

**Intelligent Design:
Scientific and Theological Perspectives**

**Submitted by Andrew Mark Sibley to the University of Exeter
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Abstract:

This thesis examines the claims of the recently formulated Intelligent Design arguments, particularly in relation to the work of Michael Behe and William Dembski, and considers whether they are acceptable as good science and as good theology. I respond to scientific considerations mainly at the level of the philosophy of science, particularly from David Hume and related commentators such as John Mackie and Elliott Sober. Theological aspects are considered in light of Reformed Calvinism with influence coming from Augustine and Paul. Interestingly, it is also evident that there is an Augustinian influence in the philosophy of science and I will highlight some of this in this thesis, especially with regard to the work of Alvin Plantinga and Michel Polanyi. In chapter two I look at Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* and identify various objections raised, for instance by Mackie. In this chapter I then consider the claim that the design argument can only be a weak or remote analogy to human intelligence and offer two ways forward. In chapter three I look more broadly at claims by Michael Ruse that Intelligent Design cannot be good science because it doesn't follow the rules of methodological naturalism. In response, I consider Plantinga's claim that Christians can move to Augustinian science and do not need to hold to naturalistic methodology in science. I also consider the thinking of Paul Feyerabend relating to criticism of methodological monism in science because it restricts scientific discovery. I also discuss concerns raised by Imre Lakatos because he believes a degree of dogmatism is necessary in science in order to hold to objective truth and avoid relativism. I then offer some thoughts as to what an Intelligent Design research programme might look like. In the fourth chapter I look at theological aspects of Intelligent Design. I discuss the question of whether it is possible to search for evidence for design apart from revelation and divine grace, and discuss difficulties highlighted by a number of theologians. I then consider the divine action debate in relation to Intelligent Design, and in the final part of the theology chapter examine question of theodicy that arise for Intelligent Design, again in light of Calvinism with its Augustinian-Pauline influence.

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