

## THE BIOTIC MESSAGE — AN INTRODUCTION

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### ABSTRACT

This paper offers a tutorial introduction to Message Theory — a new theory of creation that scientifically explains the major patterns of life, while overturning the major evidences of biological evolution.

### INTRODUCTION

Evolution is so well established, we are told, as to be a fact that no reasonable person could doubt. Evolutionists therefore cynically taunt the public with a question: "Why would God create a pattern that appears to be the result of evolution?" [1, p. 174] "Or is the Creator trying to trick us into believing in evolution?" [5, p. 199] Stephen Jay Gould offers a classic, "Did he create to mimic evolution and test our faith thereby?" [6, p. 123]

They are answered by a new theory of creation, called Message Theory, which shows that evolutionists do not know their own theory. Life, in fact, was intricately designed to look *unlike* evolution. Message Theory proposes that life was designed to convey a message. The central claim of the theory is as follows. Life was reasonably designed for survival, and for communicating a message that tells where life came from. The biotic message says, "Life is the product of a *single* designer — life was intentionally designed to resist all other interpretations of origin." That simple idea poses a plausible, credible motive of a designer. Life was designed as a biotic message.

Place yourself in the position of the biotic message sender, and imagine that you want to design life to look like the work of one designer. Make a list of every other conceivable interpretation of life. Be expansive and list everything you can. List Darwin's theory, Lamarck's theory, and everything else you can think of. Then ask yourself: How would you design life to resist, thwart, and defeat that list? This was the task faced by the biotic message sender. The task is not easy because evolutionary theory is extraordinarily pliable. Evolutionary theory adapts to data like fog adapts to landscape. It is really just a smorgasbord of countless possible naturalistic explanations that theorists effortlessly adapt to the data. As you will see, thwarting all those explanations is not easy. Yet life on Earth shows an elegant solution. This paper introduces the key arguments of Message Theory. Extensive documentation and arguments are given in a recent book [9].

### THE MAJOR PATTERNS OF LIFE

Life's major patterns can be divided into two groups: A and B. Group A patterns are prevalent and abundant. Group B patterns are rare to non-existent.

### Group A

Biologic universals (DNA, RNA, ATP, etc.)  
Nested hierarchy of characters  
"Convergent" character traits  
Von Baer's Laws of embryology  
Cladistic and phenetic patterns — as revealed by cladograms and phenograms  
Sexual reproduction  
An accessible, visible, substantial fossil record  
A structured fossil sequence  
Stasis — or non-evolution within the fossil record  
Abrupt appearances of diverse life forms based on a unique new design — "adaptive radiation"

### Group B

Gradual intergradations (over a large scale)  
Phylogeny (over a large scale)  
Intermediate and transitional forms  
Transposed characters — DNA lateral transfer in multicellular organisms  
Atavistic characters — Genetic throwbacks  
Inheritance of acquired characters — Lamarckian inheritance  
In multi-cellular animals, enzymes for efficiently digesting cellulose  
Experimental demonstrations of the origin of life  
Extraterrestrial life

These groups reveal something peculiar. Group B patterns are the ones that evolutionary theory would suggest should be commonplace and abundant — yet they are not. Each of these patterns is associated with specific evolutionary processes (some that are quite simple and plausible). Yet each is conspicuous by its absence. The absence of these patterns is an evolutionary enigma.

Moreover, Group A patterns (such as sexual reproduction, abrupt appearances, stasis, convergent characters, and von Baer's laws) are ones that evolutionary theory has difficulty with. Yet they are prevalent. Take the example of sexual reproduction. It is extremely widespread and its genetic mechanics are similar throughout. This feature alone does a magnificent job of unifying life. Yet the most plausible of evolutionary theories predicts that sex should not even exist. The existence and prevalence of sex is an evolutionary enigma.

Thus, the major patterns of life are precisely the reverse from what evolution would lead us to expect. This reversal is because life was intentionally fashioned to look unlike evolution. We will next examine those patterns in greater detail.

## BIOLOGIC UNIVERSALS

Biologic universals are a body of evidence at the molecular level that serves to unify all life. The common examples are: DNA as the carrier of inheritance, the expression of that information as proteins by means of an RNA intermediate, the genetic code based on groups of three nucleotides, the use of left-handed amino-acids in proteins, the bi-layered phosphatide construction of cell membranes. Also, ATP (adenosine tri-phosphate), biotin, riboflavin, hemes, pyridoxin, vitamins B<sub>12</sub> and K, and folic acid are used in metabolic processes everywhere. One protein called *ubiquitin* is present in all organisms, tissues, and cells studied so far, and it has an identical amino acid sequence in each case. There are many such examples, and they testify that all life came from a single common source. This construction is an ideal way to make life look like the product of one designer. If you were to unify all life — from elephants, to plants, to bacteria — then you would not give them all tusks. Bacteria do not need tusks. The ideal way to unify life is with common design at the molecular level. The pervasive unity at the biochemical level is major evidence for the biotic message.

For decades evolutionists have created the illusion that biologic universals are evidence in their favor. They maintained this illusion by artificially separating the origin of life from its subsequent evolution, as though the two are completely unrelated problems. The origin-of-life theorists were not publicizing a serious problem they were confronted with. Virtually every one of the biologic universals is too complex to have arisen directly by known processes aided by chance. So evolutionists arbitrarily got around this problem by making two untestable assumptions.

- 1) There are an infinitude of biochemical arrangements suitable for life and *totally unlike any known life*.
- 2) Many of those life forms *have existed on this planet*.

While the naturalistic origin of known life is far too improbable, evolutionists simply claimed (by assumption #1) that the origin of *some kind* of life is highly probable, and the first life forms were vastly simpler than anything known today and without any of the known biologic universals (in accordance with assumption #2). Thus, to explain away

difficulties in the origin of life, evolutionists embrace assumptions which indicate that biologic universals should not exist. Evolutionists believe that life forms — totally unlike any known life — must have existed on this planet. The complete absence of such life forms is therefore evidence against evolution.

Evolutionists explain away this new problem by making another untestable assumption. They claim that the earliest life forms were inefficient, couldn't compete or were consumed, and went totally extinct. First these organisms originated and survived quite well, then they couldn't survive at all (somehow leaving only those with the biologic universals). Such claims are all too convenient. Evolutionists pretend to know the detailed survivability of life forms that exist only in their minds — organisms for which we have not the slightest evidence. Their claims are mere evolutionary storytelling, not science.

But those evolutionary stories still do not solve the problem. Nothing in evolution even hints that modern life forms should share any similarities whatever. For example, single-celled organisms have potential for the highest evolutionary speeds due to their extremely short generation time, high reproductive capacity, and because they are the most abundant organisms on earth. In addition, these organisms have had the most time to evolve. According to evolutionists, many of these living organisms shared a most recent common ancestor between one and three billion years ago, thus they are separated by two to six billion years of evolution. Assumption #1 indicates they *could have* diverged completely since it explicitly claims that an infinitude of other biological forms would be capable of life. Evolutionists ask us to believe that all life's incredible breathtaking diversity is the result of evolution, but those other life forms (those lacking the pervasive biochemical unity) were somehow excluded! Evolutionists cannot coherently make such a self-contradictory claim.

Thus, assumptions #1 and #2 each indicates that biologic universals should not exist — if evolution is true, then life forms without any of the biological universals ought to exist on this planet. Concerning the prevalence of biologic universals there can be little doubt: Message Theory is right, and evolution (if it says anything clearly on the matter) is wrong.

### **GRADUAL INTERGRADATIONS**

If you wanted to design life to resist evolutionary interpretations, you would leave out gradual intergradations. Instead, you would design large gaps (or morphological distances) between the created life forms. How large should the gaps be? The gaps should be sufficiently large that they could not be bridged by experimental demonstrations of evolution. Life would then look like many separate, distinct, evolutionarily disconnected "kinds" of life. In addition, you would fashion the organisms so they could not interbreed between these separate groups. Life forms would then interbreed only within their own group. This would prevent hybrids from forming even the appearance of gradual intergradations between the kinds.

That pattern is precisely what we find in nature, though evolutionists avoided it. As noted by evolutionist Steven Stanley, "Since the time of Darwin, paleontologists have found themselves confronted with evidence that conflicts with gradualism, yet the message of the fossil record has been ignored." [12, p. 101]

### **LINEAGE AND PHYLOGENY**

Lineage is identified in morphology space as a long, narrow trail of species with a void in the regions at right angles to (or orthogonal to) the lineage. This "void" or absence of certain life forms is essential. To observe a lineage, the life forms must be abundant in certain places and absent in other places. Phylogeny should be observed as clear lineages that form an identifiable tree-structure of descent.

If you wanted to design life to resist evolutionary interpretations, then you would create life without any clear lineages or phylogenies. To send the biotic message most successfully you would also try to thwart the observer's attempts at arbitrarily constructing lineages. This is accomplished by placing diversity in those places where evolutionists least want to see it: orthogonal to any presumed lineages. This places life forms into those "void" regions, thereby obstructing any attempt to impose a phylogenetic interpretation onto nature. This use of diversity thwarts lineage. By placing life forms properly, a designer can make a system of life resist the appearance of phylogeny. Life forms are like sentries standing in those void regions, guarding against the construction of lineages toward other organisms. Each sentry is guarding other life forms, and each is guarded in return by others.

As already stated, all life was intentionally knitted together (with common design) to look like the work of one designer. Thus substantial similarities between diverse organisms are not at all surprising. Many creationists, however, have been lured into the evolutionists' trap of debating whether a certain species should be classified as, for example, a reptile or a bird. That approach allows evolutionists to completely avoid the central issue, which is lineage, phylogeny, and clear-cut ancestry. Evolutionists avoid discussion of real phylogeny because they cannot find it in nature.

Instead, evolutionists distort systematics to create the illusion of phylogeny. The major methods are listed briefly

here: nested supraspecific groups, paraphyletic groups, linearizing the data with a steam-roller, cladograms, phenograms, best-candidate ancestors, and so-called "convergent" characters and "lost" characters. Evolutionists use these methods to sound like they have identified phylogeny, when they have not.

Evolutionists also use the fossil sequence to create the illusion of phylogeny. Chronologically successive fossils are frequently displayed as a "lineage," even when evolutionists know the organisms could not plausibly have an ancestor-descendant relationship. [2, p. 264] Conversely, organisms are often displayed as a "lineage," even when evolutionists know the organisms do not have a proper chronologically successive fossil sequence. [4, p. 134] Evolutionists [e.g., 10, p. 223] also create illusion by claiming that no fossils are found out-of-sequence, when in fact they employ potent methods for insulating evolutionary theory from any problems with the fossil sequence.

In addition, evolutionists have re-defined and mis-used virtually every keyword of the origins debate, such as: primitive, ancestral, advanced, derived, intermediate form, transitional form, evolution, and remarkably even the words "lineage" and "phylogeny." Evolutionists now use these words without ever identifying a phylogeny, a lineage, or a single ancestor. They use the words and imagery of evolution, without supplying the evidence. All these things have been misused to create the illusion of phylogeny. Altogether it constitutes a massive program. This universal practice on their part is now material evidence that phylogeny cannot be found, quite simply, if evolutionists could have identified phylogeny, they would have.

Another way to show that large-scale phylogeny does not exist is by removing the illusions and quoting evolutionists directly. Amid their many illusions and their firm restatements of evolutionary faith, they are sometimes frank about their real inability to identify phylogeny. Boundless documentation can be provided on this point. In addition, evolutionists often disagree dramatically among themselves about proposed phylogenies, and this fact alone is substantial evidence that phylogeny cannot be found.

## CONVERGENCE

Evolutionists define convergent characters as traits that, though quite similar, evolved separately from rather dissimilar ancestors. Convergent characters are abundant in nature, and evolutionists proudly point out that these are always merely similar, never identical. They claim that identical convergence would be much too improbable for evolution to explain. They thereby create the illusion that evolutionary theory has something firm to say about nature.

On the contrary, identical convergence would be trivially easy for evolutionists to "explain." In fact, evolutionists would be deeply relieved if it were abundant. To see this you must understand evolutionary theory. Darwin's is not the only theory that life was designed to resist. Life was designed to resist *all* evolutionary theories, not just Darwin's. The simplest, most powerful, most overlooked process at the evolutionary smorgasbord is transposition. A transposition process would take a character trait from one life form and transfer it to another different life form. This simple process could easily "explain" identical convergence. In my wording, if convergent character traits were identical, they would no longer be convergent — they would be transpositions. Evolutionists would simply change their story.

Convergent characters show the careful design predicted by Message Theory. They cannot be explained by common descent. They are sufficiently different that they cannot be explained by transposition. Yet they are so similar that they demand explanation. Thus they are awkward for evolutionists to explain. Convergences cannot be explained by either common descent, or by transposition. This situation cannot be the result of random chance. It requires carefully balanced design.

"Convergent" characters are also important in the biotic message for other reasons. First, these similar designs unify diverse portions of life together, subtly stitching life into a unified whole. (Often in a *visible* way that biologic universals at the biochemical level cannot do.) This helps make life look like the work of a single designer. Second, as evolutionary systematists frequently tell you, convergence thwarts their attempt to identify phylogeny. In every respect, so called "convergences" meet the goals predicted by Message Theory. That is why they are abundant.

## CELLULOSE

Cellulose is the most abundant organic compound on earth. At least one-third of all vegetable matter is cellulose. It is a carbohydrate and a ready source of food. Curiously, no multicellular animals have the enzymes necessary to digest cellulose. Cows and other herbivores can use it only because their digestive system can retain it long enough for microorganisms to accomplish the digestion. Evolutionists use this situation as evidence against a designer. [11] They argue that an intelligent designer would have given herbivores — animals that eat only plants — the enzymes for efficiently digesting plants.

Evolutionists are mistaken. This situation is actually potent evidence for a designer. Plants need defenses against animals. If higher animals could efficiently devour the plant world and convert it into offspring, then those animals

would prosper, but the long-term result would be catastrophic for the ecosystem. Life's designer was concerned, quite reasonably, with the overall stability of the system of life. Withholding of enzymes for efficiently digesting cellulose was a reasonable step toward providing that stability.

In addition, this situation contributes to the biotic message by being especially awkward for evolutionists to explain. A world full of cellulose, and no multicellular animals to efficiently digest it! Could natural selection fail so completely? The ability to efficiently digest cellulose would be an advantage to any animal. Why is it absent? Evolutionists ask us to believe that all life's adaptations evolved to exquisite precision; that eyesight evolved more than forty separate times; and that convergences occur commonly at morphological and molecular levels — but somehow enzymes for digesting life's most abundant food source were neither inherited by, evolved by, converged on, transposed into, nor atavistically unmasked into multicellular animals. Once again, evolution is a story both incoherent and self-contradictory. It provides no structure for understanding nature. When it predicts anything clearly, it is wrong. This is a major problem for evolutionists, and it was concealed by distorting it into an argument against creation.

## TRANSPPOSITION

In theory a transposition process would take a character trait from one life form and transport it (perhaps via lateral DNA transfer) to another different life form. Transposition is the simplest, most plausible, most powerful process in evolutionary theory. Yet quite likely you have never heard of it before. The *only* reason you haven't heard it trumpeted by evolutionists is because its pattern is absent. Evolutionists never have been dissuaded by their inability to sufficiently demonstrate the mechanisms of evolution. Rather, mechanisms are embraced (and renounced) wholly on the basis of pattern. (For example, the mechanisms of embryological recapitulation — terminal addition and acceleration — never were demonstrated, nonetheless these were embraced as the means to "explain" life's patterns in an evolutionary way.) If life contained a transposition pattern, evolutionists would not hesitate to invoke a transposition mechanism in their "explanations."

There are several reasons for a biotic message sender to avoid a transposition pattern, especially in multicellular organisms. First, transposition would provide a mechanism of rapid evolution. By avoiding a transposition pattern the designer defeated that evolutionary story, and simultaneously created a puzzle for evolutionists. Why isn't transposition everywhere? Why did the simplest, most powerful mechanism in evolution somehow have little effect? Why are "convergences" abundant, but transpositions rare at best? This situation is completely unexpected for evolution, especially since the universal use of DNA, RNA, and genetic code would seem to remove the major obstacle.

Second, transposition is the expected result of any ordinary designer. Designers readily take a design from one circumstance and use it in other diverse circumstances. This is usual design practice. However, life could not be usual design and also be a message. A message cannot be the usual, ordinary design, it must be distinctly different. The absence of transposition from the pattern of life is a major clue that life is intentionally different, that it is a biotic message.

Third, transposition is the expected result of *many* designers acting separately, sharing only a common technology base. For example, the key components of cars are frequently transposed into other objects (such as jets, helicopters, lawn mowers, or dish washers) by many separate human designers. By avoiding a transposition pattern, life was successfully designed to look instead like the product of a single designer.

Finally, and most importantly, the presence of a transposition pattern would allow an observer to explain away the absences of phylogeny and gradual intergradations. An observer could look at a transposition pattern and conclude that traits are transposed from many different sources, and therefore species do not have unique ancestors or phylogenies. Evolutionists are not committed to common descent, rather they are committed to "Natural" selection — they *select* whatever *natural* mechanisms they need to "explain" the data. If evolutionists saw a transposition pattern they would leap for joy. "Transposition," they would argue, "is why phylogeny and gradual intergradations are not visible." Yet life was intricately designed to look like the product of one designer, and to resist all other interpretations. For this reason a transposition pattern had to be rigorously avoided.

## INTERMEDIATE FORMS

Intermediate and transitional forms ought to be identified by phylogeny. Once a clear-cut phylogeny is identified, the intermediate forms would be self-evident. Evolutionists, however, cannot identify a clear phylogeny, so they misuse the term "intermediate" by broadening it as much as possible. In their usage, an "intermediate" merely shares similarities of two different groups. To an evolutionist, an "intermediate" and a "convergent form" are virtually the same thing, the only difference is that convergence definitely cannot be explained by common descent. To evolutionists, an "intermediate" need not be an ancestor to either of the other groups, and thus can appear in any fossil sequence relative to the other groups. In this manner, evolutionists misuse the term "intermediate" in the widest, loosest, possible way, and they do this in order to find as many intermediates as possible.

Nonetheless, while using that loose definition, evolutionists themselves acknowledge that "convergent forms" are abundant and "intermediate forms" are quite rare. [3, p. 125] The patterns are reversed. The patterns that should be prevalent are rare, while those that are difficult for evolution to explain are prevalent. This reversal cannot even remotely be blamed on an incomplete fossil record, since an incompleteness would affect both forms in equal portions. This reversal can only result from design. Once again, evolutionary theory gets it wrong, and Message Theory gets it right.

## THE NESTED HIERARCHY OF CHARACTERS

Any system of objects can be forced into a nested hierarchy, such as the way libraries classify books. Life, however, actually has a pattern of nested hierarchy. For example, some vertebrates are based on a tetrapod body plan; of the tetrapods, some have an amniote egg; of the amniotes, some have hair and mammary glands (mammals). There are no mammals which are not also amniotes. There are no amniotes which are not also tetrapods, etc. These are the familiar examples, and there are many more. A nested pattern is quite unique, in fact no man-made system of objects is anywhere near as nested as life.

Ever since Darwin, evolutionists claimed the nested pattern as the major evidence in their favor. They said that newly evolved characters are inherited only by descendants, not by other lineages, and this would automatically create a nested hierarchy. Niles Eldredge calls it "evolution's grand prediction." [3, p. 36] The truth is that evolutionary theory *never predicted a nested hierarchy*. Simple evolutionary processes would prevent a nested hierarchy — mechanisms such as loss, replacement, distant hybridization, anagenesis (evolution within a single lineage), transposition (lateral DNA transfer), atavism (the masking and unmasking of genetic libraries that would create "throwbacks"), or multiple separate origins of life. Evolutionary theory could easily accommodate multiple, dis-united, non-nested patterns, and evolutionists would have gladly done so. The truth is that the nested pattern was used primarily as evidence *against* a designer (not for evolution).

Message Theory now provides a direct answer. The nested pattern was utilized largely for what it is not. It is not transposition. Nested hierarchy and transposition are incompatible patterns. The nested hierarchy thwarts an observer's attempt to impose a transposition explanation onto nature. It thereby allows the absences of phylogeny and gradual intergradation to be "seen" and take on real force as evidence against evolution.

Moreover, the nested pattern unifies life's great diversity, often in a visible way, by employing features above the level of biochemicals. The possession of common biological adaptations knits all life together into one system. Hundreds of years ago, scientists like Darwin and Buffon could see life's underlying unity, even though they had no knowledge of the pervasive unity at the biochemical level. Life is united by common design, not common descent.

A nested pattern is also resistant to lost or unavailable data. It retains its structure even when most of the data is missing. Take many life forms related by a nested pattern. Randomly pluck out a hundred, and they still display a nested pattern. The nested pattern is still visible even when most of the data is absent. The life forms still share common designs, and so look like the product of one designer. Patterns of transposition and phylogeny are absent, and that looks unlike evolution. The nested pattern is thoroughly resistant to noise. It can convey the biotic message with a minimum of data. It is the only simple pattern possessing these wonderful properties.

## THE ARGUMENT FROM IMPERFECTION

One of Darwin's favorite arguments was the odd, "imperfect" designs that a capable engineer would not use. His favorite examples were the peculiar reproductive structures of orchids. He said such "bad" designs are evidence that life was not fashioned by a designer, but instead has an evolutionary history. That argument is now Stephen Jay Gould's preferred line of reasoning, he calls it the "panda principle" after his favorite example, the panda's thumb. Gould says, "Odd arrangements and funny solutions are the proof of evolution."

Traditionally, creationists tried to solve this problem by showing that the basic claim is flawed, and that the designs do serve a useful purpose. They have made real headway with their efforts, particularly by overturning virtually all the so-called "vestigial" organs. However, that approach has failed to give a complete solution. There is still something "odd and curious" about these designs.

I recommend the phrase "odd and curious" for several reasons. First, it gets away from the words "perfection" and "imperfection" which led inevitably to tangential or unresolvable discussions of philosophy and religion, rather than science. Moreover, "perfect" design can only be assessed with regard to the particular design goals, and Message Theory claims substantially different design goals than most people are used to. To keep people from becoming confused I prefer the phrase "odd and curious". Second, it is like the phrase "odd and funny" which Gould uses for the very same designs, therefore we are using essentially the same terms to describe the same portion of nature. Third, the phrase is appropriate, that is, the "imperfect" designs are better viewed as "odd" (functional but unexpected from an ordinary designer) and "curious" (intended to draw attention). With that clarification of the terms

we can now overturn the argument from imperfection.

First, by *many* evolutionists own statements on this issue, if they had the wherewithal to create life, then they would *independently* go forth and create perfect designs. Now simply turn their statements around — they mean that a world of perfect designs could easily be viewed as the work of *many* designers who acted *independently*. Evolutionists have effectively said so. Since life was designed to look like the work of a single designer, odd and curious designs had to be used. These operate like the funny quirks and odd imperfections in someone's handwriting, they allow us to identify the work of a single handwriter, whereas articles of perfect handwriting could be viewed as the work of many separate perfect handwriters.

Second, perfect design would not look like a message. It would provide no cues that it was a message. It would look precisely like the product of an ordinary designer who had ordinary intentions. Since life was designed as a message — as the product of an unordinary designer — odd and curious designs occasionally had to be used.

Third, no matter how good or bad a design, a biotic message sender is forbidden from using the same design over and over again indiscriminately, since the biotic message places constraints on the occasions when the same design can and cannot be used. For example, the human hand is wonderfully designed, but if pandas had the same hand then it would be trivially easy for evolutionists to "explain." They would have said it was the result of transposition — nothing could be simpler. Since life was designed to resist evolutionary explanations, a transposition pattern had to be avoided — therefore odd and curious designs sometimes had to be employed. Evolutionists could not ask for a more direct (and surprising) answer.

Another example is the vertebrate eye (such as our own) which has its light-sensing cells of the retina "reversed" and pointing away from the light. The squid and octopus have eyes remarkably like vertebrates, except without a reversed retina. Evolutionists recently made this an issue by calling the vertebrate eye "bad" design. Creationists have already made some headway in identifying why this is good design for organisms that use and maintain their retina in brighter light. That functional approach provides a partial solution, but Message Theory provides the remainder. Evolutionists once actually tried to explain the similarities between octopus and vertebrate eyes as the result of transposition. The explanation failed precisely because of substantial differences (such as the "reversed" retina and vastly different embryology) between the two types of eyes. Message theory turns the tables on evolutionists. Not only is the vertebrate eye highly functional (perhaps optimally so), it is also designed in a way that makes evolutionary explanation difficult. Our eyes and octopus eyes are so similar as to grip our attention and demand special explanation, yet they are sufficiently different that evolutionists are left to explain them as the result of completely separate evolution and highly improbable convergence.

Odd and curious designs are not randomly distributed in life, as one would sprinkle pepper onto a dinner salad. Rather, they have a pattern that serves the purposes of the biotic message. They do that in two ways: by unifying life (to look like the work of one designer), or by resisting evolutionary explanations. The classic examples are the so-called "hips" of whales, and the so-called "hind-legs" or spurs of pythons. With considerable success, creationists have argued that these serve useful functions for anchoring muscles, etc. Nonetheless these are "odd and curious" designs in the fullest sense of the words. In these cases, the designs serve to visibly unify diverse portions of life together.

A different kind of example is the wings of three flying creatures. The bat's wing is made by lengthening the four fingers, while the pterodactyl's wing is made by lengthening only one finger (what would be our little finger), and the bird's wing is made by diminishing the hand and providing it with feathers. Evolutionists claimed this is bad engineering, and that a capable designer would not experiment with different designs but would simply use the single best design throughout. Evolutionists are mistaken. These organisms share a common body plan, that unifies them as the work of one designer. In addition, the "odd and curious" wing designs cannot be explained by common descent or by transposition. Evolutionists are left to account for the evolution of wings (and *flight!*) separately for each case. Rather than being evidence for evolution, these organisms are clean evidence for Message Theory.

Finally, as always, evolution never predicted anything about the situation. Even Gould [6, p. 122] himself claims, "perfection could be ... evolved by natural selection." Gould merely used imperfect design as evidence *against* a designer (not for evolution). Phylogeny — not imperfection — is the real evidence of evolutionary history, and Gould is acutely aware of our inability to find phylogeny in the fossil record. Gould's argument from imperfection merely misdirected our attention away from the embarrassing absence of phylogeny. That is why he emphasized the argument from imperfection so strongly.

## DARWIN'S RIDDLE

Darwin noted that the same biological designs are oftentimes not used for the same purpose in different organisms, and he used that as powerful evidence against a designer. Evolutionists still employ that argument; it is one of Stephen Gould's favorites. Darwin's Riddle asks: Why would life's designer use similar designs for *different* purposes, and in other cases use different designs for the *same* purpose?

We now answer that riddle in the most direct possible way. If the same designs were used again and again, in a random and indiscriminate way, then it would have been trivially easy for evolutionists to "explain." They would say it was the result of simple transposition. On the other hand, using the same designs in a nested hierarchical pattern will unify life without supporting a transposition explanation. The nested pattern places serious constraints on the occasions when the same designs should be used, and when they must be avoided. Darwin's Riddle is solved.

## EMBRYOLOGY AND VON BAER'S LAWS

Organisms that are quite different as adults, often share striking similarities when they are embryos. Darwin felt such evidence for evolution was second to none. But as always, evolutionary theory never actually predicted anything about the situation. Embryonic similarities cannot be the result of simple conservation or "holdovers" from earlier evolution, because, as Stephen Jay Gould notes, "embryonic patterns are as subject to evolutionary change as adult form." [7, p. 26] In addition, natural selection cannot explain the situation, because, as evolutionist Douglas Futuyma notes, "There are no design constraints that require sharks and humans to have similar embryos and yet develop into completely different organisms." [5, p. 225] According to evolutionists, modern sharks and humans are separated by some 400 million years of evolution, yet still share striking embryonic similarities. This situation, common throughout embryology, is actually an evolutionary problem.

Message Theory explains the situation directly. Embryonic similarities are visible to the eye, unaided by microscopes. The ancient Greeks could see these similarities, which provided powerful evidence for the unity of life. Even the Greeks, who had a pantheon of many gods, attributed the creation of all life to only one of them (in their case it was Zeus). The idea of a single creator was prevalent in civilizations around the ancient world precisely because of such evidence. I suggest that embryology was intentionally designed with this goal in mind. Embryological similarities unify life in a *widespread* way that adult organisms cannot, and in a *visible* way that biochemical universals cannot. The embryological similarities are a manifestly obvious attempt to convince the observer that life came from one designer.

Von Baer's laws describe patterns of development, and though not perfect they are our best and broadest generalizations of embryology. They indicate that life forms tend to begin development near a common point and slowly diverge away from each other, like the spokes of a wheel. There are similarities between the embryos and roughly parallel paths, but each life form tends to have its own distinctive developmental pathway. This radial spokes pattern helps convey the biotic message in two ways. (1) The separateness of life forms is awkward for evolution to explain. (2) The embryos are often sufficiently similar to look like the product of a single designer.

The visible unity of embryology is aided by a special sequence, also described in von Baer's laws. Embryos tend to develop their generalized characteristics first, followed successively by more specialized characters. Thus, the vertebrate characters tend to show up before the tetrapod characters, followed by the characters of the amniotes, then mammalian characters, etc. This trend — from generalized to specialized — I call the von Baer sequence. The von Baer sequence is ideal as a means to visibly unify life. Because of the sequence, organisms tend to look similar for as long as reasonably possible before developing their unique specializations that differentiate them from other species. In addition, the von Baer sequence is quite awkward for evolutionists to explain. Generalized and specialized characters are system patterns that we can see, but evolution cannot. No evolutionary process can "see" generalized characters, much less sort them into a von Baer sequence.

The theory of recapitulation was first vigorously promoted by Ernst Haeckel (who falsified his data to support his ideas). Recapitulation theory was an implicit attempt to explain von Baer's laws, and could have been devised in an armchair with no further knowledge of embryology. The explanation was never made explicit for a simple reason: The explanation falls apart when offered for inspection. To this day, evolutionists have not offered serious explanations of von Baer's laws, and despite the fact that recapitulation theory was decisively overthrown by 1920, many evolutionists still embrace some concept of recapitulation. For all its failings, they simply have no better interpretation of von Baer's laws. Taken altogether, embryology is major evidence against evolution, and for Message Theory.

## MOLECULAR SEQUENCES

Proteins, DNA, and RNA, are made of long sequences of a small number of molecules, like sentences are made of sequences of letters. For twenty years, scientists have analyzed the sequences with two pattern analysis methods: cladistics and phenetics. Cladistics examines life for a nested pattern, and confirms that it is a durable,

widespread pattern. The nested pattern throughout life — including the molecular level — indicates that transposition has not had a significant effect at the molecular level.

Phenetics, on the other hand, examines the pattern of 'distances' between life forms. That pattern through life — including the molecular level — shows a pattern of smooth spanning distances that evolutionists proudly display in their textbooks. Let us call it the "phenetic pattern." The pattern is so smooth that, for a while, evolutionists interpreted it as the result of an evolutionary "molecular clock." (Though the clock hypothesis has been overturned, the pattern of spanning distances is remarkably smooth nonetheless.)

To understand the phenetic pattern we must look again to evolutionary theory and one of its major mechanisms — atavism — the masking and unmasking of genetic libraries, also known as genetic throwbacks. Conceptually, the process would operate as follows. Various genetic traits become masked (somehow) and remain hidden without the organism, inherited from generation to generation. Now and then the process would unmask various combinations of ancient genetic traits into new organisms living in new environments, and this would occasionally result in the sudden appearance of "new" biological designs. In principle, the mechanism could "transpose" characters through time into distant ancestors, and could even mimic the transposition of characters between lineages. If life had a general pattern of genetic throwbacks, then evolutionists would be pleased to weave one of their stories. "The masking and unmasking of genetic libraries," they would say, "obscured phylogeny and created large morphological gaps in life's pattern." In a flash they would explain away the absences of phylogeny and gradual intergradations.

The unmasking process is a lot like lateral transposition, and for precisely the same reasons, life's designer had to pursue its undoing. This was accomplished by designing life in special ways. Take any major biological design — bats, whales, spiders, or turtles for example — and it subtly resists being explained as a genetic throwback. That pattern was carried down to the molecular level, and is neatly displayed in phenograms of the various biomolecules. For example, if an ancient hemoglobin molecule were unmasked into a modern organism, it would stick out like a sore thumb on the phenograms. The molecular phenograms would reveal an unmasking process, if it were operating.

In theory, lateral transposition would transfer characters between species of different lineages that exist at the same time, whereas the unmasking process (atavism) would transfer characters between species of the same lineage that exist at different times. The combination of the two processes could, in principle, transpose characters between any species existing at any time. These processes provide powerful evolutionary explanations, yet life was designed to defeat all those explanations simultaneously. The remarkably smooth patterns of life — visible at the morphological level and reinforced at the molecular level — reveal an incredible degree of planning, and testify that life was not substantially affected by transposition or unmasking processes. Thus they allow the absences of phylogeny and gradual intergradations to exert real force as evidence against evolution. Contrary to what evolutionists have claimed, phenograms and cladograms are not evidence for evolution. Rather, these display life's unifying design, and provide essential evidence against evolution's simplest, most plausible, most powerful processes.

## THE FOSSIL RECORD AND SEQUENCE

Despite all the careful construction of life, the biotic message would have totally failed without a fossil record, or if that record were viewed as seriously incomplete. In such a case, evolutionists would be exceedingly happy. "The missing fossil record," they would declare, "contains the phylogenies and gradual intergradations expected of evolution." Traditionally, that is precisely what Darwinians tried to do.

The biotic message sender had to convince the observer that the fossil record is sufficiently complete and reliable. *The only way to accomplish that task is with a special, distinct fossil sequence.* The fossil sequence is no accident. I suggest the biotic message sender acted to ensure its abundant formation. This was essential for the success of the biotic message. The fossil sequence had to be special, a pattern that validates itself and pronounces itself "complete." A pattern that says of itself, "I am a reasonably complete pattern. You cannot just brush me aside. I must be explained!" Pause for a moment and ask yourself, What kind of pattern must that be? A pattern that validates itself?

Our fossil sequence has the necessary pattern. Its components are "abrupt appearance," and, what evolutionists call, "adaptive radiation" — the rapid appearance of a burst of diversity built upon a new innovative design. If that pattern occurred just once, then the observer might say the fossil record (and the phylogeny) just happens to be missing at the necessary time. However, the same pattern — repeated again and again — whittles that explanation down. The record cannot "just happen" to be missing data at all the necessary places. Let me describe this another way. Remember that diversity thwarts lineage — diverse organisms in the "void" regions (orthogonal to a lineage) will thwart the observer's attempts to impose a phylogeny onto nature. Previously we examined this pattern in morphology space. Now we see this same pattern is visible within the fossil sequence. In the fossil record, the time dimension runs vertically, upward through the rocks. When diverse organisms appear near the

same time horizon, *they are all orthogonal to any presumed lineage*, thereby preventing the observer from identifying any phylogeny. This pattern, repeated many times throughout the record, thwarts evolutionary interpretations, while simultaneously validating itself. This fossil sequence pursues the relentless task of convincing the observer that the record is reasonably complete and reliable. In fact, that is a major success for Message Theory.

Darwinists expected the fossils to reveal phylogeny and gradual intergradations, and when the record did not comply they shouted, "incompleteness!" The punctuacionists, on the other hand, see that the fossil record cannot be brushed aside as seriously incomplete. After two centuries of close examination, the punctuacionists realized the fossil record is much more complete than previously thought. So they sought to read the record more literally and explain it as it stands. They sought to explain the situation by dramatically altering evolutionary theory. Most students know that punctuated equilibria attempts to explain abrupt appearances, large gaps, stasis, and the absence of gradual intergradations. The trade secret of punctuacionists is that their theory was also devised to *destroy* phylogeny. They needed to explain why phylogeny cannot be seen in the record of life. Their peculiar emphasis of speciation, species selection, and "species as individuals," arose entirely from their attempt to construct an evolutionary theory which "predicts" that clear ancestors, lineage, and phylogeny, should rarely if ever be found. Many scientists mistakenly view punctuated equilibria as virtually the same as Darwinism. In truth, the two could not be more different and still be common descent.

Darwinists and punctuacionists are having a heated debate. (They unite to assure the world that evolution is a "fact" and that they are merely debating the details.) They conceal the true nature of their debate with opaque discussions of "tempo and mode." In truth, they are debating how to explain the absences of phylogeny and gradual intergradation. The Darwinists say these are the result of an "incomplete" fossil record. The punctuacionists say the incompleteness argument does not hold up, so they try to "explain" the situation with a theory. This situation represents a major shift in evolutionary thinking and a major victory for Message Theory. This is due to the fossil sequence and its unique ability to validate the completeness of the fossil record.

## EARTH IS A UNIQUE PLACE

There are some peculiar things about our planet. Earth has an abundance of fossils — on land. All around the globe, from the lowlands to the tops of mountains, there are sedimentary fossils. Most of the fossils are *marine* invertebrates. Why are they not all underwater, at the bottom of the sea? Under normal conditions, fossils rarely are formed. Even then, plate tectonics indicates that rock strata are subducted into oceanic trenches, thus wiping clean the record. Why are there fossils at all? Why are they not eroded into dust? Or only the outside layers visible, like the outside layers of an onion? Or miles beneath the surface? Why is this tremendous fossil record stacked up on land, staring at us — utterly unavoidable to anyone who looks at rocks? It is as if the evolutionists' worst nightmare had literally risen from the sea. Earth has a unique ability to *preserve and display* its fossil record. This behavior is entirely unexpected of an ordinary planet. No other planet has the capacity to form — much less preserve or display — a fossil record. Yet a fossil display was absolutely essential for the success of the biotic message. This display is another key evidence for Message Theory.

Earth also has highly improbable features that are necessary for life. It has abundant water, and an average temperature in the narrow range where water is liquid. It has a nearly circular orbit, and a distance from the sun that keeps the energy flow suitable and constant. Earth's ozone layer and magnetic field serve to shield life from harmful radiation. If the rotation rate had been slower, then daily temperature variations would swing wildly beyond the tolerance of many life forms. If the rotation rate had been ten times faster, then the crust would have been highly unstable due to centripetal forces. In addition, the tilt of the axis is ideal for making the earth habitable. If the tilt had been smaller, then more of earth would be lost to polar ice caps and equatorial deserts. If the tilt had been greater, then nighttime for large portions of the earth would be six months long, severing limiting the survival of many organisms. Other special features of earth are its mass, density, radius, chemical makeup, atmosphere, and weather system. If these features had been substantially different, then life would not survive. The earth is an extremely unique place. Its ability to support life, and its ability to preserve and display an abundant fossil record are each highly improbable. Taken together they cannot be ignored. They are our clearest indication that life's designer possessed powers at least cosmological in scope.

## DISCONTINUITY SYSTEMATICS AND CREATION SYSTEMATICS

The cladistic and phenetic methods no longer supply evidence for evolution. Therefore, a new method was invented for examining the remaining key evidences of origins. [8] That method, called Discontinuity Systematics, seeks to identify the boundaries of common descent. It does that by emulating a neutral scientist who views phenetic and cladistic patterns skeptically or agnostically. In other words, Discontinuity Systematics acknowledges the phenetic and cladistic methods, and formally sets them aside, so as to focus on other patterns. Phenetics, cladistics, and Discontinuity Systematics are, like three types of film (e.g., infra-red, ultra-violet, and x-ray), for the examination of different non-overlapping patterns of life. But phenetics and cladistics no longer help evolutionists. Discontinuity systematics is now the only biosystematic method that (even in principle) could provide evidence for evolution. Evolutionists universally used systematic methods to create the illusion of phylogeny. Discontinuity

Systematics sweeps aside those illusions and examines nature for a real phylogeny. Phylogeny is a central focus of the method, and I would argue that Discontinuity Systematics is the *only* truly phylogenetic method.

With the stated exclusion of cladistics and phenetics, the method looks at all other available scientific evidences of evolutionary continuity, including fossils, and modern experimental demonstrations of variation, interbreeding and reproductive viability. The method provides: (1) a well-defined means for studying and classifying a key pattern of life, (2) terminology for conveniently communicating and debating the results, and (3) a practical means of knowledge construction and compilation.

Discontinuity Systematics is a neutral means of examining nature for a specific pattern. Message Theory then scientifically explains that pattern in a seamless fashion. The two have a clean interface. The combination of Discontinuity Systematics (a neutral observational method), and Message Theory (a scientific explanation), can rightly be called Creation Systematics. Creation Systematics (like its counterpart, Evolutionary Systematics) is not neutral or theory-free, rather it takes a definite point of view and scientifically pursues it.

The systematic method identifies a complete set of common descendants, called a holobaramin. A holobaramin is very similar to a created "kind" (a term often used by creationists), but has a more refined meaning that eliminates the notorious ambiguities of that term. In classifying organisms by their descent, Creation Systematics provides information on the content and character of the originally created life forms. It also provides the means to identify and delimit the very real biological variation that does occur in nature.

## CONCLUSIONS

According to the best scientific understanding, Lamarckian inheritance is absent from life, even though some evolutionists still look for it as a major mechanism of evolution. Likewise, simple processes (such as transposition, and the masking/unmasking of genetic libraries) have failed to impact life's pattern. Large-scale phylogeny, gradual intergradations, the naturalistic origin of life, and the discovery of extraterrestrial life, each stubbornly refuses to appear. Experimental demonstrations of biological variation fall far short of spanning the countless large gaps between types of life forms. In short, the evidence for evolution is systematically missing. The patterns that ought to be prevalent are non-existent.

Conversely patterns that are awkward for evolution to explain are abundant. Examples are: "convergences," the pervasive unity of life at the biochemical level (biologic universals), sexual reproduction, von Baer's laws of embryology, abrupt appearances of substantial new biological innovations, "adaptive radiation," and stasis within the fossil record.

Evolutionists universally complain about the creationists' "two-model approach" to origins. In truth, they have no basis for complaint. Evolutionists created the two-model approach. They fostered it as a way to sell evolution, and they still use it. The evolutionists' major arguments are, and always have been, arguments against a creator (not for evolution), and in each case that approach misdirected our attention away from deep problems in evolutionary theory. The absence from multicellular animals of enzymes for efficiently digesting the world's most abundant organic compound, cellulose, is a penetrating evolutionary mystery, yet evolutionists obscured that by turning it into an argument against a creator. In the same way, evolution never predicted the nested pattern, biologic universals, convergences, the patterns of embryology or molecular sequences, or for that matter, anything else in life. Evolutionists merely used these as convenient weapons against a creator they did not understand. Then they accommodated their infinitely flexible theory to the data, and crafted the most intricate illusion in the history of science — the idea that evolutionary theory has firm structure, that it is testable, that it is scientific. Evolutionary theory is not scientific because it makes no predictions that are actually true of life. For every major pattern of life, if evolutionary theory says anything clearly whatever, then it always favors an opinion opposite from what we observe.

Message Theory professes motives for life's design that are plausible, credible, and inviting. It is a surprisingly simple theory, and simplicity is not a fault, rather it is the mark of a truly potent scientific explanation. Despite its simplicity, Message Theory is comprehensive in its ability to explain all the major patterns of life. It does this directly, without bending in incongruous ways merely to accommodate the data. It readily solves many outstanding problems in nature, and sheds new light onto matters previously overlooked. The evolutionists' major arguments — Darwin's Riddle, Gould's panda principle, the Argument from Imperfection, biologic universals, embryonic similarities, molecular sequences, the fossil sequence, and the celebrated nested pattern — are all overturned in the most direct possible way, by showing that life was intricately designed to look unlike evolution. Life is a message from one designer.

Message Theory is also very testable, that is, it is empirically vulnerable. It makes many risky predictions. If the data were different, in countless possible ways, then Message Theory would be discredited. I cannot imagine a biological theory more vulnerable — or more contrary to the claims of evolutionists — than this one. This testability is why Message Theory is scientific, and evolution is not.

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