



Intelligent Design and Evolution: Do We Know Yet?

John A. Bloom

At its 2005 Annual Meeting, the ASA hosted a symposium on *Models of Creation: Intelligent Design and Evolution*. A number of people thought that Haarsma's contribution was especially worthy of wider dissemination, so we asked him to submit it as an article to this journal. I also asked Behe to offer some brief comments in response to it. He makes the very important clarification here about positive and negative arguments for ID.

I especially appreciated Haarsma's balanced insights on the scientific, philosophical, and theological aspects of ID, and his call for advocates of ID and advocates of evolution to avoid sweeping generalities in their conclusions. Too often the stark picture of "either ID or evolution" is painted, yet there are ID theorists (such as Behe) who recognize that design can be evident in a system which has no obvious casual gaps. So there is the real possibility that *both* ID and evolution are valid inferences from the data.

Let me say that it is critical that we be very careful with our definitions of "science" and "scientific." Haarsma writes that the goal of science is to seek naturalistic explanations, but since our culture equates "science" with "truth," and supernatural explanations by his definition are outside the realm of science, many would conclude that supernatural explanations are untrue by definition. To avoid this truth = science = naturalism trap, many scientists and philosophers say that the goal of science is to seek the best possible explanation, without presuming a naturalistic limitation.

It is also important to remind ourselves that, like ID, evolution itself includes scientific, philosophical, and religious arguments. To many, "evolution" by definition is a process that is random, unguided, and undirected—something God would not do. "Evolutionary creationists" must be careful

in their use of these terms, because to many they appear to form an oxymoron. Moreover, atheists assert that evolution intellectually supports their belief that a creator is not necessary, and that any compromising positions with theism or deism are unwarranted. Against such hostility all Christians, no matter what their beliefs may be about the specific actions of God in creation, need to take a clear and united stand. Too often we squabble over details among ourselves and leave the atheists unchallenged in the public square.

My hope is that the symposium and these articles will reduce the "either/or" tensions and focus our future discussions on the most critical questions related to origins issues: In order to be scientific, are we restricting ourselves to naturalistic explanations and papering over real casual gaps in nature because we can *imagine* scenarios that may bridge them? Are we assuming the burden of proof to actually demonstrate what we imagine? Is the burden of proof unnecessary because our model is more scientific? Or, in order to have the clearest proofs for God's existence, are we seeking dramatic gaps in nature when the real picture is more subtle? Are we looking for God's actions in the wrong places?

Perhaps the best answer here is one that we least like to hear: "We don't know ... yet." There is certainly something about the universe that cries out to us that it is created, but many of the details of how God intervened/guided/established it remain open questions. As Christians, our calling is to pursue truth with a spirit of humility. Let's keep an open mind, be aware of our personal biases, and study this further. *

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