

11/2004

Re: Unintelligent Design

Dear Editor,

Larry Schanz (Letters, 11/20) worries that teaching evolution is a political ploy by Democrats, but perhaps he should be aware that it was two hundred years ago that William Paley marveled at the apparent intricacy of the human eye and declared that it could only have been designed by an intelligent creator. However, since that time, science has conclusively demonstrated the naturalistic evolution of the eye from a simple light sensitive spot, to a directionally light sensitive recess, to a crude image forming, but lensless "pin-hole" type eye, and through numerous successive modifications to the wonderful (yet still imperfect) organ we have today.

Today, in the latest reincarnation of creation science, "intelligent design" proponents, have put forth a few new candidates that they claim are "irreducibly complex" such as a blood clotting processes and certain immunological responses. Unfortunately, not a single scientific paper has been published by the leading lights of this movement on this subject, and even more disappointing to them must be the subsequent discovery of well supported scientific evidence showing the evolutionary steps necessary to explain these biological functions.

Real scientists can make no claims as to a creator, since any such creator belongs to a realm that science cannot investigate. It's true that a creator could have designed the world 6,000 years ago with all the evidence for fossils and natural evolutionary processes already in place. Science cannot disprove this belief. Just as science cannot disprove "Last Thursdayism": the idea that the world was created last Thursday, with all the required appearances of natural processes and our personal histories intact. Rather, science can only provide useful and well supported explanations based on the observable data, and for this we should be grateful.

Regardless of one's politics, lightning is no longer explained as God's retribution. The entire "intelligent design" charade consists of a similar fallacy: that the unexplained is inexplicably the supernatural.

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