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Politically Correct Science:

Why Johnny Can't Read Scientific Creationism

The playing field is far from level in the contest between Evolutionism and Scientific Creationism. Science faculty with ambitions to move up to larger universities are unlikely to assign readings in Creation Science. Scientists who express doubts about Evolutionism are punished for straying from orthodoxy. Scientific publishers are generally unwilling to accept manuscripts from Creationist researchers and theorists. Secular review sources either neglect Creationist works altogether or are so uniformly hostile and dismissive that they are not useful for separating the wheat from the chaff. Unless librarians muster the integrity and professional diligence to collect robustly in Scientific Creationism, a monolithic Evolutionist siege will succeed.

Characteristics and Implications of the Scientific Creationism Holdings

This survey reports a search for 31 Scientific Creationism monographs and two journals in the 19 Indiana University – Bloomington libraries, identifies characteristics of the libraries' Scientific Creationism collections, and analyzes external influences on the libraries' ability to collect such materials satisfactorily.

A summary of the monograph search in table form is shown on the page following. Of 31 monographs sought, IU-Bloomington libraries hold 13. Neither of the two Creationist journals sought, *Creation Research Society Quarterly* or *TJ: Creation Ex Nihilo*, is held by any of the Indiana University libraries.

This author selected these books and journals on the advice of librarians at four fundamentalist Christian postsecondary schools (Liberty University in Virginia, and Christian Heritage College (now called San Diego Christian College), The Master's College and Institute of Creation Research Graduate School in California) rather than using the conventional review sources.

While I am grateful for their assistance, my dependence on them represents a retreat from current professional practices to a pre-modern apprenticeship model. This is necessitated by the academic equivalent of a siege, which I will describe in more detail below.

IU-Bloomington libraries have a significant collection of materials on Creationism. A keyword search recorded 126 hits. An informal survey of those titles suggests that most are works "about" Creationism, but that works "of" Creationism (by Creationists) also comprise a significant fraction.

The libraries' collection of the 13 vouchsafed Creationist monographs is unevenly distributed across the campus system. Most are found in the Main Library's research stacks. They are largely absent from the science libraries, and utterly absent from the Geology Library. This may reflect a collection development or cataloging philosophy that accords Creationism some importance as a cultural, political or historical phenomenon, or as a philosophical position, but not as science.

This would account for a second pattern: the collection is also unevenly distributed as to the nature of the Creationist works themselves. Creationist polemics (Morris) and philosophical arguments (Dembski and Johnson) are well represented, but empirical, research-grounded works of Creationist science, and especially of geology, are absent.

Difficulty of Identifying a Creation Science Canon

Evaluating IU – Bloomington libraries' Creation Science collections entails unusual difficulties in identifying a corpus of credible journals and monographs appropriate for an academic research collection. The subject of Creationism is of such cultural and religious importance that it has provoked a large body of amateur speculation and quasi-theological exhortation.

*Bart J. Stinson
Las Vegas, Nevada*

Author	Title	Holdings?
Austin, Steven	Catastrophes in Earth History	no
Austin, Steven	Grand Canyon: Monument to Catastrophe	no
Berthault, Guy	Experiments in Stratification	no
Brand, Leonard	Faith, Reason, and Earth History	yes
Coffin, Harold	Origin by Design	no
Dembski, William	The Design Inference	yes
Dembski, William	Intelligent Design	yes
Dembski, William	No Free Lunch	yes
Denton, Michael	Evolution: A Theory in Crisis	yes
Froede, Carl	Field Studies in Catastrophic Geology	no
Gish, Duane	Creation Scientists Answer Their Critics	no
Humphreys, D. Russell	Starlight and Time	no
Johnson, Phillip	Objections Sustained	yes
Johnson, Phillip	Darwin On Trial	yes
Johnson, Phillip	Reason in the Balance	yes
Johnson, Phillip	The Wedge of Truth	yes
Lubenow, Marvin	Bones of Contention	no
Morris, Henry	Scientific Creationism	yes
Morris, Henry	The Scientific Case for Creation	yes
Morris, Henry	The Troubled Waters of Evolution	yes
Morris, Henry	A History of Modern Creationism	yes
Morris, John	A Geological Perspective on the Age of the Earth	no
Morris, John	A Geologist Looks at Noah's Flood	no
Riddle, Mike	Dating Fossils and Rocks	no
Thaxton, Charles, et al	The Mystery of Life's Origin	no
Vardiman, Larry	Climates Before and After the Genesis Flood	no
Vardiman, Larry	Ice Cores and the Age of the Earth	no
Vardiman, Larry	Radioisotopes and the Age of the Earth	no
Wilder-Smith, A.E.	The Natural Sciences Know Nothing of Evolution	no
Williams, Emmett	Thermodynamics and the Development of Order	no
Woodmorappe, John	The Mythology of Modern Dating Methods	no

For purposes of distinguishing these unscientific works from credible works of empirical Creation Science (a term hereafter used interchangeably with “Scientific Creationism”), the conventional review sources are generally unhelpful.

Review sources that are useful for selection in numerous other fields either have a blind spot regarding Creation Science, neglecting to review its works, or are so uniformly hostile and dismissive that they can’t be employed to discriminate between self-indulgent jingoism and disciplined, experimental science.

This may be a permanent structural infirmity of the peer review system dependent on the contributions of a monolithic Evolutionist scientific establishment. If a reviewer were to accord favorable remarks to Creationist works, it might have unfavorable effects on tenure and collegiality.

The Evolutionist establishment has made examples of enough renegades to dissuade most ambitious academics from entertaining ideas of intelligent design, and from critiquing evolutionary theory too vigorously.

Evolutionists Crack Down on Criticism in California

Early in his career, University of California at San Francisco biology professor Dean Kenyon cemented his evolutionary bona fides by co-authoring the seminal and much-cited theoretical work “Biochemical Predestination.”

He earned a Stanford biophysics Ph.D, and did post-doctoral work at Oxford and Berkeley. He was considered an authority on chemical evolutionary theory and the scientific study of the origin of life (Meyer).

At mid-career his research results began to lead him to doubt his own earlier declarations. Within his semester-long introductory biology course, Kenyon gave three lectures on biological origins, but the university forbade him to critique “the very ideas that earlier he had formulated and that subsequently he had found defective.” (Dembski)

The biology department head accused Kenyon of teaching Biblical doctrine because he explored evidence for intelligent design, and directed him to stop.

Kenyon appealed to their dean to ask whether he was “forbidden to mention to students that there are important disputes about whether or not chemical evolution could have taken place on the ancient earth,” and whether mention of “the important philosophical issues at stake in discussion of origins” is prohibited. (Meyer)

The dean wrote Kenyon that he must “teach the dominant scientific view,” and prohibited him from teaching evidence for “special creation on a young earth.” Kenyon replied “I do teach the dominant view, but I also discuss problems with the dominant view and that some biologists see evidence of intelligent design. Please inform me of any impropriety in this approach.”

The dean’s only reply was to remove Kenyon from the classroom and reassign him to labs.

Pre-emptive Strike Against First “Intelligent Design” Think Tank

The willingness of establishment Evolutionists to suppress discussion of evidence for intelligent design, and to engage in pre-emptive strikes against the organizational and financial underpinnings of Creationist research, is not limited to secular institutions in libertine cities.

When Baptist-affiliated Baylor University in Waco, Texas, established the Michael Polanyi Center for Complexity, Information and Design, the first Intelligent Design think tank, hostile Baylor faculty, mainly in the science departments, went on the attack. When the Baylor president recruited a well-published proponent of Intelligent Design, William Dembski, to head the center, Dembski became a target.

“Then as now, many of my colleagues and I fail to see how it is possible to integrate science and religion,” wrote Lewis Barker, then a Baylor professor of psychology and neuroscience, “and for the life of me, I can’t understand why anybody would want to do so. They are separate realms, separate methodologies, separate intellectual worlds.” (Barker)

Here, rather than dispute Dembski’s research, it appears Barker, and perhaps his colleagues, retreat into Kuhn’s notion of “incommensurability” (Kuhn). They demanded that the Polanyi

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Center website remove its claim that it would “advance science,” because they denied that Dembski’s program of research was science. (Board of Directors)

After a campaign of vilification and censorship, the faculty senate voted “no confidence” in Dembski and the Center in April, calling for the university to close the center. “Not since academic Marxism has such extraordinary dismissive dogmatism taken hold of the minds of so many in the academy,” declared the directors of the (Lutheran) Cranach Institute. (Board of Directors)

Baylor’s president characterized the assault on Dembski as “intellectual McCarthyism.” (Dembski) Nevertheless, he appointed an external review committee “to consider the work done under the umbrella of the Polanyi Center and to make recommendations as to whether and how the center should continue to function at Baylor.” (Wilson)

The committee returned its complex verdict in October. (Cooper) After some obsequious fawning over Dembski’s accusers in the science faculty, it declared that the Polanyi Center should be renamed and that its research focus should be broadened by absorbing it back into its parent organization, the Institute for Faith and Learning.

Still, the committee stated that it considered “research on the logical structure of mathematical arguments for intelligent design to have a legitimate claim to a place in the current discussions of religion and the sciences,” and that “the Institute should be free, if it chooses, to include in its coverage this line of work, when carried out professionally.” (Cooper)

Despite the organizational insults, the tone of condescension and the confinement of Intelligent Design to the ghetto of science-religion controversy, Dembski claimed victory.

He issued a one-paragraph e-mail declaring that the committee report “marks the triumph of intelligent design as a legitimate form of academic inquiry.” He wrote that “dogmatic opponents of design who demanded the Center be shut down have met their Waterloo,” and vowed to continue his research.

Faculty adversaries were unwilling to concede him even the dignity of these illusions, and complained to the administration, which urged him to retract his e-mail. When he refused, he was fired as Polanyi director.

“Here is what it looks like, then,” wrote John Wilson in *Christianity Today*. “Dembski’s opponents hoped that the external review program would agree with the faculty senate’s April 2000 resolution to disband the center. When that didn’t occur, they contrived an excuse to get Dembski dismissed.” (Wilson)

Not Science but Scientism, Triumphant

The case of Forrest Mims shows that the suppression of critical discourse by enforced rules of thought is not confined to the claustrophobic academy.

Mims is possibly the most widely read electronics author in the world. He has written 60 books, and sold 7.5 million of them. He wrote the first book about personal computers, in 1975. He was a columnist for *Popular Electronics*, *Computercraft*, and *Modern Electronics*, and published articles in journals ranging from *Science* and *Nature* to *The Journal of Molecular Biology*.

When *Scientific American* asked Mims to take over its most popular column, “The Amateur Scientist,” he cancelled several lucrative magazine assignments and book projects to accept the column. He published three columns at *Scientific American*, which editor Jonathon Piel praised in a (recorded) telephone conversation as “fabulous,” (Hartwig) about how to observe sun spots, how to measure solar ultraviolet radiation, and how to make aerial photographs with a radio-controlled camera suspended from a helium balloon.

However, Mims reported that Piel’s attitude soured toward him after he mentioned that he had written an article for a Christian magazine about how to take church kids on long-distance bicycle tours.

There in the magazine’s New York City offices, Piel confronted Mims about his beliefs. “Do you believe in Darwinian evolution?” he asked the columnist. Mims answered that he did not. (Milton)

In a series of phone calls over that summer, Piel's subordinates continued to question Mims about his religious and moral views: was he a fundamentalist? Did he believe in a woman's right to choose? Finally, Piel called to tell Mims the magazine would no longer require his services. (Mims)

Mims' fourth column, which *Scientific American* never published, was about a device that amateurs might have used to track the ozone changes that occurred after the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo, and that they might have used to detect the extrapolated calibration error in NASA's primary ozone satellite. Eventually, Mims discovered the NASA error by using two of his own such devices, and received a Rolex Award for it. At the awards ceremony, a Rolex official noted that *Scientific American* didn't allow its editors to interview Mims about the award.

Although Mims did not sue the magazine, he reported that *Scientific American* attorneys threatened him with legal action if he were to make public statements about his discharge. (Mims) But a public controversy did ensue, as the *Houston Chronicle* broke his story October 8, 1990.

Two former *Scientific American* editors told the *Chronicle* that Mims was fired for his Creationist views.

"You have to understand that Creationism is a sort of shibboleth for scientists," said former managing editor Armand Schwab, Jr.

Former associate editor Tim Appenzeller, now at *National Geographic*, said "there was concern that *Scientific American* might be linked to a Flat Earther or something." (Hartwig)

None of the editors, including Piel, said they suspected that Mims would insinuate his Creationist views into the columns. But Piel expressed concerns that Mims' religious views might be exploited by third parties, thus embarrassing "the good name of this magazine." (Hartwig)

In other words, the Judeo-Christian worldview is not merely problematic or subject to criticism. It is anathema. This is not, properly speaking, a conclusion of science, but rather a doctrine of scientism.

Evolutionist Establishment Finds Creationist Science Intolerable

Dr. Eugenie Scott, executive director of the National Center for Science Education, suggested in Piel's defense that Creationist views are disqualifying because a Creationist cannot possibly be a competent scientist – or science writer.

"We're not dealing with political speech, we're not dealing with opinions on art," she said on CNN's "Crossfire" program. "We're dealing with what science is." (Hartwig)

The implication here is that freedom of speech should apply only to matters of opinion about assertions the truth of which is relative. Suppression of dissenting views is permissible if the subject is a matter of absolute truth.

Thus ghettos of Creationist publishers are to be tolerated, and the stray, eccentric Creationist scholar may be offered a position on a law or philosophy faculty, but Creationists are not welcome in the science classroom except as objects of derision, and they are not, under any circumstances, to be admitted to collegial debate on real science.

Aggressive Enforcement Nips Scientific Creationism in the Bud

Establishment Evolutionists' efforts have had their desired effect. Although Mims and Kenyon experienced some level of vindication much later, up-and-coming scientists could not mistake the lesson of their ordeals, and Dembski's: there is no future in Creationist scholarship: Don't even think about it.

"Every scientist who hears about this," said Texas ACLU spokesman Lamar Hankins of the Mims affair, "is going to wind up saying, 'Boy, I'd better not let anyone find out what I believe or I'll end up not getting published again.' It's certainly the type of thing that has a chilling effect." (Hartwig)

The hostile environment in academia affects collegial cooperation even among Creationist researchers and scholars.

"I am frequently asked what is the latest research that supports intelligent design," wrote Dembski, "and I find myself having to be reticent about who is doing what precisely

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because of enormous pressure that opponents of design employ to discredit these researchers, undermine their position, and cause them to lose their funding.” (Dembski)

Both Dembski and Mims report that many surreptitious Creationists have contacted them.

“Several confided that their careers would be ruined,” wrote Mims, “if they were to publicly acknowledge their belief that life is a product of intelligent design by a Supreme Being.”

This approach has been effective at nipping Creationist impulses in the bud, preventing Creation scientists from ever approaching “critical mass.” It almost prevented the seminal work on Intelligent Design, acknowledged by Dembski as the starting point of the modern movement, from ever getting published.

The *Mystery of Life’s Origin*, by Charles Thaxton, Walter Bradley and Roger Olsen, “focused purely on the scientific case for and against abiogenesis. Thus it consciously avoided casting its critique as part of a Bible–science controversy.” (Dembski)

The MIT Press accepted it for publication, but later reneged. Then the manuscript was rejected by over 100 publishers before Philosophical Library accepted it for publication. (Dembski) MIT Press has published in this subject area since then. (Pennock) It appears that Thaxton et al didn’t write on a forbidden subject, but they did write from a forbidden perspective.

The Burden

Publishing is a sibling, if not a parent, of librarianship. Likewise we are largely dependent, for the quality of our work product, on the diligence of a vast infrastructure of grant–writers and administrators, scholarly researchers, writers, reviewers and teaching faculty.

If the publishers we rely upon are not committed to publish, promote and distribute Creationist materials as diligently as they handle other subjects, if the reviews and catalogs ignore or dismiss Creation Science or

segregate it from other scientific literature, and if faculty refuse to request Creationist works and freeze them off their classes’ reading lists, then the integrity and professionalism of the librarian is the only remaining obstacle to the permanent suppression of a plausible scientific theory with profound social and ethical implications. †

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