

Science and Society Under Attack

The Need for Political as Well as Scientific Responses

by

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Today, science is under attack

- From intelligent design creationism to stem cell research, global warming, vaccines to prevent cervical cancer, morning after pills, even museums and zoos that mention evolution or an ancient Earth.
- Public opinion is strongly influenced by non-scientific elements, from the pulpit, from politicians and bureaucrats, from a scientifically illiterate public, and from a media that frequently treats all points of view as equal, when they are most certainly not.
- Will science eventually be required to pass muster for religious fundamentalists in the near future?

What is “Modern” Intelligent Design?

- All ID supporters vigorously claim that “Intelligent Design” (ID) is not religious, although there is NO universally accepted definition.
- The vast majority of scientists do not believe that ID is a scientific theory, but is barely an unsupported notion.

The Discovery Institute

Center for Science and Culture

- *“The theory [sic] of intelligent design holds that certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection.”* <http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=2895>
- But the Discovery Institute News, on 11-2004, defined ID as: *“The Discovery Institute is one of the major proponents of intelligent design, the idea [sic] that a divine being orchestrated the evolutionary process.”*
<http://tinyurl.com/a5vu7>

ID's "Leading Lights"

- **Michael Behe:** *"By 'intelligent design' I mean to imply design beyond the laws of nature."* One might naively assume that he means "supernatural." <http://tinyurl.com/7wsmq>
- **William Dembski:** *"Intelligent design is a theory [sic] for making sense of intelligent causes. As such, intelligent design formalizes and makes precise something we do all the time....There is no magic, no vitalism, no appeal to occult forces. Inferring design is common, rational and objectifiable."* Dembski, William A. (ed.). *Mere Creation* . IVP, 1998. p 94
- But **Dembski**, in his book, *Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between Science & Theology*, November 1999, defines ID as *"the logos theology of John's Gospel restated in the idiom of information theory."*

Is ID Science?

- There is no empirical evidence **for** ID. Supposedly supported by two notions: Irreducible Complexity (Michael Behe) and Complex Specified Information (William Dembski). Both notions have been extensively investigated and found to be wrong, empty, or misleading.
- ID exists as negative attacks on evolution. Otherwise, it is a scientifically vacuous concept that predicts nothing, is not testable, and can only terminate research.
- **It doesn't matter if ID is true or false – it is a matter of faith, not science.**



ID Movement has much broader goals than discrediting evolution

- Evolution is only the initial target of ID.
- It would be followed by an attack on all of science, and ultimately by profound changes in our society, culture and government.
- They want to change the entire character of American society.

ID World View

The 1998 “Wedge” Document

- Marked: TOP SECRET - NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION
(leaked to web in 1999)
<http://www.seattleweekly.com/news/0605/discovery-darwin.php>
- In 1993, Phillip Johnson assembled a group to develop and promote “ID”
- The Wedge is a 20-year strategic plan for changing society
http://www.kcfs.org/Fliers_articles/Wedge.html
- 6 years later, the DI finally admits it's theirs (2005); says "What's the big deal?"
<http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/filesDB-download.php?id=349>

It is a big deal!



Here are their own words!

- “Discovery Institute's **Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture** seeks nothing less than the overthrow of materialism and its cultural legacies....”



Note How The “Center” Itself Evolves to Cover Its Tracks



Wedge Governing Goals

- “To defeat scientific materialism and its destructive moral, cultural and political legacies.”
- “To replace materialistic explanations with the theistic understanding that nature and human beings are created by God.”

Wedge Twenty Year Goals

- “To see intelligent design theory as the dominant perspective in science.”
- “To see design theory application in specific fields, including molecular biology, biochemistry, paleontology, physics and cosmology in the natural sciences, psychology, ethics, politics, theology and philosophy in the humanities; to see its influence in the fine arts.”
- “To see design theory permeate our religious, cultural, moral and political life.”

ID proponents sometimes divulge their real motivations

- **“From the sixth century up to the Enlightenment it is safe to say that the West was thoroughly imbued with Christian ideals and that Western intellectual elites were overwhelmingly Christian. False ideas that undermined the very foundations of the Christian faith (e.g., denying the resurrection or the Trinity) were swiftly challenged and uprooted. Since the enlightenment, however, we have not so much lacked the means to combat false ideas as the will and clarity.”** [William A. Dembski and Jay Wesley Richards, *Unapologetic Apologetics*, Intervarsity Press, 2001, p. 20]

ID proponents sometimes divulge their real motivations

- “The scientific picture of the world championed since the Enlightenment is not just wrong but massively wrong. Indeed entire fields of inquiry, especially in the human sciences, will need to be rethought from the ground up in terms of intelligent design.”
[William A. Dembski, *Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between Science and Theology*, Intervarsity Press, 1999, p. 224]

How do ID advocates respond to reporting their *exact words*?

- From Albert Mohler, President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, on my ABT Editorial:
<http://www.crosswalk.com/news/weblogs/mohler/?adate=1/30/2004#1243665>
- “Berman is apoplectic.”
- “Berman's article is the latest evidence of the intellectual insecurity and Stalinist oppression that marks today's evolutionary science. This is a spiritual battle and the arguments over evolution have as much to do with morality and politics as with fossils and natural phenomena.”

Op Ed In Dallas Morning News
February 6, 2005

William Murchison, part-time faculty member in Baylor
University Journalism Department

- “Darwinian fascism and bigotry aren't fun to observe: least of all the snooty attempts to close off inquiry, to brush aside legitimate objections to the Darwinian account of origins.”

Current ID PR Strategies

- Claim that “others” are biased, and teaching ID is only *fair*
- Cite popular polls and ignore scientific consensus
- Refer to ID in scientific-sounding rather than religious language
- Redefine science to allow supernatural causes for natural phenomena
- Settle for any change or modification in their goals, and declare anything as a victory
- Equate evolution to atheism

ID “Newspeak”

- “*Critically analyze,*” “*it’s only fair,*” “*teach the controversy*” and “*academic freedom*” all mean it’s OK to teach false evidence against evolution
- “*Darwinist, dogmatic, materialist*” are intended as insults to mainstream scientists
- “*Origins science,*” “*irreducible complexity,*” and “*complex specified information*” are anti-science ID neologisms

There is a cacophony of different voices in the ID movement, so that they can defend or deny any attribution.

But, scientifically, ID is a sterile and vacuous concept

- Doesn't designate *who* the designer is.
- Doesn't ascribe *properties* to the designer.
- Doesn't say *how* design occurred.
- Doesn't say *when* design occurred.
- Doesn't say *anything* scientific.

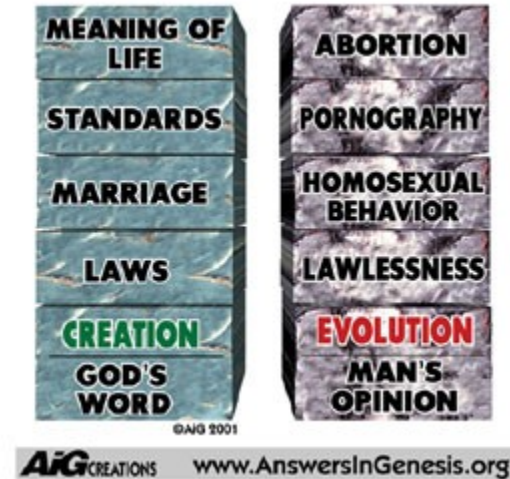
Simply says: Life is too complex, so it was designed → nudge, nudge, wink, wink, God did it!

Current Events!

- Many states engaged in anti-evolution proposals for public schools
- Cobb County, GA: Stickers in textbooks
- Kansas: Kangaroo court and ID in schools
- Dover, PA: Trial ruled ID religion
- Ohio: ID lesson plan & “critically analyze”
- US: IMAX movies undergo self-censorship
- NSTA: Science teachers often avoid “controversy”
- 2004 Gallup & Newsweek polls: 45% to 48% of Americans believe in Biblical creationism (95% of scientists believe in secular or theistic evolution)

Why Must the Intelligent Design Movement Be Actively Resisted?

- Because ID is
 - Bad science
 - Bad religion
 - Bad pedagogy
 - Bad politics



- Their goal is to make ALL elements of society conform to their religious views

ID is a political/religious controversy, not a scientific one.

I've talked about WHAT IDers have said, WHAT they do, and HOW they do it. Now WHY do they do it? **FEAR!!!**

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What can you do?

- Run for political office, including school boards, state legislatures.
- Become politically active.
- Speak at colloquia, churches, other venues.
- Write letters to newspapers, politicians.
- Join a Citizens for Science, Clergy for Science, or other state or national groups.
- Contact me, NCSE, et al. for help and connections.

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