

Designer - Yes or No?

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Evolutionists are fond of making a theological argument, which goes something like this:

1. If all living creatures and their parts are the product of a perfect Designer, then all living creatures and their parts are perfectly designed.
2. **Not all living creatures and their parts are perfectly designed.**
3. Therefore, not all living creatures and their parts are the product of a perfect Designer.

Such imperfection or sub-optimality is best explained, they think, by the blind workings of natural selection. Charles Darwin proposed this line of reasoning in his *Origin of Species*. Just as the study of complicated things having a function points us toward a Designer (teleology), so the study of complicated things having little or no function points us away from a Designer (dysteleology).

The vertebrate eye is an oft-cited example of bad design. As evolutionists like to put it, the retina is upside down. Light must pass through various cells before getting to the rods and cones that are buried, head first, in yet another layer of cells. In other words, the critical parts of the rods and cones are pointing **away** from the source of light. This arrangement also requires a “blind spot” through which the wiring of the photoreceptors must be routed. It is a little like having all the cords and connections for your entertainment center on the front of the screen. For all these reasons, George Williams concludes that the eye is “stupidly designed.”¹

As a general approach, dysteleology is deeply flawed. First, it is an argument made from ignorance. Evolutionists are quick to consign any mysterious body part to the trash heap of natural selection. Other scientists, blessedly ignorant of the Darwinian agenda, eventually find a use for so-called vestigial organs. Second, bad design is in the eye of the beholder. As George Ayoub has pointed out, you can try changing the order of layers in the vertebrate eye, but only at the ex-

¹ Williams, George C. *Natural Selection: Domains, Levels, and Challenges*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 73.

pense of starving the photoreceptors of essential nutrients and oxygen.² When faced with the prospects of “imperfect” vision, or no vision at all, it is hard to argue with the Creator’s choice. Third, even if we were to concede that the eye or some other component of living creatures is badly designed, it is still the **product of a designer**. Witness the Ford Pinto and New Coke. Fourth, if evolutionists really want to argue on the level of theology, we could certainly respond that the presence of imperfection in the world today hardly implies the presence of imperfection at the time of creation. While everything was “very good” (Genesis 1:31), the entrance of sin into the world has made the whole creation suffer (Romans 8:22).

Pulling back even further, we can see two fundamental problems. First, Darwinists are constantly telling us that evolution is an important part of science. To them, rejecting evolution is tantamount to rejecting good science, and if we reject good science, our quality of life will surely suffer. In fact, dysteleology has hindered the progress of science. According to Wojciech Makalowski, classifying large chunks of DNA as useless remnants of our evolutionary past has “repelled mainstream researchers” from studying this “genomic treasure.”³

Second, Darwinists are caught in a contradiction, if not outright hypocrisy. On the one hand, they will try to assure the lay public that the very possibility of design is a religious question and has nothing to do with cold, hard science. On the other hand, they must acknowledge the appearance of design in order to advance their anti-God atheology. They have to make a choice: either design is a taboo subject, or design is a legitimate subject. Which one will it be? In the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, biologist J. Scott Turner had to admit that the presence of design in the living world is at least an interesting question.⁴

The problem with asking these sorts of questions is that it puts the two sides on a level playing field where the independent critical thinker will have to weigh the evidence for him or herself. This is a debate that dogmatic evolutionists simply do not want because they know they cannot win.

² Ayoub, George. “On the Design of the Vertebrate Retina,” *Origins & Design*, 1996, 17:1. [Online] <http://www.arn.org/docs/odesign/od171/retina171.htm>

³ Makalowski, Wojciech. “Not Junk After All,” *Science*, 23 May 2003.

⁴ Turner, J. Scott, “Why Can’t We Discuss Intelligent Design?”, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 19 January 2007, B20.