adds to the mystery of ctenophores (L. L. Moroz et al. Nature http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/nature13400; 2014). The sequence omits whole classes of genes found in all other animals, including genes normally involved in immunity, development and neural function. For that reason, the researchers contend that ctenophores evolved a nervous system independently.

Ctenophores have long vexed taxonomists [scientists who classify things]. Their resemblance to jellyfish earned them a spot on the tree of life as a sister group to cnidarians (the phylum that includes jellyfish). On the basis of their nervous systems — which can detect light, sense prey and move musculature — many researchers had them branching off from the common ancestor of other animals after the sponges and flattened multicellular blobs known as placozoans, neither of which have a nervous system. Now armed with data showing that ctenophores lack many common genes, some scientists contend that these are the closest living relatives to the first animals. 5

In other words, ctenophores don’t have many genes commonly found in most “highly evolved” animals. Therefore, they say, these jellyfish must have evolved very early from one of the first living animals. (If they had evolved later, they would have inherited all those common genes.)

The nervous system of the Pacific sea gooseberry is so different from all other animal nervous systems that evolutionists are forced to admit that they could not have been inherited from a common ancestor.

The uniqueness of this ctenophore’s nervous system leads Moroz and his team to argue that it must have evolved independently, after the ctenophore lineage branched off from other animals some 500 million years ago. “Everyone thinks this kind of complexity cannot be done twice,” Moroz says. “But this organism suggests that it happens.” 6

Despite the obvious facts, evolutionists just throw logic and common sense to the wind and believe the impossible. The classic example of this is found in Chapter 5 of Richard Dawkin’s book, Climbing Mount Improbable. After quoting Darwin’s statement that the evolution of vision would seem to be “absurd in the highest possible degree,” Dawkins goes on to argue,

It has been authoritatively estimated that eyes have evolved no fewer than forty times, and probably more than sixty times, independently in various parts of the animal kingdom. In some cases these eyes use radically different principles. Nine distinct principles have been recognized among the forty to sixty independently evolved eyes. 7

Regarding the “problems” associated with visual perception, Dawkins says,

The different solutions to problems pop up here, there, and everywhere, suggesting, yet again, that they [eyes] evolve rapidly, and at the drop of a hat. 8

He believes that since eyes evolved accidentally 40 to 60 times, it MUST be much more likely to happen than one would naturally think.

The nervous system (of which the eye is just one part) is more complicated than an eye. The central nervous system controls the heart, and other organs. To think that a nervous system could evolve by chance just once is ridiculous. To say that it could happen twice is twice as ridiculous.

The genetic evidence is irrefutable. The two nervous systems are so different they could not possibly have evolved from a common ancestor. Furthermore, since the nervous systems could not possibly have been consciously conceived by one or more supernatural designers, the two nervous systems had to evolve, by chance, independently. There is no other possible conclusion. ☺

Since the nervous systems could not have been inherited from a common ancestor, that fact affects the shape of the evolutionary tree of life. So, here is the new “truth” about evolution:

Only two groups of animals do without a nervous system: sponges, which are simple

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5 ibid.
6 ibid.
7 Dawkins, 1996, Climbing Mount Improbable, Chapter 5, “The Forty-fold Path to Enlightenment,” page 139
8 ibid. page 188
animals attached to the sea bottom that do not show complex behaviours, and the placozoans, animals comprised of two flat sheets of cells that creep along the ocean floor absorbing nutrients. The simplicity of sponges and placozoans has led generations of zoologists to conclude that they are ancient animal groups, and may look very like the first multicellular animals that emerged on the planet more than 500 million years ago.

Over the past decade, however, extensive comparisons of protein and DNA sequences have led to surprising rearrangements at the base of the animal tree of life. In fact, it seems that previous assumptions about the origin of multicellular animals may be wrong, and that a group of gelatinous creatures, the ctenophores, collectively referred to as comb jellies, could be the first group to have branched off from the animal tree of life.

As a result, evolutionists have to call upon the service of spin doctors to explain away the obvious conclusion (that the theory of evolution is false).

The phylogenetic position of comb jellies at the base of the animal tree of life and the findings of Moroz and co-workers suggest a fascinating scenario — that comb jellies evolved a nervous system that is unrelated to that of other animals. Heretical hypotheses such as this strike a blow against the anthropocentric view that complex animals emerged gradually along one lineage only, culminating in humans, and that complex organ systems did not evolve twice. But such views do not reflect how evolution really works. Evolution does not follow a chain of events in which one lineage progresses continuously towards complexity while other branches stagnate. Instead, it is an ongoing process in all lineages. When the animal tree branched more than 500 million years ago, one lineage gave rise to ctenophores and the other to all remaining animals alive today, and it seems that the two lineages independently evolved a rapid internal communication system.

Here’s the way a different spin doctor tried to make it all better:

“Animals evolved gradually, from the lowly sponge to the menagerie of tentacled, winged and brainy creatures that inhabit Earth today.

This idea makes such intuitive sense that biologists are now stunned by genome-sequencing data suggesting that the sponges were preceded by complex marine predators called comb jellies. … If comb jellies evolved before sponges, the sponges probably lost some of their ancestors’ complexity.

It certainly is true that DEVOLUTION can happen. Genetic information certainly can be lost, resulting in reduced functionality. For example, genetic mutation can take away a bird’s ability to fly. But to argue that sponges lost a complex nervous system misses two points. First, how did they get that complex system in the first place? And second, what was the survival advantage in losing that complexity?

A third spin doctor uses an argument we have often made.

“In the analyses I’ve done, ctenophores are the most problematic taxon. They jump around depending on which genes you use and which animals you include,” says Gert Wörheide, a molecular palaeobiologist at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich in Germany.

Genetic similarity depends upon which things you choose to compare, and which things you choose to ignore. You can reach whatever conclusion you want.

So, what is their conclusion?

Regardless of where ctenophores finally end up on the tree, the development and evolution of the complex nervous system of these creatures will be an enigma for some time. If it turns out that comb jellies are not at the base of the tree and that animal neurons indeed originated only once, someone must figure out why the molecular biology underlying the comb-jelly nervous system is so different from that of other animals.

There is more opportunity for research funding, which is really all that matters!☺

Moa DNA Problems

Now let’s move from the jellyfish to the birds. An article in last month’s journal Science reported

10 ibid.
12 ibid.
on a study about ratites which revealed a serious discrepancy between DNA analysis and traditional evolutionary history. A ratite is a bird that belongs to a family of big, flightless, southern birds like the elephant bird, ostrich, emu, rhea, and moa. (That's the last moa pun in this essay. I promise!)

In particular, the article addressed the problem of how moas got to New Zealand. They can't fly, can't swim, and certainly didn't walk there. Evolutionists have traditionally believed that they evolved in New Zealand from a closely related bird that was already there. This recent DNA study blew that theory out of the water.

Despite extensive studies, the evolutionary history of the giant flightless ratite birds of the Southern Hemisphere landmasses and the related flighted tinamous of South America has remained a major unresolved question. 14

What, you might ask, is the unresolved question? Even if you might not ask, here is the answer:

New Zealand is the only landmass to have supported two major ratite lineages: the giant herbivorous moa and the chicken-sized, nocturnal, omnivorous kiwi. Morphological phylogenetic analyses initially suggested that these two groups were each other's closest relatives, presumably diverging after the isolation of an ancestral form following the separation of New Zealand and Australia in the late Cretaceous ~80 to 60 million years ago (Ma). However, subsequent studies suggest that kiwi are more closely related to the Australasian emu and cassowaries, whereas the closest living relatives of the giant moa are the flighted South American tinamous. The latter relationship was completely unexpected on morphological grounds [comparison of shapes] and suggests a more complex evolutionary history than predicted by a model of strict vicariant speciation. 15

In plain English, a genetic analysis of the giant moa (native to New Zealand) shows that it is more closely related to a South American bird (a tinamou, which looks like a chicken, and can fly) than an emu (a similar-looking flightless bird which is native to Australia). The DNA analysis contradicted the traditional “morphological phylogenetic analyses,” which are studies that constructed an evolutionary tree based on shape

How did they come to this conclusion, and why is it surprising?

We used hybridization enrichment with in-solution RNA arrays of palaeognath [tinamou] mitochondrial genome sequences and high-throughput sequencing to sequence near-complete mitochondrial genomes from both elephant bird genera: *Aepyornis* and *Mullerornis*. Phylogenetic analyses placed the two taxa, *Aepyornis hildebrandti* (15,547 base pairs) and *Mullerornis agilis* (15,731 base pairs), unequivocally as the sister taxa to the kiwi (Fig. 1 and fig. S1). This result was consistently retrieved, regardless of phylogenetic method or taxon sampling, and was strongly supported by topological tests. To our knowledge, no previous study has suggested this relationship, probably because of the disparate morphology, ecology, and distribution of the two groups. Elephant birds were herbivorous, almost certainly diurnal, and among the largest birds known, whereas kiwi are highly derived omnivores, nocturnal, and about two orders of magnitude smaller. 16

They are very confident in their results; but they are surprised because their results say that some very large birds, which are active during the day, and eat only seeds and plants, are closely related to little birds which are active at night and eat seeds and bugs.

The relationships they discovered using genetic analysis don't make sense geographically, either.

Madagascar and New Zealand have never been directly connected, and molecular dates calculated from the genetic data suggest that kiwi and elephant birds diverged after the breakup of Gondwana (Fig. 1 and fig. S4). However, mean node age estimates among palaeognath lineages are sensitive to taxon sampling (Fig. 2), so molecular dating provides limited power for testing hypotheses about ratite biogeography. 17

Evolutionists believe that a supercontinent called Gondwana broke up millions of years ago, and before it broke up, animals could easily travel from one part of the Earth to another. They also believe that they can tell how long ago two species diverged from their common ancestor by measuring genetic differences and assuming a mutation rate. But, when they compare the time they think the kiwi lineage broke from the elephant bird lineage, that time does not agree with the

15 ibid.
16 ibid.
17 ibid.
time when they think Gondwana broke up. So, Kieren argues that the age estimates aren’t accurate because they depend upon which birds from each lineage you sample.

The elephant birds, which lived on Madagascar until recently, pose a similar problem.

Perhaps the most enigmatic [puzzling] of the modern palaeognaths are the recently extinct giant Madagascan elephant birds. Africa and Madagascar were the first continental fragments to rift from the supercontinent Gondwana, separating from the other continents (and each other) completely during the Early Cretaceous (~130 to 100 Ma). Consequently, the continental vicariance model predicts that elephant birds and ostriches should be the basal palaeognath lineages. Most molecular analyses recover the ostrich in a basal position, consistent with a vicariant model. However, the phylogenetic position of the elephant birds remains unresolved, as cladistic studies of ratite morphology are sensitive to character choice and may be confounded by convergence, whereas DNA studies have been hampered by the generally poor molecular preservation of elephant bird remains. 18

In plain English, elephant birds should be “basal” (near the base of the mythical tree of life) because they should have evolved more than 100 million years ago, before Madagascar became isolated from other land masses. DNA analysis doesn’t agree with conventional evolutionary prejudice, so the “phylogenetic placement” (that is, position on the tree of life) of elephant birds “remains unresolved.”

If DNA analysis had confirmed evolutionary prejudice, it would have been hailed as proof that they were right without question. The conclusions of “cladistic studies of ratite morphology” (that is, comparison of the shapes of the ratite family of birds) depend upon “character choice” (that is, which physical characteristics one chooses to deem as more important or less important) didn’t agree with the DNA analysis. Therefore, the DNA analysis could be wrong because the biological samples of elephant birds, taken before they went extinct, might have been poorly preserved. “Convergence” is the other common evolutionary excuse for unexpected results. Convergence is the belief that evolution caused two unrelated species to accidentally and independently converge on the same survival solution, resulting in similar physical features or similar DNA.

You might have heard an evolutionist say that, if a scientist ever discovers anything that disproves the theory of evolution, that science would reject the theory. But, as you can see, that simply isn’t the case. Whenever DNA evidence is inconsistent with evolutionary theory (as it frequently is), it doesn’t disprove the theory. Instead, all sorts of excuses are made to try to reconcile the theory with the DNA facts by making up some fantastic explanation. For example,

The evolution of the ratite birds has been widely attributed to vicariant speciation, driven by the Cretaceous breakup of the supercontinent Gondwana. The early isolation of Africa and Madagascar implies that the ostrich and extinct Madagascan elephant birds (Aepyornithidae) should be the oldest ratite lineages. We sequenced the mitochondrial genomes of two elephant birds and performed phylogenetic analyses, which revealed that these birds are the closest relatives of the New Zealand kiwi and are distant from the basal ratite lineage of ostriches. This unexpected result strongly contradicts continental vicariance and instead supports flighted dispersal in all major ratite lineages. We suggest that convergence toward gigantism and flightlessness was facilitated by early Tertiary expansion into the diurnal herbivory niche after the extinction of the dinosaurs. 19

In other words, because the dinosaurs went extinct, the ratite birds didn’t have to hide during the day. They didn’t have to be so small that they wouldn’t be worth a dinosaur’s time to hunt and eat them. After the dinosaurs were gone, they got big by eating plants, and didn’t need to be able to fly away to escape the dinosaurs. It’s a wonderful story, isn’t it? ☺

The phylogenetic placement of the elephant bird as sister to the kiwi creates a marked discordance between the order of continental breakup (Fig. 3, A and B) and the sequence of palaeognath divergences (Fig. 3C). Instead, it appears that the common ancestor of elephant birds and kiwis was probably flighted and capable of long-distance dispersal, which is supported by a small, possibly flighted kiwi relative from the Early Miocene of New Zealand. Together, the phylogenetic position of the flighted tinamous and apparent [unknown] flighted ancestor of the kiwi and elephant bird imply that every major ratite lineage independently lost flight (Fig. 1). 20

In other words their new “phylogenetic placement” (that is, their new mythical

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18 ibid.
19 ibid.
20 ibid.
evolutionary tree) of the birds they studied is inconsistent with the Gondwana legend about the separation of the continents 100 million years ago. Therefore, some unknown bird must have flown from South America to New Zealand relatively recently (in mythical geological time), and all of its descendants living today have separately lost the ability to fly.

**LIVING IN A DREAM**

This reminds me of a song that says, "Only a fool believes" because "a wise man has the power to reason away what seems to be." The evidence against evolution is plain to see—but they are "smart" enough to come up with reasons why the plain truth isn't true. They call themselves scientists, but they are really dream weavers.

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**RELIGION AND PROBABILITY**

**Sam’s hatred of God trumps science.**

Sam began the conversation with this email.

While perusing your essays, I noted one thing missing - evidence FOR young earth creation. I see lots of attacks on evolution, evolutionists, and so forth, but I did not come across a single instance of you writing about positive, scientific evidence indicative of a young earth, flat creation, or post-flood diversification.

You offer lots of snark and bombast, but all you are doing is hurling stones from the sidelines.

We sent him this one-sentence reply:

*You are right, we don’t promote Biblical ideas.*

That seemed to anger him even more. He responded:

*Yours is the coward’s way. I suspect that the real answer is that you know that there is no evidence for biblical creation.*

*You have nothing to offer FOR your bronze age, middle eastern myths, so you just attack and insult and condescend. I like how the desperate creationist always tries to deflect the fact that they have nothing onto evolution. The geological and historical evidence clearly provide no evidence for a world-wide flood ~4500 years ago. There is no "science" for Yahweh making a man from dust. THIS is why all you can do is insult and throw stones from the sidelines.*

So, I asked him,

*Why can you not honestly investigate the theory of evolution without bringing religion into it?*

He responded:

*Why can you not do the same? Your "scientific" discussions of many of the topics on your site demonstrate the fact that you have no relevant background in the material. So, like all creationists with vanity websites, you engage in distortion and disinformation to prop up your Faith, all the while pretending that it is all scientific. I can easily demonstrate to you your various failures and misrepresentations on several of your pages if you'd like.*

*How can he say we can’t help bringing religion into the discussion? All one has to do is read any of our newsletters to see that religion is mentioned very rarely, and only when someone else brings it up, and never as proof of anything. This is one of those rare occasions in which we can’t avoid mentioning religion because Sam’s personal attacks are rooted in his religious beliefs.*

I invited him to correct any scientific error we have published, but he didn’t even try. He just made more accusations about my honesty and presumed faith.

*There is no point in trying to convince someone like Sam of anything—but I did try to understand his point of view because it might help me have a rational discussion with a reasonable person who holds the same views. I asked him why he believes in evolution and he sent copies of articles written by other people telling why those people believe in evolution. I was tempted to ask him if he was unable to think for himself, but I took this diplomatic approach instead:*

*I see from my email that I phrased my question poorly. I want to know what YOU think the evidence is for evolution—not what other people think. Since you didn’t tell me what you think, I have to infer from the articles you quoted that you think that genetic similarity can only be the result of a common biological ancestor, and cannot be evidence of a common designer. Therefore, you must think there is a way to tell the difference. Please tell me what you think that way is.*

*At last, I finally got an answer! It wasn’t a very good answer; but it’s probably the best answer I could expect to get from him.*

*I'm sure so well-read a non-scientist as you is aware of things like the GULO gene and other 'shared errors' used in phylogenetics. What sort of designer would put the same broken genes in different creatures?* Would you put a faulty and/or non-used circuit in two different new electronic contraptions because the first old one you designed had that circuit and it worked for that original device? No - that would be stupid and indicative of incompetence. But you imply that your ethereal and evidence-less 'designer' may have done so. After all - who can know what this "designer" (wink wink) had in mind?"
Because his belief in evolution is entirely based on his religious beliefs, he projects his reasoning upon me, and assumes my disbelief in evolution is entirely based on my religious beliefs. The truth is, my analysis has been influenced greatly by my experience gained during the years when I was employed doing what is politely called, “foreign material exploitation.” It was very humbling to discover that some of the “stupid” circuits in Soviet weapons were actually so clever that I didn’t immediately recognize their genius. “Shared errors” might not be errors at all. They might actually be features that are not correctly understood.

Evolutionists used to talk about how much “junk DNA” there was. This was DNA that supposedly had no purpose, formed by accident. Now scientists know that nearly all that junk DNA isn’t junk. It has purpose. (The remaining “junk” probably has purpose, too, but isn’t understood yet.) That’s why most evolutionists no longer argue that the existence of so much junk DNA is evidence that the DNA molecule formed by accident. “Junk DNA” isn’t junk, and “DNA errors” might not be errors.

But suppose those genetic similarities really are errors. Errors don’t prove common ancestry. Errors that are easy to make can often be made independently in different situations. (Different people accidentally misspell certain words the same way. That’s why Microsoft Word has an autocorrect feature which automatically corrects the spelling of some words. You have to tell Word not to change “hte” to “the” automatically.) If errors don’t significantly affect survival, they will not be removed by natural selection. Therefore, a simple-to-make genetic error that does not have serious consequences might arise independently in multiple species and might become established in different species.

**Distinguishing Intent**

I asked Sam how to tell the difference between intentional similarity and accidental similarity. It would be unfair of me not to answer the question myself.

First of all, I must state my belief that it is possible to differentiate purpose from accident. Again, this belief is rooted in my former employment, some of which involved target recognition. A smart bomb needs to be programmed to distinguish a man-made structure (a bridge or an armored vehicle) from a natural feature (a tree or a rock). Algorithms do exist for making the distinction, which I am not at liberty to share.

The game of poker, however, is not subject to security restrictions, so let’s see if you can recognize purpose from accident in a friendly game of poker. The photographs below show four hands dealt during a poker game. The hands were dealt twice. The first time was Deal A, and the second time was Deal B.

In Deal A, West was dealt a flush, North was dealt a full house, East was dealt four-of-a-kind, and I (South) dealt myself a straight flush (the highest hand).

Do you think I dealt those hands from a shuffled deck, or a stacked deck? If you think those hands (which encourage my three opponents to bet large sums of money, only to lose to my straight flush) were honestly dealt from a shuffled deck, I would like to invite you to my high-stakes poker game next Wednesday night.

Now consider Deal B.

Could those cards have been dealt from a shuffled deck? Yes, they could. In fact, they were.

Why might you believe that Deal B came from a shuffled deck, but Deal A came from a stacked deck? Your first response might be, “The odds against Deal A are so small that it could not possibly have happened by chance.” That’s the wrong answer. Yes, the odds against Deal A are very small indeed, but it could possibly have happened by chance. I would not bet on it—but it could happen.
But it isn’t really a question of probability. The probability that those 20 cards in Deal A were dealt in that order is exactly the same as the probability that the 20 cards in Deal B were dealt in that order. Let me say that again a different way to make sure I make myself perfectly clear. Deal A is no less probable than Deal B. If you shuffle a deck and deal out 20 cards, it is just unlikely that those 20 cards will match Deal B as Deal A.

But you were able, instinctively, to know that Deal A came from a stacked deck, and Deal B came from a shuffled deck, even though both hands are equally unlikely. Since probability has nothing to do with it, how were you able to recognize my nefarious purpose in Deal A?

It all comes down to “meaning” or “purpose.” The four hands in Deal A have meaning, and serve a purpose. (Their purpose is to beat a less powerful hand.) Because it has meaning, there is a name for South’s hand in Deal A. It is called “a straight flush”—but there is no name for South’s hand in Deal B because it has no meaning, value, or purpose.

YOU CAN SOMETIMES TELL BY LOOKING

If I show you a picture of something you have never seen before, and you don’t know what it is, can you tell if it is man-made or not? If the thing in the picture has wheels, or gears, or hinges, then you know it is man-made because wheels, gears, and hinges serve a purpose. You may not know what the purpose is. You may reasonably think it probably has something to do with motion; but even though you don’t know the purpose, you can recognize that the object in the picture must be man-made because things like wheels, gears and hinges have a purpose.

Things that have a purpose don’t happen by accident. If you can spot a purpose in something, it didn’t happen by accident. BUT, you might argue, there is a plant called a Venus flytrap. It has hinges in its leaves. Those hinges weren’t man-made! Yes, they weren’t man-made and they do have a purpose.

The Venus flytrap (also Venus’s flytrap or Venus’ flytrap), Dionaea muscipula, is a carnivorous plant native to subtropical wetlands on the East Coast of the United States. It catches its prey—chiefly insects and arachnids—with a trapping structure formed by the terminal portion of each of the plant’s leaves and is triggered by tiny hairs on their inner surfaces. When an insect or spider crawling along the leaves contacts a hair, the trap closes if a different hair is contacted within twenty seconds of the first strike. The requirement of redundant triggering in this mechanism serves as a safeguard against a waste of energy in trapping objects with no nutritional value.

Not only does it have hinges, it has sensory hairs, and an algorithm that avoids wasting energy. So there is clearly some purpose involved.

The evolutionists’ argument is that this arrangement of hairs, a hinge, and a triggering algorithm (not to mention the subsequent digestive process) happened by accident, and was favored by natural selection. The probability of this happening is very low, but given enough time, any improbable combination can occur. Their argument fails because it isn’t a question of probability—it is a question of purpose. Everything is improbable. Every poker hand is improbable. It isn’t the probability—it’s the functionality that shows purpose.

THE IMPOSSIBLE ALARM

Someone might argue that some poker players are dealt a straight flush COMPLETELY BY ACCIDENT. But it isn’t completely by accident. Somebody intentionally dealt the cards. They deal the cards for a reason—they wanted to play poker.

Just because something is improbable doesn’t always mean it had to have happened on purpose—but it should alert you to the possibility of intention. As we just said, it is possible that a poker player might be dealt a straight flush naturally. It does happen, rarely. But if someone is dealt a straight flush several times during one evening, it really should alert you to the possibility that the game might be rigged.

It is improbable that two different functioning nervous systems evolved independently by chance. The improbability of this happening does not, in itself, prove it didn’t happen. But the improbability should alert you to the fact that something unlikely AND MEANINGFUL has happened, which is generally an indication of purposeful intent. But in this month’s feature article we noted that although the scientists who studied the nervous system of the Pacific sea gooseberry recognized that it was incredibly improbable that two entirely different nervous systems would evolve by accident, they came to the irrational conclusion that it did happen by accident.

IMPERFECTION

Sam thinks that imperfection is evidence of

accident. I've never owned a perfect car that never broke down and needed repair. That doesn't mean all my vehicles were created by accident.

Sam apparently isn't aware of the second law of thermodynamics, which says that, given enough time, the Great Wall of China will crumble and completely disappear. Nothing lasts forever. Things fall apart. They don't fall together. The Great Wall of China did not build itself.

Sam thinks that common "errors" in DNA are evidence of common ancestry. As we said before, those "errors" might have unknown functionality and not be errors at all. But suppose they really are errors. It is an "error" when a wall falls down. If two walls fall down, it doesn't mean they were both built by the same shoddy builder. It just means nothing lasts forever.

It is a fact that DNA gets copied during reproduction, and the copying process is imperfect. After many generations, DNA accumulates errors. Natural selection tends to weed out those errors. Natural selection conserves the integrity of DNA—it doesn't encourage innovation. But natural selection isn't perfect. Genetic defects have worked their way into all living things to one degree or another. It is not surprising that two unrelated species might both acquire a non-lethal mutation if it is easy for that mutation to occur.

Sam's religious beliefs cloud his judgment. He believes there is no purpose to life. We are all just the result of the accidental formation of DNA molecules. Since he doesn't believe in purpose, he can't see purpose even when it is obvious.

The world around Sam is full of improbable things that have a purpose (a cell phone, for example). Certainly he can't believe cell phones appeared by accident. It would be irrational to believe that. BUT a Venus flytrap has hinged leaves that are just as improbable and have a purpose. It is just as irrational for him to believe that those hinged leaves happened by accident—but his religious belief (that is, atheism) forces him to be irrational and unscientific.

Atheism distracts scientists from uncovering the truth. Scientists can learn much from comparative genetic studies when they don't waste time trying to figure out how accidents caused similarities and differences and look for purpose instead. It would be far more productive to determine exactly how those similarities and differences in DNA manifest themselves in physical characteristics.

If you rip the arm off a starfish, it will eventually grow back. If you rip my arm off, it won't—but at birth my DNA did cause my arm to grow. What's different about the DNA in a starfish and my DNA that will allow the starfish to grow an arm any time, but I can only grow an arm in the womb?

Yes, we know there are scientists who are doing studies like this. That's great. Our point is there are many scientists who aren't. They are wasting time and money trying to prove that an incorrect theory of origins is correct.

Even worse, there are people like Sam who are actually impeding scientific advancement by attacking people who are using science to discover meaning and purpose in the Universe. Remember, it was Sam who wrote an unsolicited email personally attacking me for pointing out that the theory of evolution is unscientific and should be discarded.

Perhaps it makes Sam emotionally insecure to think that he might be wrong. His atheism will probably prevent him from recognizing the obvious signs of purpose. That's why we don't waste our time arguing with people like Sam. But it is important to understand why people like Sam insist on believing the unbelievable. It is important to realize that his belief in evolution isn't based on scientific evidence. He believes in evolution despite all the scientific evidence against it. He has to believe in evolution because it is the creation myth of atheism. So, it is all about religion to him. He is incapable of separating his religious beliefs from the theory of evolution.

But deep down inside, he must realize that the theory of evolution is incompatible with science. That's why he lashes out at us when we present uncomfortably strong scientific arguments against evolution. Nothing is going to change his mind as long as he is a confirmed atheist. To get him to see the truth about evolution, we would have to help him deal with his God issues. We don't do that.

The purpose of Science Against Evolution isn't to convert anyone to any particular religion. The purpose of Science Against Evolution is stated on our home page. “Since 1996, it has been Science Against Evolution's objective to make the general public aware that the theory of evolution is not consistent with physical evidence and is no longer a respectable theory describing the origin and diversity of life.”

The first step in scientific advancement is to realize a formerly held belief is wrong. That opens the door to scientific discovery. That's what we are trying to do.

Yes, some things are discovered by accident—but the odds that you will find an answer increase if you are actively looking for it. Scientists should look for purpose—not random luck.
CREATION WISE

http://www.creationwise.com/index.html

The Creation-Evolution Debate

This month’s website review looks at a site which provides interesting insights into the creation-evolution debate. The main page of the site is organized into three sections. The top section provides links to five topics: Creation, Evolution, Universe, DNA and Humans (plus some changing images). The small left section contains links to additional material. The main section (on the right) provides detailed information about the chosen link. The website is easy to traverse and provides links to return to the Front Page after exploring a particular topic.

The Front Page of the site provides an introduction and makes the observation that “The creation-evolution debate involves two sides whose belief systems mean that they are not able (or willing) to understand each other.” Then the author of the site presents some interesting insights into the size of the universe and the 8.7 million species on planet Earth.

After reading the introductory material of the website main page you can explore the main topics or other material such as 1) How old is the Earth? 2) Irreducible Mechanisms, 3) Polystrate Fossils, 4) Living Fossils, 5) Evolution Contradictions and 6) Evolution Frauds.

I find the comments the author makes about evolution in the main topic section of Evolution quite interesting. He states “People should not use the term ‘the theory of evolution’ because the word ‘theory’ gives credence to the concept of evolution. Evolution is a hypothesis and is not substantiated in any way!” He also has much to say about natural selection.

There is much to explore on this website and I’m sure the reader will find the comments the website author makes on various subjects are well thought out. He certainly is not afraid to state his opinion on many controversial topics.

One thing I find interesting about this website is that no information is provided as to who is the author of the site. No biographical information is provided. The Contact Us link just provides a UK email address. I guess when dealing with controversial topics it is good that one can remain anonymous on the Internet.