

INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE: This ENC 4260 essay submitted for Option 1 of Assignment 3 does a good job of summary, explanation, and analysis. Note the writer's neutral language and attempt to provide a fair, balanced representation of two opposing perspectives. Use this sample as a guideline to the formation of a strong thesis statement, effective supporting evidence and quotes, and use of clear, concise language. (I have used single-spacing to conserve space, but your submission should be double-spaced.)

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ENC 4260 / T. Roberts, Instructor
Assignment 3 / 3 March 2009

Evolution vs. Creationism and Intelligent Design: Weaknesses in Evolution

THE PARTIES:

Institute for Creation Research

The National Center for Science Education

THE CONTROVERSY:

Should evolution or Intelligent Design be taught in public schools? Why choose one, when together they create a balanced view of the subject?

This battle has been inevitable ever since Darwin first published his Origin of Species. Creationism was not questioned by the general public up until that time, and even after the book was published, there was only a small reaction to the idea of evolution. Fast forward 66 years from 1859 to 1925: in the United States a young teacher in Tennessee defends his right to teach evolution in public schools. This famous "Scopes-Monkey Trial" had one goal, which it failed to realize. The trial did not decide whether laws forbidding the teaching of evolution were unconstitutional (Lindor).

Once again, fast forward 43 years to a Supreme Court ruling in Epperson vs. Arkansas. This case decided that such bans (evolution) contravene the Establishment clause because their primary purpose is religious. This opens the door for evolution to be taught in public schools across the United States.

The controversy continues as Creationists and Darwinists argue whether creationism is science, and whether Darwin's theory has been proven. The National Center for Science Education argues that Darwin's theory of evolution is the basis of human existence, and that it will be proven given time. They are also lobbyists who work to ensure that the alternate theories of Intelligent Design and creationism do not enter the public school system in the United States.

The Institute for Creation Research (ICR) argues that the human body is so complex, that evolution alone cannot explain how life came into existence on earth. ICR states their purpose is to "equip believers with evidence of the Bible's accuracy and authority through scientific research, educational programs, and media presentations, all conducted within a thoroughly biblical framework"(Institute for Creation Research). These Darwin skeptics are willing to admit that natural selection and evolution within a species are workable theories; however, they do not subscribe to the idea of transmutation of species -- that is, the idea that a species evolved from another species.

Both sides use proof (or rather, lack thereof) as strategic and tactical objectives. Evolutionists claim that Intelligent Design supporters have produced no proof that a superior being created life on earth, and state that the idea should be "subjected to the same research and theory-building demanded of everyone else in the scientific community"(National Center for Science Education). Intelligent Design supporters claim that the mathematical precision that exist in the smallest cells in all life prove intentional design. They also argue that the earth is in such a delicate location in space, that it could only be placed there by a divine hand.

Evolutionists have published many books, documents and documentaries defending the theory of evolution and its basis as the origin of life. Intelligent Designers have recently gone on the offensive, releasing documentaries such as "*Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*" and "*The Privileged Planet*". Their main tactic is to attack the assumption that evolution is the only theory that works when looking at the origin of life.

Frank Sherwin's article "No Weaknesses in the theory of Evolution" posted ICR's website is a prime example of the type of publications issued by ICR. Their tactics include taking statements of their opponents out of context, and playing up the weaknesses of evolution by implying that these theories will never be proven.

The ideological motivations for the disagreement are clear. Evolutionists completely divorce science from religion, maintaining there should be no connection between the two, instead maintaining that scientists as individuals hold a wide range of beliefs, and science itself is neutral on the subject of religion. ICR maintains that the only answer to the origin of life on earth is a Divine Creator, and science must operate within a biblical framework. The scientific community refuses to accept that there may be no scientific answer for the origin of life. The very beginning of all life may be exactly what ICR maintains: God. To acknowledge God would mean we are responsible to our Creator for the life we lead. Creationist would argue this is the very reason that evolutionists refuse to engage in the discussion -- they do not want to acknowledge a higher power.

The scientific community is angry that their words are being distorted, and that they are being accused of having a hidden agenda. Their response generally entails a very simple phrase: Prove it. They refuse to acknowledge creationism/intelligent design as theories, stating that they fail the basic scientific test required of all theories, and so should not be considered valid.

Rather than attack Darwin as a fraud, creationists need to publish sound scientific data that disproves the theory. While the planet earth and all life on it (including the human body) has an astonishing precision, this precision alone is not enough to prove that God exists, and that creationism should be taught in public schools. The approach currently

being taken by intelligent design is quite effective, but producing the data, rather than depending on slick marketing techniques, will win the scientific community.

KEY TERMS:

Evolution: Broadly stated, evolution is change over time. For the purposes of this paper, evolution is the theory that all life emerged from a single biological organism.

Intelligent Design: Belief that a higher power purposefully designed the galaxy, planet earth, and the life that exists on it.

Transmutation: Theory that one species can, over time, change into another species.

Systematics: Study of the diversity of life on Earth, and the relationships among living things through time (*)

Evolutionary Trees: Systematics drawn in chart form

Biological molecules: The study of DNA. In Frank Sherwin's article they refer to a branch of evolutionary research that maintains evolution is proven through DNA and charted through molecular physics.

Morphology: The study of fossils. In Sherwin's article morphology refers to the Systematic charting using fossils as opposed to biology.

Creationism: The belief that all life was put on earth by a Devine Power and the history of earth is correctly interpreted through Genesis, the first book in The Bible.

Intelligent Design: The belief that all life was created intentionally by a higher being.

Sources

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