Disclosure

of things evolutionists don't want you to know

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Our Take on the ENCODE Project

Here's what we think about the Encyclopedia of DNA Elements (ENCODE).

One of our readers, Joseph, found January's *Web Site of the Month* column "fascinating," and wished we would do an article on the ENCODE Project. The Science Against Evolution Genie will grant his wish—right after this short comment.

Reviewed websites are selected because they merit mention—even if we don't agree with them. We try to present the issues as honestly as possible, and sometimes we do that by reviewing websites with opinions we don't share. Since we don't necessarily endorse or agree with the content of websites reviewed, Joseph wanted to know what we think about the ENCODE Project.

The ENCODE Project

Here's the abstract of the main article in the peer-reviewed professional journal, *Nature*, describing the results of the ENCODE Project.

> **Abstract**
>
> The human genome encodes the blueprint of life, but the function of the vast majority of its nearly three billion bases is unknown. The Encyclopedia of DNA Elements (ENCODE) project has systematically mapped regions of transcription, transcription factor association, chromatin structure and histone modification. These data enabled us to assign biochemical functions for 80% of the genome, in particular outside of the well-studied protein-coding regions. Many discovered candidate regulatory elements are physically associated with one another and with expressed genes, providing new insights into the mechanisms of gene regulation. The newly identified elements also show a statistical correspondence to sequence variants linked to human disease, and can thereby guide interpretation of this variation. Overall, the project provides new insights into the organization and regulation of our genes and genome, and is an expansive resource of functional annotations for biomedical research. [1]

They studied "the human genome." In case you don't know what a genome is,

> The genome is the entire set of genetic instructions found in a cell. In humans, the genome consists of 23 pairs of chromosomes, found in the nucleus, as well as a small chromosome found in the cells' mitochondria. Each set of 23 chromosomes contains approximately 3.1 billion bases of DNA sequence. [2]

The genome is the genetic information that the human body uses to build all the cells it is made up of.

The purpose of the study was not to prove evolution. It was biomedical research. They were trying to figure out what each part of the human genome does, and how it is related to disease. Evolution was not discussed because it was taken for granted by the study authors.

The article itself is pretty boring, and is not

[1] The ENCODE Project Consortium, *Nature*, 06 September 2012, "An integrated encyclopedia of DNA elements in the human genome", pp 57-74, http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v489/n7414/full/nature11247.html#abstract

[2] http://www.genome.gov/Glossary/index.cfm?id=90

very quotable. It is mostly a lot of stuff about mapping where various things are found on the DNA molecule. The comments about the article are more pertinent to evolution than the article itself. Before addressing those comments, let's make an analogy between DNA and Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Decoding Names and Proteins

The Rosetta Stone contains writing in Egyptian hieroglyphics and two known languages. Since the two known languages say the same thing, archeologists assumed that the hieroglyphics say the same thing, too. Since the names "Ptolemaios" and "Kleopatra" appeared in multiple places in the two known languages, Jean-François Champollion looked for them in the hieroglyphics, and found them.

Suppose you don't know anything about the Russian language, but discovered a bi-lingual document in Russian and English discussing the Soviet Leaders Сталин (Stalin), Ленин (Lenin), and Никита Хрущев (Nikita Khrushchev). Knowing how the names are pronounced, you could start to figure out how Cyrillic letters are pronounced. That's how Champollion figured out how to pronounce hieroglyphics. But knowing what the hieroglyphics sound like is just the beginning. He still had to figure out what the sounds that weren't names meant. That took longer.

When the DNA structure was first analyzed, nobody knew what the DNA did. The first thing they discovered was that portions of the DNA molecule caused proteins to be produced. (They "coded for proteins" in genetic jargon.) Until recently, scientists were unable to figure out what the rest of the DNA molecule did. All they knew was,

> More than 98% of the human genome does not encode protein sequences, including most sequences within introns and most intergenic DNA. [3]

Arrogantly, they thought that if they didn't understand what it did, it must not do anything. It must be random "junk" left behind by evolution. If Champollion had been as arrogant, he would have thought that all the hieroglyphics that weren't names were just junk doodles, and would not have discovered what they meant.

Not Junk

The ENCODE Project has now been able to assign biochemical functions for 80% of the genome, so that 80% of the human genome clearly isn't "junk." As time goes by, we expect the purpose for the remaining 20% will be found, too.

The Evolution Connection

You might be wondering why an article about biomedical research, which has no creationist agenda, would be so controversial in the evolutionary community. It is because this biomedical research strikes at the heart of an evolutionary assumption that has been around at least since 1986, and probably much longer.

In 1986, the famous militant evolutionist, Richard Dawkins, challenged William Paley's long-standing watchmaker analogy. (In 1802, Paley argued that if a pocket watch is found on a heath, it is most reasonable to assume that someone dropped it and that it was made by one or more watchmakers, and not by natural forces.) In his book, The Blind Watchmaker, Dawkins wrote,

> Natural selection, the blind, unconscious, automatic process which Darwin discovered, and which we now know is the explanation for the existence and apparently purposeful form of all life, has no purpose in mind. It has no mind and no mind's eye. It does not plan for the future. It has no vision, no foresight, no sight at all. If it can be said to play the role of watchmaker in nature, it is the *blind* watchmaker. [4]

This has become a fundamental tenant among evolutionists. Evolution must have no goal in mind because a goal implies intention, intention implies design, design implies intelligence, and intelligence implies a deity.

The problem for evolutionists is that studies of living things have produced an insurmountable mountain of evidence that life could not have evolved by chance. The probability of chance producing living things so well designed is just too small. So, ten years after The Blind Watchmaker, Dawkins wrote Climbing Mount Improbable, in which he introduced a new class of objects.

> I shall call them *designoid* (pronounced 'design-oid' not 'dezziggnoid')… Designoid objects *look* designed, so much so that some people — probably, alas, most people — think that they *are* designed. These people are wrong [5]

He admits that living things clearly appear to

[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noncoding_DNA

[4] Dawkins, 1986, The Blind Watchmaker, page 5, https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Richard_Dawkins

[5] Dawkins, 1996, Climbing Mount Improbable, page 6, http://www.evolbiol.ru/document/637

have been designed; but he claims that is just an illusion. Although he admits they certainly appear to be designed, he claims they weren't really designed for no other reason than that he doesn't believe in a designer. He sees the evidence, but can't accept the logical conclusion.

Because of the theological implications, it is vitally important to evolutionists that no hint of purpose be admitted in evolution. This brings us back to the idea of "junk DNA."

Junk DNA

Dawkins believes that the god he doesn't believe in would not create any junk DNA. That is, if DNA was designed on purpose, there would not be any unnecessary parts. Unnecessary parts just drive up the cost.

In 2015, Ford produced 2,613,162 cars.[6] None of them had fuzzy dice hanging from the rear view mirror. Fuzzy dice serve no purpose. If you want fuzzy dice, you have to spend $4 to $12 dollars of your own money to get them. If Ford bought fuzzy dice wholesale at a deep discount of $1 per pair, and put them in every car sold, it would have reduced Ford's profit by more than 2.5 million dollars. Smart designers don't add things that don't have a function. Functionless cosmetic features are added only if it is believed that their beauty will increase the number of units sold.

Dawkins' point, accepted by most evolutionists, is that if the human genome were designed on purpose, it would not be 2% useful parts that code for proteins and 98% random junk that doesn't do anything. Therefore, DNA must be the result of purposeless accidents filtered by natural selection.

The ENCODE Project found functions for at least 80% of the human genome, and the possibility that the remaining 20% has functionality that hasn't been understood yet. If the human genome is lean and mean, with no unnecessary extra baggage, then it must be the product of conscious design.

The Broken Clock

The other problem evolutionists have with the ENCODE Project is that their findings break the molecular clock. Evolutionists traditionally have viewed DNA as consisting of junk and "ultraconservative regions." The ultraconservative regions are not red states with Republican governors. They are stretches of DNA which never change (their pattern is conserved) because any change would be lethal to the organism. But the junk regions, which were previously believed to have no function, could accumulate mutations which would not be removed by natural selection because they don't affect the viability of the organism. Therefore, they believed they could determine how long it could have been since two "closely related" organisms diverged from their imaginary common ancestor by counting the number of differences in the junk DNA and dividing by an average mutation rate. (The mutation rate was based on the differences in DNA of species which were "known" to have diverged after a "known" number of years.)

If the junk regions really do have functionality, as the ENCODE Project has discovered, then accumulated differences aren't immune to "negative selection" (to use jargon the ENCODE Project uses). Therefore, the accumulated differences can't be used as an evolutionary clock.

They Still Believe

Despite this, it is clear from their report that the authors of the ENCODE Project still believe in evolution. Their paper is full of sentences like this one:

> Our data show that global patterns of modification are highly variable across cell types, in accordance with changes in transcriptional activity. [7]

"Global patterns of modification" implies evolution. They assume that some creatures are more recently evolved, and are the result of modification of the DNA of a more primitive creature. They recognize that the amount of evolution is "highly variable across cell types." In other words, they believe that certain parts of the DNA molecule have evolved a lot, and other parts have not evolved very much. (This also invalidates the notion of the molecular clock.) They explain this away by saying it is the result of "changes in transcriptional activity." They expect you to accept this explanation without question, so they offer no proof that it is true.

I Didn't Know the Gun Was Loaded

The authors of the paper seem clueless as to the obvious damage this report does to the theory of evolution. They believe completely in evolution,

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[6] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ford_Motor_Company#Sales_numbers

[7] The ENCODE Project Consortium, *Nature*, 06 September 2012, "An integrated encyclopedia of DNA elements in the human genome", http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v489/n7414/full/nature11247.html

so it apparently never occurred to them that their discovery of functionality in junk DNA absolutely refutes Dawkins' position. They just innocently presented their data showing conclusively that they have found purpose for 80% of the human genome and did not prepare any defense for the attacks they would get from evolutionists who fear that creationists can use this to their advantage.

Astute evolutionists, like Steven Pelech, immediately recognized the vulnerability of the theory of evolution to creationists in light of this information, and used this defense:

> There appears to be strong evolutionary pressure in multicellular organisms to retain excess baggage so as to simply make sure that the important parts are retained. There are countless cases of this ranging from the extensive remodelling of embryos during early development, to the hundreds of thousands of superfluous phosphorylation sites in the proteins encoded by the human genome. At the levels of gross anatomy down to the molecular, there are so many examples of inefficiencies in biology. [8]

Even though the researchers found that 80% of junk DNA wasn't really junk, and isn't unnecessary "excess baggage," Pelech says that retention of unnecessary excess baggage really is necessary to "make sure that the important parts are retained." He thinks that the way embryos develop is inefficient, as if he knows a more efficient way to create offspring.

The Inefficiency Defense

Pelech insists that there are many examples of inefficiencies in biology—an argument that optical engineers just can't see. Here's why:

You've probably heard more than one evolutionist say that the human eye is inefficient, claiming that the human retina is installed backwards. Just in case you haven't, here's an example of the argument from poor design.

> The structure of humans' eyes (as well as those of all vertebrates). The retina is 'inside out'. The nerves and blood vessels lie on the surface of the retina instead of behind it as is the case in many invertebrate species. This arrangement forces a number of complex adaptations and gives mammals a blind spot. [9]

[8] Steven Pelech, comment #49966, http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v489/n7414/full/nature11247.html

[9] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argument_from_poor_design

It should come as no surprise to you that the bigger a telescope is, the more sensitive it is. The telescope on the front of the infrared air-to-air missile I helped design in the 1970's was about three inches in diameter. It could barely see as well as a human eye. There was no way I could shrink the telescope down to the size of the pupil of a human eye. Hawk, owl, and eagle eyes are even smaller than human eyes, but clearly have good enough sensitivity to see small rodents from high in the sky. Don't talk to me about "inefficiencies in biology" and claim that eyes are badly designed.

The Bottom Line

The less "junk" there is, the more evidence there is for design. That's why the discoveries of genetic research in general, and the ENCODE project in particular, are so damaging to the theory of evolution.

Email

The Platypus Problem

Mixed Traits present a problem for evolutionists.

In last month's email column, Michael recommended two YouTube videos produced by evolutionists. We addressed one in detail. We ignored the other, partly because there wasn't much of significance in it, and partly because our "six-page newsletter" was already eight pages long. We strive to keep the newsletter short and to the point, but it is hard because there is so much science against evolution.

Mixed Traits

There was one point in the second video worth attention. VoysovReason argued that different categories of animals (and plants) have particular distinguishing characteristics because they inherited them from the common ancestor of that category. Creatures in other categories don't have these traits because they evolved from a different ancestor.

> Once these major types of changes develop, they tend to remain unchanged in all the descendants for millions of years, even as they branch out into subgroups and species. And

significantly, we don't see a mixing of these traits with animals outside the major group. There are no reptiles with fur, or birds that give birth to live young. [10]

Because traits don't mix, there aren't any venomous mammals that lay eggs and have a bird's beak. If such an animal existed, it would be unexplainable from an evolutionary point of view.

The Mythical Platypus

Apparently, the duck-billed platypus must be a myth! ☺ But if the platypus doesn't exist, how could scientists have decoded its genome and reported it in the professional literature?

> **Abstract**
> We present a draft genome sequence of the platypus, *Ornithorhynchus anatinus*. This monotreme exhibits a fascinating combination of reptilian and mammalian characters. For example, platypuses have a coat of fur adapted to an aquatic lifestyle; platypus females lactate, yet lay eggs; and males are equipped with venom similar to that of reptiles. [11]

How do evolutionists try to explain where the venom came from?

> Analysis of the first monotreme genome aligned these features with genetic innovations. We find that reptile and platypus venom proteins have been co-opted independently from the same gene families; milk protein genes are conserved despite platypuses laying eggs; and immune gene family expansions are directly related to platypus biology. [12]

The same miraculous accident happened twice. And there's more!

> Other special features of the platypus are its gastrointestinal system, neuroanatomy (electro-reception) and a venom delivery system, unique among mammals. Platypus is an obligate aquatic feeder that relies on its thick pelage to maintain its low (31–32 °C) body temperature during feeding in often icy waters. With its eyes, ears and nostrils closed while foraging underwater, it uses an electro-sensory system in the bill to help locate aquatic invertebrates and other prey. Interestingly, adult monotremes lack teeth. [13]

From what bird or reptile did they inherit the electro-sensory system?

Initially, it was hard to believe they lay eggs.

> The most extraordinary and controversial aspect of platypus biology was initially whether or not they lay eggs like birds and reptiles. In 1884, William Caldwell's concise telegram to the British Association announced "*Monotremes oviparous, ovum meroblastic*", not holoblastic as in the other two mammalian groups. The egg is laid in an earthen nesting burrow after about 21 days and hatches 11 days later. For about 4 months, when most organ systems differentiate, the young depend on milk sucked directly from the abdominal skin, as females lack nipples. Platypus milk changes in protein composition during lactation (as it does in marsupials, but not in most eutherians). [14]

Remember, traits don't mix. They have to be inherited from an ancestor. Living things aren't like a Baja Bug, made from a mixture of diverse custom parts on a Volkswagen frame.

> The anatomy of the monotreme reproductive system reflects its reptilian origins, but shows features typical of mammals, as well as unique specialized characteristics. Spermatozoa are filiform, like those of birds and reptiles, but, uniquely among amniotes, form bundles of 100 during passage through the epididymis. Chromosomes are arranged in defined order in sperm as they are in therians, but not birds. The testes synthesize testosterone and dihydrotestosterone, as in therians, but there is no scrotum and testes are abdominal. [15]

That brings us to the good stuff—sex!

> The platypus karyotype comprises 52 chromosomes in both sexes, with a few large and many small chromosomes, reminiscent of reptilian macro- and microchromosomes. Platypuses have multiple sex chromosomes with some homology to the bird Z chromosome. Males have five X and five Y chromosomes, which form a chain at meiosis and segregate into 5X and 5Y sperm. Sex determination and sex chromosome dosage compensation remain unclear. [16]

Let's face it. The platypus looks like a steampunk animal constructed by a mad scientist, not the product of evolution from a common ancestor.

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[10] VoysovReason, "The Evidence for Evolution Made Easy", 11 minutes and 30 seconds into the video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jw0MLJJbqc

[11] *Nature*, 8 May 2008, "Genome analysis of the platypus reveals unique signatures of evolution", pp. 175-183, http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v453/n7192/full/nature06936.html

[12] *ibid.*

[13] *ibid.*

[14] *ibid.*

[15] *ibid.*

[16] *ibid.*

by Lothar Janetzko

Scientific Evidence that God Created Life

http://www.creationism.org/heinze/SciEvidGodLife.htm

Did God Create Life? Ask a Protein!

This month's website review looks at a site that provides interesting insights into many questions regarding the debate surrounding creation and evolution. The site presents an article by Thomas Heinze which presents challenging questions for evolutionists.

At the beginning of the article, you will find links to the contents consisting of 1) Did God Create Life? Ask a Protein! 2) A Cell Must Have a Membrane, 3) Where Did the Information in Cells Come From? 4) Redefining Science to Eliminate the Creator, 5) Did Time Perform the Miracle of Life? and 6) Did Life Come from Space?

The first link takes you to a lengthy discussion about proteins, amino acids and RNA. You also learn that "***Proteins are so hard to make that in all of nature, they never form except in already living cells. Never! This scientific fact stands in stark contrast to what was taught.***" You will also find a discussion about the Principle of Biogenesis (living things come only from living things) and abiogenesis.

In the 2nd section, you will find information about the important function of a cell's membrane.

The 3rd section provides an interesting discussion about the information contained in cells. Where does the information come from? Can matter compose information? The statement is made that, "***Information never happens apart from intelligence, yet cells contain huge amounts of information. I believe this is the most important single evidence that life came from the mind of an intelligent Creator rather than from dumb chemicals.***"

In the 4th section, you find how the term science has been redefined. "The term 'science' once meant 'knowledge discovered by experimentation, observation and objective investigation", but now many, including the Kansas state guidelines, redefine science as "The human activity of seeking **natural explanations** [emphasis ours] for what we observe in the world around us."

The last two sections of the article also provide interesting material to ponder regarding how life could have formed here on earth.

At the top of the website article, you will find a link to the Main Heinze Page which will take you to many more articles written by the author that you may find interesting. Many topics are covered.