

# Evidence for Message Theory

A review of  
*Life's Solution: Inevitable  
Humans in a Lonely  
Universe*  
by Simon Conway Morris  
Cambridge University Press,  
Cambridge, UK and  
New York, 2003

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Need I say this is an evolution book? The preface sternly warns us, 'if you happen to be a "creation scientist" ... may I politely suggest that you put this book back on the shelf. It will do you no good.' That's your first sign that creationists will *love* this book! Like Stephen Jay Gould before him, Simon Conway Morris boldly states many facts that are awkward for the received view of evolution—facts long ignored or de-emphasized by other evolutionists—facts favourable to creationists. Therefore Morris must vigorously distance himself from creationists, just as Gould did. This review will note several parallels between Morris and Gould.

The book is clearly written, terse and to the point, with bountiful scientific meat and little fluff. There is much technical vocabulary, though usefully defined within the prose. Authoritative and thoroughly referenced; the endnotes alone run for 113 pages! Not for the casual reader, but creationary scholars have a useful (and favourable) resource here, much as they do with Gould's books.

Unlike many evolutionists, Morris frankly acknowledges the serious difficulties for the naturalistic origin-of-life (chemical evolution), and is ripe for jubilant quotation by creationists. Creation scholars have said much of it before, as have various leading evolutionists in bits and pieces, but

it's good to see it again, and add to the rising chorus of voices, all singing the same tune.

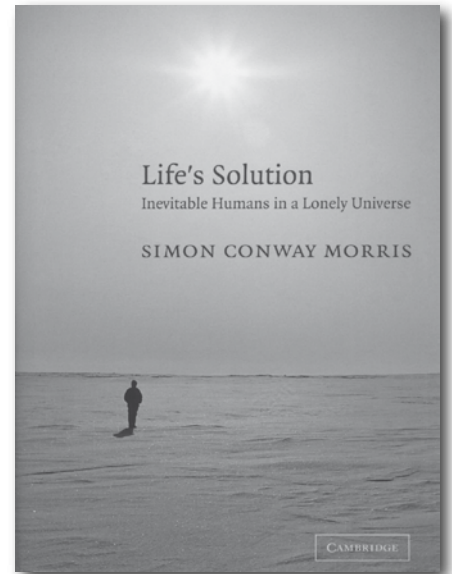
In the same way, Morris emphatically advances the many highly special properties—of our Earth, our Solar System, our galaxy and universe—that are necessary for life. We live in a very special place. Again there is much material here ripe for jubilant quotation by creationists.

He argues explicitly—and perhaps more forthrightly than any previous evolutionist—for the high *improbability* of life arising here or elsewhere. There are numerous quotable quotes that favour creationists (unintentionally), and such a wealth of authoritative and favourable testimony from an 'unfriendly' witness is especially ... delicious.

While he soundly advances these points—points that are fundamentally *anti*-evolution and pro-creation—one wonders why he does so in the context of this book. Apparently it is to stave off falsification of his main thesis—that the evolution of humans is 'inevitable' (anywhere that meets certain minimal requirements for life to exist). The inevitability is inherent within the universe itself, somehow within the very fabric of nature. But if that's true, then why aren't there extraterrestrial humanoids communicating with us? Obviously, the absence of those humanoids would tend to falsify his claim that humans are inevitable. Apparently to get around this problem, he suggests we may very well be alone in the universe, because of the extremely high improbability of life starting.

Thus he advances a view that seems self-contradictory—that humans are (a) inevitable, yet (b) alone in the universe—the book's subtitle. If not self-contradictory, there is considerable unresolved tension between those two propositions.

In a closing chapter, Morris addresses the philosophical emptiness of evolution and many of its proponents. Again, unusual for an evolutionist, he says many things that creationists agree with. For example, evolutionists are 'all too often exhibiting a lofty



arrogance, mingled with contemptuous disdain, which presupposes that any religious instinct is a mental aberration' (p. 322).

He criticizes the philosophical approach of ultra-Darwinists (such as Richard Dawkins):

'... far more serious, are particular examples of sophistry and sleight of hand in the misuse of metaphor, and more importantly a distortion of metaphysics in support of an evolutionary programme. Consider how ultra-Darwinists, having erected a naturalistic system that cannot by itself possess any ultimate purpose, still allow a sense of meaning mysteriously to slip back in. .... Notwithstanding the quasi-religious enthusiasms of ultra-Darwinists, their own understanding of theology is a combination of ignorance and derision, philosophically limp, drawing on clichés ...' (pp. 314–316).

'That biology can be co-opted for agendas, if not ideologies, that promise an ever-more-perfect future, albeit across piles of corpses, is evident from the lunacies adopted by totalitarian states. Such madness is, of course, a thing of the past—or is it? Now new distortions beckon, not least those to be allowed by assigning a protean malleability to life as

engendered by genuflection to the primacy of the gene' (p. 323).

Morris comments on Darwin's 'retreat into gloomy agnosticism', and 'the rottenness at the heart of Haeckel's project'. He clears away some myths about the Scopes Trial, and lays blame on the 'ruthless' Clarence Darrow.

Morris objects to the notion that science and religion have a distinctly separate 'sphere of influence' (i.e. Gould's concept of 'non-overlapping Magisteria') saying, 'such apparent generosity merely conceals a strategy for sidelining religion and a road to philosophical incoherence' (p. 322).

Again contrary to Gould, Morris makes some small attempt at merging science and religion. First, he sets the stage by acknowledging that traditional evolutionary theory (and evolutionists) tended to support a gloomy, meaningless, purposeless, or morally incoherent philosophy. So, whence comes the meaning, purpose, or hope? Whence comes the good news? Well apparently, the good news comes from his new version of evolutionary theory, which claims: (1) the evolution and repeated convergence of new complex biological traits is *inevitable* and built into the fabric of nature, and (2) therefore, very human-like extraterrestrials just might exist out there in the universe. ... Stop me. I cannot contain my joy.

Morris gives it a wink and a nod. He keeps his science-hat on throughout the discussion, without faking religious piety, or giving phoney sentimental platitudes. But it scarcely qualifies as a merger between science and religion, or even between science and philosophy.

He often refers to extraterrestrials, and claims they would likely behave, perceive, function, and look, very much like humans. Perhaps that's intended to give us hope? Just as likely, it's intended to give us hype, which helps sell books. Once you get past the hype, this book is not about *extraterrestrials*; rather, it's an attempt to make sense of the data *here on Earth*. And that is where Morris creates much interesting mischief.

## Convergence

The book focuses on convergences, in theory these are features that evolved separately and independently toward a similar complex design. Countless examples are documented, almost exhausting the reader, though each one is fascinating. An additional index is included (six pages) just for locating the many convergences discussed. Even by itself, that would make the book valuable, since such a resource was previously unavailable. The book is not intended as a complete accounting of convergence, since it does not remotely include all the cases. Morphological and behavioural convergences receive the most attention, while there is far less attention to molecular cases, and embryological convergences receive no attention—though convergence is abundant at all levels.

The book is also valuable for studying *evolutionary epistemology*—or how we know what we know about evolutionary theory. When leading evolutionists are compared (with each other, and even with themselves, under a variety of circumstances), we see remarkable contradictions concerning the structure and predictions of evolutionary theory. The answers that evolutionists give depends on the problem under consideration—and the answers often contradict. In this way the *comparative study* of evolutionary theorizing is valuable, even to creationists, for it reveals evolutionary theory as it really is, and its lack of structure. This is displayed in this book, by the contradictions between Gould and Morris.

## Gould versus Morris

Stephen Jay Gould claimed evolution is 'contingent' and highly dependent on the peculiar circumstances of history. He is fond of saying that re-running the tape of life will always give different outcomes and different biospheres, with a vanishingly small prospect of anything like a human emerging. Morris contradicts all that. So, why do leading evolutionists contradict each other over the fundamental predictions of evolutionary theory?

The answer is that Gould and Morris focused on different evolutionary problems, which caused them to generate radically different 'answers'.

It is useful to summarize Gould's reasoning. Gould, a paleontologist, focused on two major dilemmas of the fossil record, which he hoped to answer with the theory of punctuated equilibria. One dilemma was the predominance of large morphological gaps, which he rightly called a 'trade secret of paleontology'. He hoped to answer it by supposing occasional rapid bursts of evolution at punctuation events. His claim is well known.

The other dilemma, far less often acknowledged, was the systematic absence of clear-cut ancestors and lineages. Gould described this aspect of the data as 'labyrinthine, indecipherable, bushes'. Gould went further and said this pattern is like a fractal (from mathematics), which looks the same no matter how close you get to the data—it's just 'bushes all the way down'—without clear-cut lineages. But the word 'bush' is misleading, because it conveys the imagery and assumption of common descent, without that actually being observed. An interconnecting tree-structure is *assumed*, but not actually observed—and this misleading assumption is conveyed by the word 'bush'. Where evolutionists use the word 'bush', I would use the word 'diversity', since it accurately conveys the evolutionists' observations, without the misleading pro-evolutionary assumptions.

From an observer's point of view, a lineage is a long, narrow, trajectory of life-forms through character-space, with the adjacent regions *void* of life-forms. If life-forms occupy the 'void' regions (making these non-empty), then a lineage is not observed. In this way, diversity prevents the observer from observing a lineage, or even imposing a lineage onto the data. In my wording: diversity thwarts lineage. Diversity prevents the identification of clear-cut ancestors and lineages. An abundance of diversity helps make life *resist* evolutionary explanations.

This absence of clear-cut lineages,

and abundance of diversity (i.e. ‘bushiness’), was the second dilemma that Gould brought to light. (It also contradicted classical Darwinism, which expected clear-cut ancestors and lineages, arising through anagenesis, and driven predominantly by the natural selection of individual organisms. (Anagenesis is change of a species through time within a given lineage, in contrast with cladogenesis, which is a splitting or branching of a lineage.) Darwin’s emphasis of anagenesis was so great that the ‘origin of species’—that is, cladogenesis or speciation—is not even discussed in Darwin’s book of that name.)

Gould hoped to answer this second dilemma through a radical new emphasis on speciation (or splitting points where an additional new species originates). This goal required that the speciation events be in a substantially *random* direction concerning adaptation, thus

introducing a new *randomness* to evolution (a randomness he hoped to ease through a special emphasis on species selection). He also claimed a high frequency of stasis (or non-change), and gave many examples of *non*-progressive and *regressive* evolution. All of that increased his tendency to see evolution as a substantially *random, unrepeatable* process.

Gould exposed previous illusions about the data, which drew cheers from creationists. So he wrote articles explicitly arguing the case for evolution, and opposing creationists. He argued that so-called ‘imperfect’ designs (such as the panda’s thumb) are the major evidence for evolution. But that would have been awkward to combine with arguments for the incredible powers of evolutionary ‘attractors’ and the ‘inevitability’ of good design (as in Morris’s argument)—because evolutionary theory would come

across as self-conflicted, structureless storytelling. So, Gould tended to de-emphasize the third great evidence against evolution—the abundance of convergence.

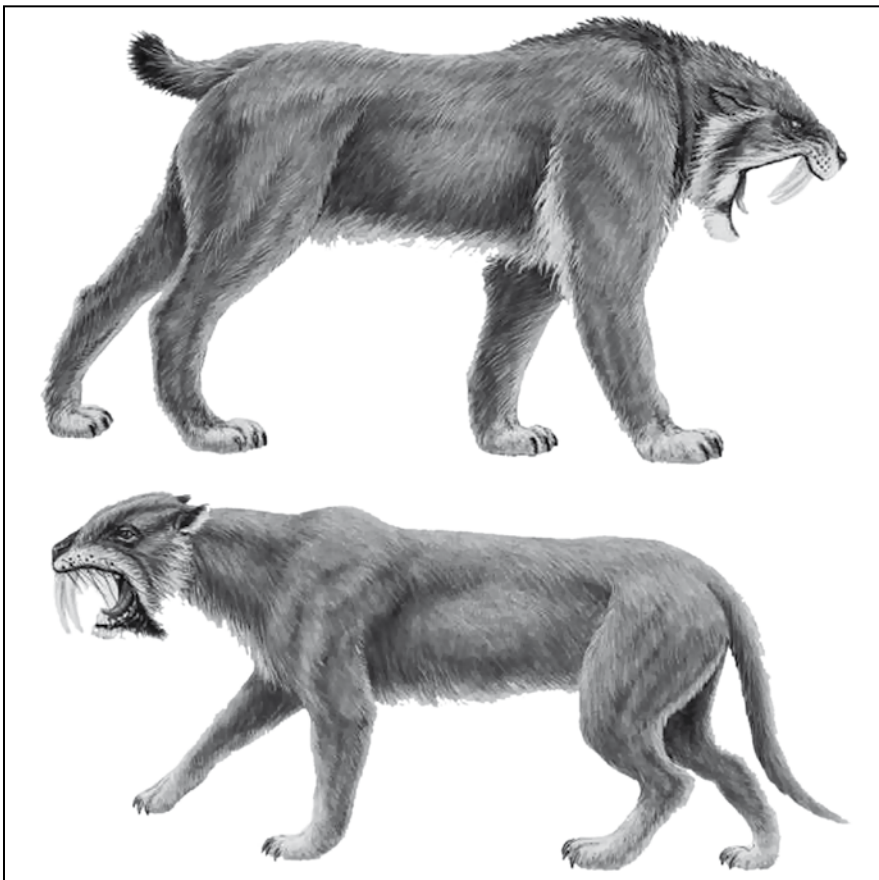
Indeed, most evolutionists downplayed convergences as mere evolutionary curiosities, or ‘noise’ that may safely be ignored. Moreover, convergences suggest a sense of teleology, or purposefulness in nature, which gave evolutionary biologists ‘a feeling of unease’:

‘I have been particularly struck by the adjectives that accompany descriptions of evolutionary convergence. Words like “remarkable”, “striking”, “extraordinary”, or even “astonishing” and “uncanny” are commonplace. ... the frequency of adjectival surprise associated with descriptions of convergence suggest to me that there is almost a feeling of unease in these similarities. Indeed, I strongly suspect that some of these biologists sense the ghost of teleology looking over their shoulders. Nor is this an unworthy sentiment’ (p. 127–128).

Morris’s situation is completely different. His book does not address the creation-evolution debate, nor does it seriously defend the ‘fact’ of evolution. Unlike Gould, Morris feels free of such burdens, and ignores the dilemmas that Gould struggled to face.

### Misplaced assumptions

Morris takes evolution as a given, and assumes it as a fact. Thereafter, that assumption miraculously turns all antievolutionary data into incredible ‘evidence for evolution’. Under that logic, greater evidence *against* evolution is immediately reinterpreted as greater evidence *for* incredible evolutionary claims. Do you find the evolution of vision hard to believe? Never mind. The mere *existence* of vision is immediately transformed into ‘evidence for’ the incredible powers of natural selection. Do you find the independent evolution of vision—not once, but over forty separate times—hard to believe? Never mind. The mere *existence* of such a pattern is immediately transformed



The design similarities in the unrelated sabre-tooth of the placental cat (top) and the cat-like marsupial thylacosmilid (lower) is interpreted as ‘convergence’ by evolutionists—another word for ‘incongruity’.



into ‘evidence for’ the incredible powers of evolutionary ‘attractors’ within the fabric of nature. This is Morris’s logic, repeated over and over again, through countless examples. First assume evolution is true, then that assumption immediately transforms all antievolutionary evidences into incredible claims for the powers of evolution.

The situation is illustrated with an analogy. If we first *assume* Mister Smith committed the local bank robbery, then his observance in another town at the time is merely taken as *proof* of his incredible speed. However, the situation is worse, because Mister Smith was first convicted at trial by *omitting* highly relevant evidence (his observance in another town at the time). Then later that same evidence (together with the ‘fact’ of his conviction) is brought forth as proof of his incredible speed. But the correct solution is to demand a re-trial. In the same way, a re-trial is warranted concerning the ‘fact of evolution’ and the creation-evolution debate. Evolutionists have consistently de-emphasized both the extent and importance of convergence—a habit acknowledged even by Morris (p 285). He now wishes to bring forth convergence as profound evidence—a move I embrace with supreme delight. But his move also calls for thorough re-examination of the case in light of this previously overlooked evidence. A retrial is called for, and Morris ought not merely assume evolution is a fact.

### Definitions of convergence

Though the bulk of Morris’s book is devoted to convergence, he does not define how these are observed and identified, and that oversight leaves common misconceptions in place. Theorists easily define ‘convergence’ in their head, for use in theoretical discussion. But how is convergence defined so observers may identify it in nature? People commonly believe the same definition applies to both theorists and observers. That is, people believe convergences are identified by first observing *clear-cut ancestors and lineages*. (If those were observed along independent evolutionary paths toward

a similar biological design, then you would indeed have a convergence—and a very respectable evidence for evolution.) But that common belief is false. Once you get past the trivial waters of small-scale variation, out into the deep and controversial waters of large-scale evolution (the subject of the creation-evolution controversy, and this review), convergences are never identified in that manner—because such a pattern does not exist in nature. When evolutionists say they observe ‘convergence’, (say, the eyes of octopus and vertebrate) they convey the false impression that clear-cut ancestors and lineages have been identified—and Morris’s book doesn’t do nearly enough to disabuse readers of that false impression.

In other words, there is disparity between definitions used by *theorists* versus *observers*, and that disparity is ideal for creating illusion. To dispel the illusion we must disentangle the various definitions and keep them straight. The first thing to remember is that the above definition of convergence—the definition that would count as serious evidence for evolution—is not found in nature. In that sense, convergence is an illusion.

### Intermediate forms

Next take a brief excursion into intermediate forms. Evolutionists typically define an intermediate form (or transitional form) as an organism that shares characteristics from two separately classified groups. That definition does not require the identification of any ancestors or lineages. Moreover, that definition is sloppy, too open-ended, and seems intended to allow more organisms to be called an ‘intermediate form’. Notably, that definition is effectively the same one commonly used for a convergent form—the only difference is how they are explained. From the observer’s point of view, these intermediate forms and convergent forms are defined identically, except for how they are explained. One evolutionist’s convergent form is another evolutionist’s intermediate form, and vice versa. Yet remarkably, using

those same definitions, evolutionists acknowledge that intermediate forms are rare, while convergent forms are abundant. That holds true no matter what particular phylogeny is assumed. This ratio is unexpected of evolution and cannot be readily explained by the ‘incompleteness’ of the fossil record.

### Incongruities in evolutionary hierarchy

We are now ready for a more technical definition of how observers identify convergence. A ‘convergence’ is identified as an *incongruity* within a hierarchical data structure. For example, library books are classified into a hierarchical classification system. If a given book is classified as Art, and it has some complex features surprisingly similar to the Math books, then this could qualify as a ‘convergence’ under the same method used by evolutionists—no ancestors are identified.<sup>1</sup> The important point is that what evolutionists call ‘convergence’ is observed *without* identifying real, clear-cut ancestors or lineages. When evolutionists say they observe ‘convergence’, you can typically replace that with the phrase, ‘incongruity within a hierarchical data structure’.

### Identical convergence?

Evolutionists claim convergences will seldom, if ever, be identical, because natural selection would not be expected to produce exactly the same complex feature twice independently. They used that argument to make evolutionary theory seem more testable: as though making a risky scientific prediction. Convergences, they said, ought strongly tend to be non-identical, and Morris asserts, ‘this in itself is as concrete a piece of evidence for the reality of evolution as can be provided’ (p. 128).

Evolutionists are either naïve about evolutionary theory, or they are absent-mindedly creating an illusion about it. If all the convergences were *identical*, would it falsify evolution? No, on the contrary, it would vastly ease evolutionists’ problems. The point is fundamental: if convergences

were identical, they would no longer be ‘convergences’—they would be Transpositions. That is, these would no longer be perceived as the independent evolution of complex similarities, but rather as Transpositions, where biological characters are transposed (via some mechanism) from one lineage into an entirely separate lineage. That change in perception would dramatically change the playing field in favour of evolution.

### Transpositions

Do not naïvely think the *lack of a detailed mechanism* would prevent evolutionists from invoking a Transposition explanation. The concept of evolutionary Transposition is both simple and ancient, far predating our understanding of genetics. And do not think its *lack of experimental demonstration* would somehow prevent evolutionists from invoking Transposition to explain things. Historically, evolutionary mechanisms were typically embraced without experimental demonstrations. Even the modern embrace of descent with modification has never been experimentally demonstrated sufficiently to establish large-scale evolution, such as the evolution of eyes. None of those

shortcomings has seriously prevented evolutionists from invoking peculiar mechanisms and claims. Instead, the fundamental driving force is *pattern*. Pattern is the essential evidence that makes all the difference. Evolutionists see a pattern, and then choose a matching ‘explanation’ from their vast smorgasbord of explanations.

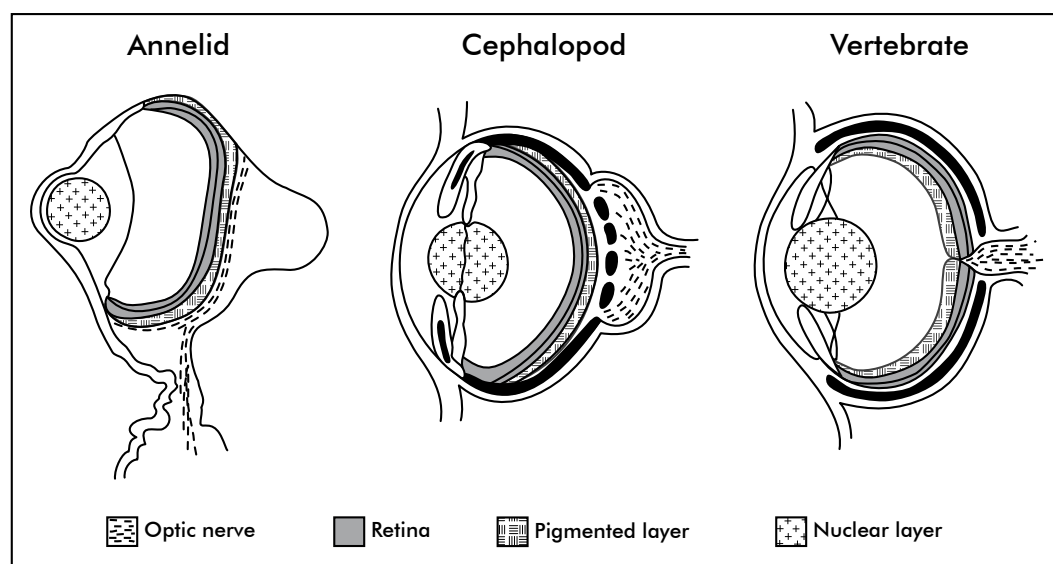
If evolutionists see a pattern that looks like Lamarckian inheritance, then they invoke ‘Lamarckian inheritance!’ If they see a pattern that looks like a genetic throwback, they shout ‘Genetic throwback!’ If they see a pattern they interpret as convergence (say, a non-nested character within a cladogram), then they shout ‘Convergence!’ Pattern has everything to do with it, while the lack of demonstrated mechanisms has scarcely held evolutionists back.

And I dare say, if evolutionists saw a pattern that looked like Transposition, they would invoke ‘Transposition!’ Indeed, that has already happened, in the case of the leghemoglobin protein in legume plants (which was claimed to be a Transposition of a vertebrate hemoglobin gene into these plants). A Transposition explanation was invoked, and later renounced, based upon evolutionists’ various perceptions of the data *pattern*.

The typical creationist (or evolutionist for that matter) naïvely thinks common descent poses the gravest threat to a creation point of view. In actuality, Transposition poses a far greater threat. If evolutionists had looked upon the world and seen a rampant widespread pattern of transposed character traits (a Transposition pattern), then they would immediately ‘explain’ it via Transposition. They would say, ‘Transposition did it!’ If that were established as a real and predominant pattern of life, then evolutionists would forever be free of their greatest dilemmas with the fossil record (exposed by Gould). First, Transposition would explain rapid evolution, which would explain the large morphological gaps. Second, Transposition would explain the absence of clear-cut ancestors and lineages (the ‘bushy’ pattern), because species would ‘inherit’ their characteristics from all over the place, without uniquely defined ancestors. The ancestors would be distributed throughout the biosphere, literally everywhere. The case for evolution would be vastly stronger—if only life had a widespread Transposition pattern.

Hundreds of evolutionary researchers, led by Michael Syvanen, see immense possibilities in such Transposition explanations, and pursue it wholeheartedly, with conferences and book publications. So what is the main thing holding back general acceptance of their ideas? Answer: Pattern! The multicellular organisms (organisms that leave a distinct fossil record) lack a substantial Transposition pattern (at the morphological, embryological, and even the molecular level). Once again, life’s patterns are designed to *resist* evolutionary explanation.

If you insist on a mechanism for Transposition, there is one. It is called



Morris claims a ‘convergence of the camera-eye’, including the classic comparison between the octopus (cephalopod) and human (vertebrate) as well as the alciopid polychaete (annelid). Evolutionists claim the camera-eye (with its lens, iris, retina, spherical shape and so forth) arose separately at least six times, and the origin of vision at least forty times.

lateral DNA transfer, or lateral gene transfer. Also, Morris acknowledges that the genetic code ‘adopted on Earth really is not just adequate, but quite remarkably good’ (pp. 107 and 13–19), and with trivial exceptions it is universal to all life. Thus, there is a common genetic substrate (DNA), plus an experimentally demonstrated mechanism for naturally transferring genetic material from one genome and inserting it into another genome, plus a ‘quite remarkably good’ common genetic code for expressing the transferred genetic material—and all of that merely *increases* the mystery that Transposition has had relatively little impact in evolution. Evolutionists possess a mechanism, ripe with possibility, but they hold back from invoking it. Perhaps this proves they embrace explanations in *inverse* proportion to how well the mechanisms can be substantiated? Or does it indicate, as I have said all along, that *pattern* really is the major factor in whether evolutionists embrace, or renounce, a given explanation. Quite simply, evolutionists do not invoke a Transposition explanation because they do not see a Transposition pattern.

### Back to ‘convergence’

So what does all that have to do with convergence? First, convergences are important for what they are not—they are not Transpositions. Convergences are not identical; rather they are sufficiently different to prevent an easy Transposition explanation. For example, the classic case of the vertebrate eye and the cephalopod eye (the octopus or squid), which are similar camera-like designs, yet have retinas oriented the reverse of each other, as well as radically different embryology. If their eye had been identical, then evolutionists could have easily explained it as the result of Transposition. As it is, evolutionists are stuck with explaining the origin of the camera-like eye more than once. In fact, Morris claims it arose separately at least six times.

We are now ready for a fuller definition of how evolutionists identify

convergence. ‘Convergent forms’ are complex traits sufficiently *similar* to each other that they demand explanation, yet sufficiently *different* that they cannot be explained by Transposition, and systematically placed (relative to other organisms) so they cannot be explained by common descent or by atavism (genetic throwback). Evolutionists are then left with their least simple, least desirable, least plausible explanation—that these complex traits arose independently and converged upon the same design solution. Notice again that no ancestors are ever identified, so this pattern can exist, and does exist, independently of any ancestors. Notice that the focus is on *pattern* and on *avoiding* the most dangerous, most potent, evolutionary explanations. Notice also the special balance of requirements—the convergent forms must be sufficiently similar, but not too similar or identical. Like Goldilock’s porridge, ‘Not too hot, and not too cold’. Taken all together, these criteria are highly specific, yet this convergence pattern is abundant—at all biological levels: morphological, embryological, and molecular. This design helps life to *resist* evolutionary explanations.

Morris claims convergence is evidence for the ‘constraints’ of evolution, and for incredible evolutionary powers. Ironically, it’s the other way around. Convergence is evidence that *evolutionary theory* itself is a constraint on life’s design. Convergences are exquisitely designed to *resist* evolutionary explanations.

Convergent forms are themselves awkward for evolutionists to explain, but these also resist evolution in yet another important way. That is, convergence helps thwart the evolutionary explanation of *other* organisms. In my wording, ‘convergence thwarts lineage’. Convergence helps thwart evolutionist attempts to impose lineages onto life.<sup>2</sup> If you ask evolutionary systematists why they are having such trouble identifying ancestors and lineages, they give two very real answers: (1) Life has too much diversity (i.e. ‘too bushy’ or ‘too much speciation’), and (2) Life has too much ‘convergence’. Gould

and Morris brought these abundances out into the open, both beloved by creationists.

### Predictions versus circular reasoning

Morris claims evolutionary theory ‘predicts’ that convergence should be abundant. He is mistaken, because evolutionary theory is unnecessary for his prediction. His argument is implicitly as follows. Quite simply, we predict that our next observations will confirm our previous observations. For example, we observe that the weather on two successive days has, say, a 90% chance of being alike—therefore we predict that the weather tomorrow will have a 90% chance of being like today. That prediction does not arise from any theory of weather, or understanding of how weather operates, or what causes weather, or why. Any serious understanding of the weather is unnecessary here. Likewise Morris’s prediction operates precisely that same way. That is, we observe a high incidence of complex similarities that *cannot be explained* by common descent, by atavism, or by Transposition—evolutionists call this pattern ‘convergence’—and Morris predicts we will observe a high incidence of that same pattern elsewhere. No theory of evolution is necessary here. Evolutionary theory is not predicting the data—it’s the other way around. Morris moulds evolutionary theory to fit the data, and then he calls the result a prediction of evolutionary theory—that’s circular reasoning.

Morris boldly continues his circular reasoning, ‘first and foremost’ to fend off the creationists:

‘What then are the implications of convergence? First and foremost is that the various examples I have given will provide no comfort for the “creation scientists”, because in their various ways they provide compelling examples of the reality of organic evolution’ (p. 301).



### The origin of life

The simplest known life-forms contain plentiful features that are vastly too complex to have arisen in the first life by known processes plus random chance. This probability argument would seem to falsify the naturalistic origin of life. So origin-of-life theorists sought to avoid falsification through the following (unsubstantiated) assertion. They claim there exist an infinitude of *other possible* life-forms *unlike known* life-forms—e.g. life possible without DNA, without RNA, without ATP, without protein, and without virtually any other known feature of life. Therefore the chance of originating *some-kind* of lifeform by chance is not so remote. In effect, they sought to dilute the probability argument by claiming the simplest known life-forms are an *infinitesimally small subset* of the ‘*possible*’ life-forms—and this radically changes the odds of success.

Morris contradicts his fellow evolutionists, by claiming ‘the possibilities were from the beginning for ever unavailable’.

‘Despite the immensity of biological hyperspace I shall argue that nearly all of it must remain for ever empty, not because our chance drunken walk failed to wander into one domain rather than another but because *the door could never open, the road was never there, the possibilities were from the beginning for ever unavailable* [emphasis added]’ (p. 12).

Such contradictions go unnoticed because evolutionists traditionally separate the origin-of-life from its subsequent evolution—as though the two are unrelated problems. Indeed, Morris was not trying to explain the origin of life—rather he was trying to explain the patterns of macro-evolution. As already said, the ‘answer’ evolutionists give depends on the question asked, and their answers often contradict.

### Message Theory

Intelligent design offers a better scientific explanation. Message Theory claims life was reasonably designed:

(1) for survival, (2) to look like the product of *one* designer (or group of designers acting together as one, rather than multiple independent designers), and (3) to also *resist* evolutionary explanations. This theory explains and predicts: (a) the vast unity of all life-forms, including their astonishing unity at the biochemical level (which is not predicted by evolution). It also predicts the system-wide, large-scale patterns exposed by Gould and Morris, (b) the large gaps between life-forms that defy Darwinian gradualism, (c) the absence of clear-cut ancestors and lineage – in other words, (d) the abundance of diversity (i.e. in Gould’s words, ‘indecipherable bushiness’), plus (e) the abundance of ‘convergence’ (which cannot be explained by common descent, by atavism, or by Transposition). Also, there is, (f) the substantial absence of a Transposition pattern (particularly in the fossil record, the multicellular life-forms). Plus (g) the origin-of-life is such an intractable problem for naturalism. Life is unified as the work of one designer, while simultaneously designed to resist evolutionary explanations. These are the major patterns of life, and Message Theory explains them all in a coherent, scientifically testable (i.e., empirically risky) manner. I claim the *entirety* of Morris’s book—and its documentation of life’s abundant ‘convergence’ pattern—as evidence for Message Theory.

### References

1. This method remains effectively the same even under the more refined classification techniques used for cladograms and phenograms. For example, a cladogram is a *nested*-hierarchy of characters, therefore a *non-nested* similarity is an incongruity, which evolutionists interpret as a ‘convergence’—no real ancestors are identified. Also, there are additional complications that allow evolutionists to *interpret* non-nested similarities as either the ‘convergence’ of a character in some organisms, or as the ‘loss’ of that same character from other organisms—and that ambiguity raises various avenues for mischief. But those details are not pertinent to this review.
2. For example, see Morris, pp. 286–287.