

Creation Science
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Intelligent Design
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*From “Creation Science”
to
“Intelligent Design”:*

Tracing ID’s Creationist Ancestry

From “Creation Science” to “Intelligent Design”: Tracing ID’s Creationist Ancestry

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Creationism has evolved over the last forty years—from the young-earth creationism of the 1960s-70s, to the “creation science” or “scientific creationism” of the 1980s, to “intelligent design,” creationism’s most recent variant. Beginning their self-transformation in the 1980s, creationists emerged publicly as “intelligent design theorists” in the early 1990s in order to execute the “Wedge Strategy,” a 20-year tactical plan developed under the leadership of Phillip E. Johnson and formalized in a document with the same title.¹ The landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling, *Edwards v. Aguillard* (1987), which outlawed the teaching of creation science in American public school science classes, meant that creationists had to reinvent themselves yet again if they were to continue their efforts to undermine the teaching of evolution.² Intelligent design creationists at the Discovery Institute’s Center for Science and Culture (formerly the Center for the *Renewal* of Science and Culture), aided by their followers around the country, are using science education as the vehicle for their effort to “renew,” i.e., overthrow, the secular foundation of American culture, which they regard as corrupted by “scientific materialism”: “Discovery Institute’s Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture seeks nothing less than the overthrow of materialism and its cultural legacies.”³

The following chart reflects the clear commonalities between the substance of ID and its immediate ancestor, “creation science.” Grouped beneath characteristics that have been integral to creationism regardless of its various forms, selected remarks made by prominent creationists clearly show the direct line of descent between creation science outlawed by *Edwards v. Aguillard* and its post-*Edwards* manifestation, “intelligent design.”

¹ For a comprehensive account of the development and execution of the Wedge Strategy, see Barbara Forrest and Paul R. Gross, *Creationism’s Trojan Horse: The Wedge of Intelligent Design*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.creationismstrojanhorse.com. For a comprehensive account of the historical development of American creationism, see Eugenie C. Scott, *Evolution v. Creationism: An Introduction*, Greenwood Press, 2004.

² For an account of how ID proponents have strategically altered their terminology in an effort to conceal their identity in response to opposition, see Barbara Forrest and Paul R. Gross, “Intelligent Design Has Distinctly Evolutionary Nature,” *Science & Theology News*, December 1, 2004, <http://www.stnews.org/Books-343.htm>. For a more detailed, fully referenced version of this article, see Barbara Forrest and Paul R. Gross, “The Evolution of ‘Intelligent Design’,” at http://www.creationismstrojanhorse.com/ST_News_Online.pdf.

³ See “The Wedge Strategy” at www.antievolution.org/features/wedge.html. For a discussion of ID’s theological underpinnings and its leaders’ anti-secularism, anti-rationalism, and religious exclusionism, see Barbara Forrest and Paul R. Gross, “The Wedge of Intelligent Design: Retrograde Science, Schooling, and Society,” in *Scientific Values and Civic Virtues*, ed. Noretta Koertge, Oxford University Press, 2005.

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“Scientific creationism, which in its modern phase began in the early 1960s, is actually one of the intellectual antecedents of the intelligent design movement.”
 — ID creationist Dean H. Kenyon; featured in an ID creationist videotape, *Unlocking the Mystery of Life*; co-author of ID creationist textbook, *Of Pandas and People*; fellow of Discovery Institute’s Center for Science and Culture¹ ***Kenyon, originally a creation scientist, became an ID creationist in the 1980s.

Origin & Development	Rejection of Naturalism (which logically implies supernatural explanations)	Abrupt Appearance (Implying Divine Intervention)	Supernatural Design of Biochemical Complexity
Scientific Creationism (Young-earth) 1970s	“Creationists believe that this continued emphasis on the naturalistic ... production of living organisms is highly misleading. None of these phenomena would ever occur under natural conditions.” Henry Morris, <i>Scientific Creationism</i> , 1974, 50-51.	“All orders and families (as well as kingdoms, phyla and classes) appear suddenly in the fossil record, with no indication of transitional forms from earlier types.” — Morris, 1974, <i>Scientific Creationism</i> , 79.	“It seems beyond all question that such complex systems as the DNA molecule could never arise by chance ... The creation model ... postulates a great Creator, by whom came life.” — Morris, 1974, <i>Scientific Creationism</i> , 62.
Scientific Creationism 1980s	“Until such evidence [that life could have begun spontaneously by purely chemical means] is forthcoming, one certainly cannot claim that the possibility of a naturalistic origin of life has been demonstrated.” — Dean H. Kenyon, 1986, Affidavit in <i>Edwards v. Aguillard</i>	“Creation-science means abrupt appearance in complex form ... [M]ost fossil forms appear abruptly in the record ... This extraordinary situation directly supports creation-science.” Kenyon, 1986, Affidavit	“The origin of printed texts, manufactured devices, and biomolecular systems [DNA] require intelligent design ... In each case the characteristic order of the system must be impressed on matter from ‘the outside.’” Kenyon, 1986, Affidavit
Intelligent Design Creationism 1990s-present	“Creation is not naturalism. By developing a theory of creation in opposition to naturalism, we learn a great deal about creation. Mere creation, then, is a theory of creation aimed specifically at defeating naturalism and its consequences.... As Christians we know naturalism is false. Nature is not sufficient.” — William A. Dembski, 1998, <i>Mere Creation: Science, Faith, and Intelligent Design</i> , 14.	“Intelligent design means that various forms of life began abruptly through an intelligent agency, with their distinctive features already intact—fish with fins and scales, birds with feathers, beaks, and wings, etc.” — Dean H. Kenyon and Percival Davis, <i>Of Pandas and People</i> , 1993, 99-100.	“Might there be [a] ... natural process that explains biochemical complexity? ... [I]f there is ... no one has a clue how it would work.... In the face of the massive evidence ... for biochemical design, ignoring that evidence in the name of a phantom [natural] process would be to play the role of the detectives who ignore an elephant.” — Michael Behe, 1996, <i>Darwin’s Black Box</i> , 203-4
Origin & Dev.	Claims of Increasing Support for Their Views	Evolution’s Threat to Society	Claims Regarding Creationist Textbooks
Scientific Creationism (Young-earth) 1970s	“Creationists in general today are well-informed and articulate; their numbers are growing rapidly and educators cannot continue to ignore them.” — Henry Morris, 1974, <i>Scientific Creationism</i> , iii	“[Evolution] may tend to rob life of meaning and purpose in view of the implanted concept that the student is merely a chance product of a meaningless, random process.” — Morris, 1974, <i>Scientific Creationism</i> , 15.	“[<i>Scientific Creationism</i>] is not designed as a ‘neutral’ textbook on origins, but solely as a supplementary textbook ... thus enabling any course to be offered with a good balance between the two models [evolution and creation].” Morris, 1974, <i>Scientific Creationism</i> , v.
Scientific Creationism 1980s	“Although students generally hear only one side on the origins question, increasing numbers of scientists are now abandoning evolution for a new scientific version of creationism. Creationist scientists now number in the hundreds, possibly in the thousands, in the States and other countries.” — Kenyon, 1986 Affidavit	“It is an illusion to suppose that the problems evolutionary theory raises for the Christian are... under control.... The doctrine of evolution ... is the creation of men of genius. To underestimate ... its impact is dangerous.” — Wayne Frair and Percival Davis, 1983, <i>A Case for Creation</i> , 9	“Creation-science has educational merit, can be taught in the classroom in a strictly scientific and nonreligious sense, and can be so presented in textbooks.” — Kenyon, 1986, Affidavit
Intelligent Design Creationism 1990s-present	“Since Discovery Institute first published its statement of dissent from Darwin in 2001, more than 300 scientists have ... signed onto a growing list of scientists of all disciplines voicing their skepticism over the central tenets of Darwin’s theory of evolution.” — Discovery Institute’s Center for Science and Culture, 2004	“[T]hinkers such as ... Darwin...portrayed human beings not as moral ... beings, but as animals or machines... The cultural consequences of this ... materialism were devastating. Materialists denied the existence of objective moral standards...” — “The Wedge Strategy,” Center for (the Renewal of) Science and Culture, ca.1998	“ <i>Of Pandas and People</i> is not intended to be a balanced treatment by itself. We have given a favorable case for intelligent design ... [U]sed with your other text, it should help you to balance the overall curriculum.” — Kenyon and Davis, 1993, <i>Of Pandas and People</i> , ix.

See Forrest & Gross, *Creationism’s Trojan Horse: The Wedge of Intelligent Design*, Oxford U. Press 2004. Info at www.creationismstrojanhorse.com.

¹ Benjamin Wiker, “A New Scientific Revolution,” *Catholic World Report*, July 2000, interview with Dean H. Kenyon and David K. DeWolf, www.catholic.net/rcc/Periodicals/lgpress/2000-07/intvinterview.html. Kenyon exemplifies creationism’s transition from “creation science” to “intelligent design” after the Supreme Court’s 1987 *Edwards v. Aguillard* ruling, which declared “creation science” to be unconstitutional in American public school science classes. He became one of ID’s earliest proponents and members of the “Wedge.” See Barbara Forrest and Paul R. Gross, *Creationism’s Trojan Horse: The Wedge of Intelligent Design* (Oxford U. Press, 2004), for a discussion of the ID movement’s “Wedge Strategy.”

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Origin & Development	Denial that Evolution Is a Fact	Gaps in Fossil Record	“Teach the Controversy”/Alternative Theories/ Strengths & Weaknesses of Evolution ²
<p>Scientific Creationism (Young-earth) 1970s</p>	<p>“Although widely promoted as a scientific fact, evolution has never been proved scientifically. Some writers still call it the <i>theory</i> of evolution, but even this is too generous.... Evolution is ... neither fact, theory, nor hypothesis. It is a belief—and nothing more.” — Henry Morris, “Evolution, Creation and the Public School,” <i>Impact</i>, March 1, 1973</p> <p>“Although many people teach evolution as though it were a proven fact of science, it is obvious that this is false teaching.” — Henry Morris, 1974, <i>Scientific Creationism</i></p>	<p>“[T]here is a tremendous gap between one-celled microorganisms and the ... many invertebrate phyla of the Cambrian [period].... If the former evolved into the latter, it seems impossible that no transitional forms between any of them would ... be preserved or found.... [S]pecies appear suddenly in the fossil record, with no incipient forms leading up to them.... [H]ow does the evolutionary model account for these ... gaps in the fossil record? ... In view of the wealth of fossils now available, it is impossible to say ... that the gaps will be filled in by further fossil collecting.” — Henry Morris, 1974, <i>Scientific Creationism</i>, 81, 87, 89</p>	<p>“There is ... a considerable body of ... scientific evidence that contradicts the theory of evolution ... The importance of the nature of this evidence is never emphasized in textbooks used in our public school systems and colleges.... As a result, biology students are exposed to all the evidence ... in favor of the theory, but are not made aware of its weaknesses, nor the evidence that actually contradicts the theory.... [S]uch an educational process amounts to indoctrination.” — Duane Gish, “Creation-Evolution,” <i>Impact</i>, June 1, 1973</p>
<p>↓</p> <p>Scientific Creationism 1980s</p>	<p>“It is my conviction that if any professional biologist will take adequate time to examine carefully the assumptions upon which the macroevolutionary doctrine rests, and the observational and laboratory evidence that bears on the problem of origins, he/she will conclude that there are substantial reasons for doubting the truth of this doctrine. Moreover, I believe that a scientifically sound creationist view of origins is not only possible, but is to be preferred over the evolutionary view.” — Dean H. Kenyon, 1986, Affidavit in <i>Edwards v. Aguillard</i></p>	<p>“[A]t a certain time in ... the Cambrian Period ... numerous fossils are found that are virtually absent from older layers of rock. ... [I]t is evident that something spectacular occurred at that time. It seems ... reasonable to suggest that the abrupt change reflects some special activity of God.... Gaps are almost always present in that record just at the point where a gradual transition from one major group of organisms to another would be expected, according to macroevolutionary theory.... But increased collecting [of fossils] ... has failed to eliminate these many gaps.” — Wayne Frair and Percival Davis, 1983, <i>A Case for Creation</i>, 55-57</p>	<p>“Educational Value of Creation-Science and Evolution. It is also my conclusion that balanced presentation of creation-science and evolution is educationally valuable, and in fact is more educationally valuable than indoctrination in just the viewpoint of evolution. Presentation of alternate scientific explanations has educational benefit, and balanced presentation of creation-science and evolution does exactly that.” — Kenyon, 1986 Affidavit</p>
<p>↓</p> <p>Intelligent Design Creationism 1990s-present</p>	<p>“One misconception concerns the status of evolution as a fact. In the origins debate, it is common to hear the assertion that evolution is not merely a theory but an indisputable fact.... [O]nly in the most trivial sense—change over time—can evolution be considered a fact.... If students are to achieve true scientific literacy, they must learn to distinguish fact from supposition.” — Mark D. Hartwig and Stephen C. Meyer, 1993, <i>Of Pandas and People</i>, 154, 157</p>	<p>“To say that the fauna of the Cambrian period appeared in a geologically sudden manner also implies the absence of clear transitional intermediate forms connecting Cambrian animals with simpler pre-Cambrian forms.... [I]n almost all cases, the Cambrian animals have no clear ... antecedents ... Further, several recent discoveries ... suggest that these ... gaps may not be merely an artifact of incomplete sampling of the fossil record.” — Stephen C. Meyer, 2004, “Intelligent Design: The Origin of Biological Information and the Higher Taxonomic Categories,” <i>Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington</i> 117(2)</p>	<p>“Since intelligent design is a new theory of biological origins, we recommend that students not be required to learn about it. Nevertheless, we think they should learn about the scientific strengths and weaknesses of orthodox Darwinism. Clearly, teachers should also be free to tell their students about alternative new theories like [Michael] Behe’s design theory, provided these theories are based (as Behe’s is) upon scientific evidence, not scriptural texts. There are many reasons to adopt this ‘teach the controversy’ approach.” — Stephen C. Meyer and John Angus Campbell, March 11, 2005, “Teach the Controversy,” <i>Baltimore Sun</i></p>

See Forrest & Gross, *Creationism’s Trojan Horse: The Wedge of Intelligent Design*, Oxford U. Press 2004. Info at www.creationismstrojanhorse.com.

² The Discovery Institute’s Center for Science and Culture promotes the idea that there is a scientific controversy about the status of evolution. Bruce Chapman, DI president, contends that “Darwinism is a theory in crisis” and that students should be made aware of “the growing scientific dispute of its key ‘proofs.’” (“How Should Schools Teach Evolution?” *Dallas Morning News*, September 21, 2003). Under the slogan, “Teach the controversy,” ID creationists propose teaching students about “alternative theories of origins,” the “strengths and weaknesses” of evolution, and “evidence against evolution.” All these proposals are simply attempts to undermine evolutionary theory by teaching creationist criticisms of it.