

The God of the Gaps Argument and Biological Design

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There seems to be considerable confusion as to what a god-of-the-gaps argument is, especially among those who defend the neo-Darwinian theory of evolution. Contrary to popular assumption, if an argument challenges a Darwinian scenario for the diversification of life, it is not automatically a god-of-the-gaps argument.

To qualify as a god-of-the-gaps argument, the argument must rely on the premise (P) (either stated or implied),

P: If we do not know what caused x , then God did it.

For example:

1. We do not know what could produce the level of functional information found in the genomes of life.
2. If we do not know what caused something, then God must have done it.
3. Therefore, God produced the functional information in the genomes of life.

Darwinists correctly point out that this is a god-of-the-gaps argument. It simply does not follow that because we do not know what caused some particular x that, therefore, God did it. What they often fail to realize, however, is that it does not therefore follow that God did *not* do it. Nor does it follow that evolution did it.

To avoid the god-of-the-gaps fallacy, the above argument must be revised. For example, one could point out that premise (1) is false; we *do* know one thing that can produce huge amounts of functional information ... intelligent minds. We do it every time we compose a text or write software. In fact, it is the only testable, verifiable, and empirically observable method for producing functional information that we know of. We can, therefore, produce the following valid argument:

1. Intelligent minds are the only verifiable cause of statistically significant levels of functional information.
2. The genomes of life contain statistically significant levels of functional information.
3. Therefore, the only verifiable method that could produce the level of functional information found in the genomes of life is an intelligent mind.

Although many Darwinists incorrectly assume this argument is yet another god-of-the-gaps argument, they would be mistaken. Premise P is not part of the argument. Of course, the second argument only establishes that the functional information encoded in the genomes of life was produced by an intelligent mind. 'Intelligent mind' is a broad category; an additional argument would be needed to narrow that category down to God. Nevertheless, science often advances one step at a time. At this point, the science is pointing toward an intelligent mind behind the functional information encoded in the genomes of life.