

A New, Bizarre Attack on Intelligent Design

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The science of “intelligent design” has been attacked for many years as merely a resurrection of old-time creationism, which it is not. Recently, Paul Krugman of the *New York Times* opened a new, bizarre line of attack by suggesting that the neo-con ideologue Irving Krystol is the “father” of intelligent design. Time to sort a few things out....

The central dogma of old-time creationism was the “fixity of species” doctrine. The fixity doctrine had arisen among theologians as an incontestable implication of the book of *Genesis*. Further, by converting all the *begats* of *Genesis* into numbers, theologians estimated that the Earth was about 6,000 years old.

In the mid-eighteenth century, the fixity doctrine became a general academic orthodoxy after Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), the great Swedish botanist, expressed the opinion that “no new species” had appeared on Earth since the Creation.

The fixity doctrine met with no serious challenge until 1809, when the French naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck published his *Philosophie Zoologique*, the first modern theory of evolution. Lamarck maintained that after a long succession of generations, individuals originally belonging to one species are transformed into a new species distinct from the first. Lamarck’s “mutability of species” doctrine is the foundational premise of all modern evolutionary theory.

Charles Darwin built his theory upon the mutability doctrine, and soon after the publication of his *Origin of Species* (1859), the old fixity doctrine gave way to the new doctrine. This and other early victories in the “war of evolution vs. creationism” led ultimately to the common view that Darwin’s theory represents a better guide to reality than the Bible.

Contemporary intelligent design, in contrast to creationism, is based on a conviction that pre-dates the Bible, that, indeed, goes back to our aboriginal ancestors: *The creation was created by a creator.* (Excuse the redundancy.)

The ancients couldn’t see the creator, and so they presumed the creator was invisible—“spiritual.” The “Great Spirit” of Native Americans, for instance. Generally speaking, the “great religions” went anthropomorphic and gave names, or at least labels, to the invisible creator. “God,” as you know, is not a name.

Darwin himself refers to the “sublime Creator” from time to time, and Alfred Russel Wallace, co-creator of classical Darwinism (which was first known as “the Darwin-Wallace theory”), was an intelligent design advocate. Wallace argued that the universe is governed by a great “Mind.”

The fact early Darwinism took a turn down *Strictly Materialistic Street* was due to the efforts of “Darwin’s bulldog”—Thomas H. Huxley. Huxley, the inventor of agnosticism, hated theologians and yearned for the day when, in his words, Science would put its foot on the neck of Theology. Huxley, who opposed any implication of intelligent design in Darwin’s theory, succeeded in excommunicating Wallace from the Darwinism movement.

Theology may inspire some of the intelligent design proponents, but all appear to be agreed on the necessity of proving, *scientifically*, that an implicate intelligence has organized the explicate world.

As to the new line of attack on intelligent design: In an August 5 (2005) *New York Times* column titled “Design for Confusion,” Paul Krugman writes: “I’d like to nominate Irving Kristol, the neoconservative former editor of *The Public Interest*, as the father of ‘intelligent design.’...”

Irving Kristol has nothing to do with the intelligent design movement, as Krugman admits. So why is he being nominated father of intelligent design?

Because, Krugman writes, back in 1978, Kristol urged corporations to make “philanthropic contributions to scholars and institutions likely to advocate preservation of a strong private sector.” So what?

Well, Krugman explains, “the clear implication was that corporations that don’t like the result of academic research, however valid, should support people willing to say something more to their liking.” Thus and therefore, Krugman tells us, Kristol is the guy responsible for intelligent design.

Krugman’s fallacy is called *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* (after this, therefore because of this)--the conversion of a temporal into a causal relationship.

What’s the principal cause behind the growing prestige of intelligent design? The influence of the new physics, which opened up the realm of the “invisible” as never before. *Nota bene:* Intelligent design is more aligned with the new physics than is Darwinism. The father of intelligent design is, as indicated, A.R. Wallace.