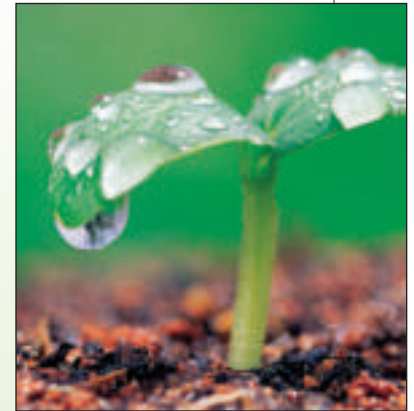


SCIENCE & YOU

VISIBLE CREATION SHOWING US THE INVISIBLE GOD

THE WEB OF LIFE

By early Fall in the “sunflower state” of Kansas where I live, millions of tons of wheat, corn, beans, and yes, sunflowers, have been produced by the incredible biological machine called a green plant. Peter Ray of Stanford University describes a plant in engineering terms as a “device for capturing the energy of sunlight and using it through the process of photosynthesis, to convert carbon dioxide into organic carbon compounds [sugars] from which the substance of life can be manufactured.” The root, stem and leaves are just “the equipment necessary to make photosynthesis successful” in that they absorb water and minerals from the soil and provide a place, within the leaves, for the finely tuned biochemistry of photosynthesis to happen.



Since the late 1700s it has been known that the actual organic substance of the plant comes, not from the soil, but from carbon dioxide which is part of air. Incredibly then, the millions of tons of wheat, corn and other crops made of carbon-containing chemicals appear in the fields each year literally out of thin air. But plants don't just absorb sunlight and chemically trap atmospheric carbon; they also release molecular oxygen (O₂) as a byproduct of photosynthesis and serve as a food source for animals and humans. Indeed, animal and human life on earth would not be possible without photosynthesis. So the plant is the foundational machine in a larger web of living machines which depend on each other to sustain life on earth.

Plants take in sunlight, carbon dioxide and water, producing organic sugars and oxygen. Animals and humans consume plants and use oxygen to “burn” the organic sugars as fuel. They also exhale carbon dioxide, the very molecule needed by the plant as raw material for its life and growth. Although oversimplified, this example is still sufficient to illustrate that the “web of life” is not a random development. It is not only that each part of the web is a complete, functioning device that is compelling and astonishing, but that each part has a purpose to sustain a larger, integrated and co-dependent system. The existence of purposeful relationship and interdependence between parts in a larger system is evidence of conscious, rational design and not unconscious chance.

Consider an electric razor. It must have a means to capture, transform and transmit energy to the cutting blades. Integrated within the housing along with circuits and various gears, shafts and brushes, is an assembly of individual machines functioning in a system for a specific purpose, created by conscious intelligence. So it is with the biological world and the web of life. This is exactly why Peter Ray cannot help but use engineering terms and examples when describing the plant and why even staunch evolutionary believers cannot keep from using the word “designed” when describing living things. One must concede that the biological world appears to be designed because it *is* designed, or else bear the burden of proof as to why the web of life even exists at all.

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1 Ray, Peter Martin. *The Living Plant*. Second edition. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1972. p 1.