**THE SKEPTIC ARENA.COM**

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**Misconceptions of Intelligent Design**

**by Arthur Khachatryan**

***I recently came across a blog post written by an atheist that ... begins by claiming that nobody knows what Intelligent Design (ID) is, and that people who hold to ID are intentionally changing the terminology in order to confuse the masses. First, I must point out that this is patently false.***

**Arthur, Intelligent Design is the theory that our universe is best explained by the creative activity of an all-powerful god. This belief is held by billions of people all over the world.**

***While I’m a bit confounded why there is so much confusion in the public about ID, I suppose I should not be.***

**Arthur, I'm not confounded. Intelligent Design is a desperate attempt by Ghost Worshipers to counter the provable results of science.**

***The more accurate view of ID would be that life and universe are “better explained as the result of a mind rather than mindless process” because they bare the qualities usually associated with a mind, namely complex specified information, that from our uniform repeated experience only come from minds, not blind processes.***

**Arthur, before there were minds, complex specified information existed in many forms. We have the fossils to prove it. Attributing this information to "blind processes" demonstrates a failure on your part, to understand that the basic laws of science are anything but ... blind.**

***Secondly, ID does not merely pertain to the origin of life, but permeates many other areas of biology, many areas of chemistry and into physics and cosmology.***

**Arthur, swap out the words "pertain to" and "permeates" for the word "infects" ... and I'll sign.**

***The modern ID movement is merely the direct scientific application to the concepts.***

**Arthur, Intelligent Design is the direct *rejection* of scientific conclusions to the concepts.**

***Let’s take a look at some of the other specific claims mentioned in the piece.***

***1. ID is against the scientific theory of evolution, because evolution doesn’t explain abiogenesis.***

***To put it mildly, the writer has a horridly inaccurate view of ID. First, ID is not necessarily against evolution with respect to the totality of what is meant by ‘evolution.’ ID is a scientific model for helping to explain the natural world***

**No Arthur, it is not. There isn't an ounce of science in Intelligent Design. It is a religious model of the world and nothing more.**

***In one sense it competes with evolution, but in another sense, it also works in conjunction with evolution. That evolutionary processes are at work in biological systems is not really a question of debate. Small evolutionary changes within kinds have been directly observed.***

**Arthur, that's what forced "you guys" to invent the terms "micro-evolution" and "macro-evolution."**

***There is usually enough built-in genetic variability in organisms to allow for fairly wide adaptive range. ID is typically employed when large amounts of complex specified biological information is required to go from one completely different organism or subset of an organism to another of a completely different nature.***

**Arthur, where your argument fails spectacularly, is in your failure to recognize that all life on Earth is related, and that there are no organisms "of a completely different nature."**

**I know how much it bothers you that you are related to monkeys. But the truth is much worse than that - you are also related to a banana. In your case, probably much more closely ... than in mine.**

**Interestingly, it doesn't seem to bother "you people" to believe that you were created out of magic mud; and it is that fact that pretty much blows the lid off your pretensions of being logical and scientific: that belief proves ... that you are neither.**

***Secondly, far from being a matter of settled fact, a naturalistic means of generating life from non-life has NOT been explained.***

**Wrong Arthur. It has never been *proven* how life began, however, the Miller-Urey experiment, did in fact, provide a naturalistic means of generating organics from non-organics.**

***In fact, there is mass confusion and heated debate among origin of life researchers.***

**Arthur, that debate does NOT include ... your magic ghost.**

***If we already had a firm grasp on how life originated on earth, these origin of life researchers would not be trying to still find the answer. And if it’s easy to reproduce such experiments one simple experiment would be enough to show this to be the case, but we don’t have that.***

**Arthur, ask and ye shall receive:**

[**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miller-Urey**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miller-Urey)

**It has been replicated repeatedly, worldwide, and is so easy to perform that even a high school student can do it.**

***All we have is [SIC] various speculations, all of which run into fairly big roadblocks along the way.***

**Arthur, but in your mind, a magic invisible ghost ... no roadblock at all. Think about your hypocrisy on that one for awhile.**

***The claim of naturalistic evolutionists is that during the past 3.8 billion years non-life has evolved into a conscious, self-reflective, artistic, spiritual, intelligent being that has the ability to examine the depths of the processes which have led to its existence. Even on the surface, this seems like a wild stretch.***

**Arthur, someone with your beliefs is not in a position to be ridiculing others for "a wild stretch."**

***On paper, it looks even more daunting. Consider the fact that these 16 steps would have had to have been scaled during this time for that to have happened:***

**Arthur, I'm going to skip your list as it does nothing more than list the accomplishments of evolution.**

***What are the odds of all of these steps being conquered by blind evolutionary processes?***

**Arthur, evolutionary processes are not blind - they are guided by the laws of nature and by natural selection.**

***Well, evolutionary biologist, Francisco Ayala, estimated these odds to be 1 in 101,000,000***

**Arthur, since the premise "blind processes" is false ... Ayala's number is rendered meaningless.**

***This vast improbability has led philosophers to surmise that if evolution did occur, it would have been a miracle:***

**Arthur, but you do believe in miracles, don't you? Do you really think it is a smart tactic to ridicule something that you, yourself, believe in? (hint: I would go with "No" on that one)**

***Stanley Miller’s experiments of generating life from chemical compounds in the 1950’s have in the modern age of scientific advancement been thoroughly refuted.***

**Arthur, if that were true you could feel something that only women can experience ... multiple orgasms. But since it isn't true, your only hope of ever knowing that feeling would involve sexual reassignment surgery; and I just happen to know a guy ....**

***Today scientists believe early Earth’s atmosphere was composed of carbon dioxide, nitrogen, and water, and this mixture of gases does not yield organic compounds in prebiotic simulation experiments (hence, no primordial soup) – a devastating blow for the naturalistic origin-of-life scenario.***

**Arthur, it's kinda funny (but also sad at the same time) that you willingly accept scientific speculations, like the one you just cited, when you think you can use them to support your position.**

**All your audience has to do is go back a short way to see what you thought of scientific speculation. Yet here you are trumpeting a "devastating blow" and fully accepting ... a scientific speculation.**

**The bottom line is that no one knows what atmospheric conditions were like on the early Earth.**

***Additionally, and this is something that should be even more unsettling for origin of life researchers, there are actually no chemical signatures of any primordial soup in the oldest rock formations on earth.***

**Arthur, and what would those signatures look like? You don't know because the apologetic sites where you got these cut-and-paste gotchas didn't tell you. By the way Arthur, run back to those apologetic sites and ask them why they are looking for signatures in the oldest rocks (which are about 4.3 billion years old) when life isn't believed to have evolved from the elements until hundreds of millions of years later. Let me know what they say.**

***The prebiotic soup is a scientific myth***

**Arthur, actually it is one hypothesis for how life on Earth may have started. Myths would be those stories found in your ancient holy book. You know, like the talking snake and the argumentative donkey ... which you have no problem believing.**

***emanating from a presupposition of what must have happened given the claims of naturalistic chemical evolution***

**Arthur, the Miller-Urey experiment was not a presupposition. They had no way of knowing what would happen when they tried it. They were the first to discover the link between non-life and life.**

***yet another form of begging the questions [SIC] whereby the assumption of that which is desired to be achieved is presupposed at the outset – presupposing the theory that we’re trying to prove.***

**Arthur, you are describing Ghost Worship ... not science. You are engaging in psychological projection.**

***Lastly, the fact that abiogenesis has NOT been explained by evolution has little to do with the merits of ID as ID does not depend on the failure of the naturalistic evolutionary model to explain abiogenesis, but offers something better – a competing/corresponding model.***

**No Arthur, it does not offer a model - it offers ancient myths; nor do your fairy tales compete with modern science. Nearly all scientists (many of whom are Christians) laugh at "you people." You are considered a joke outside the bubble of fools, within which, you operate; and Arthur, that applies ... worldwide.**

***2. ID explains abiogenesis as an unnamed designer: supernatural or alien.***

***ID makes no claims about the designer. The central proposition of ID is that certain effects are the result of intelligent causes. That’s all. That’s it.***

**Arthur, that just shows how utterly dishonest you little freaks are. Everyone already knows who you think the designer is.**

***Obviously that opens the door of implications for what could potentially be the cause of those effects, but ID really has nothing to do with what follows. As a theist I would obviously see this requirement consistent with a transcendent cause, namely God. But that has little to do with ID as we are now in the realm of philosophy.***

**Arthur, I don't think you should diminish philosophy by equating it to religion.**

***3. ID does not accept evolution but adaptation (what’s the difference?).***

***The difference between adaptation and what the writer most likely intended to say by “evolution” – macroevolution, is quite big. Based on a brief summary of this objection that the writer alludes to, it’s clear that the writer had a good idea what the answer to the question might be – that it is this difference between microevolution and macroevolution.***

**Arthur, "macroevolution" is a term that was invented for the sole purpose of denying evolution. There is only ... evolution.**

***In the expansion of this question the writer speculates what the answer might be to his original question, and asks what is perhaps the best follow-up question – “What genetic mechanism stops micro-evolution to continue evolving into macro-evolution?”***

***Well, let’s see. Adaptation is change within a specific limited range of genetic variability. Macroevolution is an all-out no-holds-barred, changes from radically different animal kinds to others.***

**Wrong Arthur. Animals do not radically change from their parents. Crocodiles to not produce "crocoducks." That only happens in Ray Comfort's fantasy world.**

***Macroevolution sees no true genetic limitations.***

**Arthur, evolution *does* have genetic limitations ... remember the crocoduck?**

***Smaller microevolutionary changes are extrapolated as a means to demonstrate that larger more extensive changes have happened. However, this extrapolation is founded on the speculation that natural selection and mutation are all that we need to move evolution along***

**Arthur, those are not the only two evolutionary processes. Genetic drift and horizontal gene transfer are just two, of several others.**

**Arthur, less time in Bible Study and more time hitting the biology textbooks could have saved you a ton of embarrassment.**

***that great amounts of new complex specified information can be generated by completely random means.***

**Arthur, natural selection is not completely random; nor is genetic drift. The problem seems to be, Arthur, that you do not even possess the basic biological knowledge of a high school freshman.**

***4. ID is guided evolution/adaptation.***

***The writer asks, “Where’s the guide? Is there a goal to evolution? Are we the goal (surprise!)?”***

***It’s not clear what kind of “guide” the writer is asking for, but it’s safe to assume he is asking for the author of the process of guiding evolution. In other words he wants scientific evidence for the intelligent agent that is guiding the process. Well, that is actually not a relevant question to whether or not ID is a reliable explanation of what occurs in nature.***

**Arthur, when people try to dismiss relevant questions, like you just did, it is usually because they have no answer, or, because they are hiding something - they have an answer but they don't want to give it.**

**Why? Why hide it?**

**The answer is, because Christian apologists cannot defend their position. Their entire shtick is to try to stay on the offensive and keep scientists on the defensive. William Lane Craig is a perfect example of someone who uses that tactic. Sadly, it often succeeds because opponents fall for it. Unfortunately for you Arthur ...**

**I didn't.**

***5. Skip* (Boring)**

***6. Design is everywhere (look around you).***

***In this section, the writer makes a sweeping statement: “The natural world is all around us, also known as reality. So far, we have zero evidence for the supernatural (designer or not) or for aliens. If you have no evidence, why hold on to a silly belief?”***

***The first point to be made here is that the writer has already settled the case in his mind by presupposing the visual “natural world” (all around us) to be the total sum of “reality.”***

**Arthur, what makes you think he is presupposing? Perhaps he is basing his conclusion on the fact that since no evidence for the "supernatural" has ever been found, it has a lot in common with ... things that don't exist.**

***The mere visual world is not all there is.***

**Arthur, you need to reread his statement. He didn't say that. So you have created, yet another a Straw Man (I will skip over Arthur's lengthy and tedious destruction of his own Straw Man).**

***The writer then moves on to state that “we have zero evidence for the supernatural.” This is demonstrably false. There have been scores of books written on history, science, philosophy and more, that demonstrate this evidence.***

**Arthur, books are not evidence. Have you ever heard of science fiction? Harry Potter? Star Wars?**

**Arthur, let me give you another hint ... they're not true.**

***The problem here may be that the author is expecting evidence of a certain kind that would persuade him. However, an intelligent agent has no obligations to demonstrate such visual proof to every generation of human beings from eternity past into the indefinite future.***

**Arthur, we aren't asking for proof to be given to "every" generation - we would be thrilled if your ghost could be talked into providing proof ... to just one generation.**

***7.* Skip (Boring)**

***8+9. Irreducible complexity is the key. Irreducible complexity has been debunked, now we believe in inconceivable complexity.***

***Well, irreducible complexity plays a role, but it is not necessarily “the key.” Irreducible complexity is a view of ID that certain aspects of the natural world are so intricately intertwined in their symbiotic design that its parts would not have emerged independently as part of the overall system without any guiding intelligence at work. The writer then states the following:***

***“The bacterial flagellum is actually an evolved trait. All components that make up the bacterial flagellum can be found functioning in other organisms. The flagellum most likely evolved with more parts, each additional part beneficial for it’s [SIC] host, and later, evolved to a less complex form…”***

***The flagellum is actually a simple example proposed by Michael Behe.***

**Arthur, Behe's simple example got him sliced and diced in court. If you watch the documentary about that trial, you can see Behe get his ass handed to him ... in a jar.**

**But Arthur, for apologists like you, if you decide to watch it, make sure you keep a barf bag next to your remote.**

***Irreducible complexity has actually not been disproved.***

**Arthur, I've noticed that you like to use the "logic lingo" to try to impress your audience. I've also noticed that you demonstrate repeatedly that you haven't the faintest idea, how logic works. Your last claim was a perfect example. Even a beginning logic student would have known better than to make the rookie error of trying to "Switch the Burden of Proof." It is not the scientist's burden to disprove Behe's theories - it is his burden ... to prove it.**

**Arthur, 15 minutes on a Wikipedia logic page isn't going to cut it. If you want to run with the big dogs and quote logical fallacies, first, you had better learn how to recognize them; and most importantly ... how to avoid committing them.**

***Hehe [SIC] has actually adequately defended his position.***

**Arthur, not in court he didn't. Seriously Arthur, you need to rent that documentary. But if you have kids, make sure you send them to bed first: you wouldn't want them to see their dad ...**

**puking his guts out.**

***Hehe [SIC] aside, The writer states the following:***

***“Abiogenesis/evolution can account for all irreducibly complex arguments.”***

***Well, it’s clear that life came into being from non-life.***

**Arthur, rational people believe life came into being after evolving from inorganic elements; while you believe it was created by an invisible ghost with severe anger management issues, Who said:**

**"Abra Cadabra - Alakazam**

**from magic mud - I will make me a man"**

***The question is whether there was an intelligence guiding the process or not.***

**Arthur, based on the location of our windpipe and oesophagus, I would be wary of granting God intelligence on that one. A non-union plumber could have done a better job.**

***It’s true that just because one person cannot conceive of a particular reality, that we cannot necessarily negate that it’s true. However, this can also be easily applied to the writer’s own incredulity about Intelligent Design and God – just because the atheist writer cannot conceive of such truths, does not necessarily merit his disbelief***

**Arthur, you have just committed the logical fallacy of False Equivalency. His incredulity is not the same as your incredulity. His incredulity is based on science and logic. Your incredulity is based on motivated reasoning; though I hesitate to dignify what you do ... as reasoning.**

***10. DNA is a genetic code therefore it’s designed.***

***IDelists claim that human DNA is over 90% functional..Geneticists believe human DNA to be about 8% functional.”***

***The claim that geneticist [SIC] believe human DNA to be about 8% functional is a highly outdated position. Throughout most of the history of such research it was widely claimed that most of the human DNA was junk. Not anymore. The pattern has always been towards more complex specified information being utilized in ways that we previously never fathomed. The more we learn, the more we recognize function of what we previously though [SIC] to be “junk” and get a greater sense of just how breathtakingly complex biological systems are – ALL results that evolutionists did not expect. The recent ENCODE project, for example, demonstrated that this formerly supposed “junk DNA” is a myth. We now know with a high degree of certitude that the vast majority (at least 80%) of our DNA information is in use in one way or another.***

**Arthur, allow me to show your audience what you are hiding from them:**

[**https://www.sciencenews.org/article/reports-junk-dnas-demise-were-based-junky-logic-and-dubious-definitions**](https://www.sciencenews.org/article/reports-junk-dnas-demise-were-based-junky-logic-and-dubious-definitions)

**Excerpt: "Not only is most of the genome junk, it seems, so is the ENCODE analysis. It uses a questionable definition of function and commits various logical fallacies in applying it."**

**Arthur, thanks for proving for the umpteenth time that honesty and Ghost Worshipers go together like the Hatfields and McCoys.**

***11. “Humans share 99,5% [SIC] genetic information with other humans… because we’re closely related. Humans share less genetic information with trees because we’re less closely related.”***

***The similarity here does not contribute anything to the claims of common descent***

**Arthur, now you are just retreating into denial. The "claims of common descent" are based on that similarity, which is what enabled biologists to construct the evolutionary Tree of Life.**

**Arthur this is nothing more than biology 101. If you are going to play in the big leagues, you need to at least understand the basics of what your opponent's position is.**

***It’s clear that we share less genetic information with other forms of life. Is common descent the only viable way to explain this? Not really. We can also explain the facts by common design. It’s an equally good explanation, perhaps even more so, to say that human beings are designed, and trees are designed,***

**Arthur, then you have boxed yourself into a corner from which you cannot escape as you desperately try to explain all the horrible designs in nature such as the giraffe's laryngeal nerve. Only a maniacal idiot would design a world such as this one.**

***The writer then speaks about phylogenetic trees providing evidence of common ancestry because of the reduction/expansion of these genetic similarities. What the writer is unaware of is that the method of concocting and utilizing phylogenetic trees in identifying ancestral relationships is valid ONLY if evolution and common ancestry is assumed a priori.***

**Arthur, you are using a Straw Man to falsely accuse biologists of circular reasoning. Evolution and common ancestry were never assumed a priori. For thousands of years, everyone, including nearly every scientist, assumed creation. But evidence gathered in recent centuries indicated that evolution and common ancestry were the *only* explanations that explained the observations.**

***Now, suppose we are charitable and grant the construction of phylogenetic trees their merit in identifying evolutionary lineages. If evolutionary lineages are so clear cut, would we not expect the trees arrived at by various evolutionary researchers to be identical to those constructed by others?***

**Arthur, you don't even realize that you just made the same mistake, as your opponent did earlier. Remember when you nailed him (correctly) for trying to claim that, if humans had 90% functional DNA, then other mammals should too?**

**Now you commit the same generalization fallacy that he did. Since when do all scientists agree on every detail of any theory?**

**The errors you can find so easily in others Arthur, elude you ... when you commit them.**

***Would they at least be similar? The fact of the matter is that the proposed phylogenies of one group of researchers vary greatly from those proposed by others. There is no consensus that the writer is implicitly claiming.***

**Arthur, the phylogenies do not "vary greatly" as you claimed. They vary only in detail. Where all the phylogenies *do* vary greatly is in comparison to *your* Tree of Life - which looks nothing like the world we see around us.**

***I would like to conclude by pointing out the writer has in multiple instances, committed what he was suspecting might be the case – not merely the logical fallacy that he mentioned at the outset (straw man), but also many others. His understanding of ID is woefully misinformed,***

**Arthur, not to worry. Being woefully misinformed about bullshit like astrology, homeopathy, or ancient gruesome fairy tales, will not negatively impact him as long as he has the rational thinking skills to protect himself from the dangers they represent.**

***the arguments for macroevolution highly outdated, overstated, and many fallacious.***

**Arthur, since macroevolution is a Creationist invention anyway ... who cares?**

**As long as he understands evolution then he is firmly grounded in reality ... something you will likely never experience.**

***As far as style goes, suffice it to say that his manner of persuasion is [SIC] much to be desired.***

**Arthur, based on how fast your Christian friend fled the flock ... it sounds like you weren't much better.**

**(Ouch!)**

***Angry rants laced with profanity have little impact on the learned,***

**Arthur, you live in the 21st century and still worship an angry, invisible ghost ... so he wasn't ranting to "the learned."**

***and frankly have no place in reasonable discussions between serious grown-ups.***

**Again Arthur, your beliefs have eliminated you from the category of "serious grownups." Nor has anything that you have said, qualified as part of a "reasonable discussion."**

**You are granting yourself a status that your words have not earned.**

***I suppose there may be many who fall victim to such intellectual bullying by buying what merely sounds intelligent.***

**Arthur, is that your excuse for why your friend bailed on God?**

**Well, she isn't alone. Christianity is at a historic low in America (70%) and is disappearing even faster in Europe as humans evolve out of Ghost Worship and into a more enlightened age.**

***When people use big words with confidence, especially big scientific words, they try to prop themselves high on a pedestal to preach to the masses about their ignorance and backwardness.***

**Arthur, and then there are those like you, who try to impress everyone with the 15 minutes you spent on a Wikipedia logic page, only to trip yourself up constantly with logical fallacies**

**(I lost count of how many Straw Men you created).**

***And the Intelligent Designer waits patiently with open arms, ready to embrace those who would humble themselves under the truth***

**Arthur, tell us what the Intelligent Designer has promised to do ... to those who don't.**

[**http://www.cltruth.com/blog/2014/misconceptions-of-intelligent-design/**](http://www.cltruth.com/blog/2014/misconceptions-of-intelligent-design/)

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**THE SCIENCE SEGMENT**

**Alcohol Use Disorder**

**affects about 30% of Americans in their lifetime**

**Alcohol Use Disorder has become a highly prevalent, highly comorbid, disabling disorder that often goes untreated in the US, concludes an analysis of over 36,000 face-to-face interviews. Prevalence overall was high but even more so for men - 36% at some point in their life had alcohol use disorder.**

**The existence of a problem was established in the study if criteria were met for the latest definition of Alcohol Use Disorder as set out in the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.**

**The main change in the diagnosis of alcohol use disorder was to merge the criteria for "abuse" and "dependence," which had been considered separately before. Abuse criteria involve the social problems of drinking too much, while the dependence criteria involve classic measures of addiction such as withdrawal and time spent consuming alcohol.**

**The main finding of the study was that, among Americans, there is a lifetime Alcohol Use Disorder prevalence of 29.1% - but only 19.8% of adults are ever treated. 68.5 million Americans have alcohol use disorder at some point in their lives**

**Other results of the investigation include:**

**■The greatest prevalence figure was for men - 36% in the lifetime**

**■Rates were also particularly high among Native Americans: 43.4% in the lifetime; and white Americans: 32.6% in the lifetime**

**■Alcohol use disorders were associated with other disorders, such as substance use, major depressive, and bipolar I, and antisocial and borderline personality disorders.**

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**FAMOUS QUOTES**

**Anonymous**

**"Science is in the business of finding facts ...**

**Politics is in the business of hiding them ...**

**Religion is in the business of making em' up."**