

Dear Editor,

The moment I read the Editor's Note in the Spring 2006 issue of *American Entomologist* I knew that I would have to respond with some heart-felt comments of my own, or else live in shameful silence like one who tolerates injustice for the sake of avoiding confrontation. Let me begin by saying that I am an entomologist and have been one since the age of four. Like most of my fellow ESA members, I have an unquenchable interest in insects and their kin. Arthropod diversity, morphology and behavior consumes my personal time as well as my professional time and I would have it no other way. Furthermore, I am a scientist. I have observed biological phenomena, formulated hypotheses, researched the work of others, gathered data, tested the data, drawn conclusions that ought to be repeatable by others, and I have published my work in refereed scientific journals, including ESA journals. One thing that I do not appear to have in kind with my fellow ESA members (or at least the vocal ones) is a fanatical stand on theories of origins to the point of advocating the exclusion of all but one approach to this subject in our public schools. I do not agree with the Resolution on Intelligent Design that was passed by the members in attendance at the closing session of the Ft. Lauderdale meeting of the ESA, as printed on page 7 of the *American Entomologist*. Allow me to explain why I march to the beat of a different drummer while addressing Gene Kritsky's opening comments (page 2).

Gene states that "Intelligent design explains nothing. It merely tries to explain currently unknown aspects of biology with a greater unknown." Let me respond by saying that intelligent design and its underlying premise of irreducible complexity in biological systems is intended to provoke thought.

Furthermore, I have not read any critiques or studies that explain adequately (e.g., in a statistically defensible and demonstrable manner) how simple matter can order itself into biochemical pathways and then into increasingly complex and diverse living systems, whatever environmental conditions prevail over eons of time. May I add that the

"currently unknown aspects of biology" are numerous indeed.

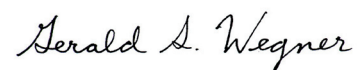
Gene's assertions that intelligent design "will not help us understand how insects evolve resistance to pesticides" or "how pathogens evolve" or "advance our knowledge" are true; but ID is not intended to address these endeavors. Nor does ID stand in the way of these noble pursuits. Genetic research can stand on its own merits. Indeed, genetic research has demonstrated that, apart from human manipulation (yes, design), every population's gene pool has its limits. Evolution on a small scale (i.e., microevolution) via natural selection is demonstrable, as evidenced in the other articles that appear in the Spring 2006 issue of *AE*. That is not the argument here. The argument is whether or not it is scientific to assert that evolution on a grand scale (i.e., macroevolution), with its reliance on numerous, unobserved successive beneficial mutations is the only possible basis for the earth's biodiversity. This takes me to my next point. Many of us hold Ph.D.s in entomology and related biological sciences. As I recall, Ph.D. stands for doctor of philosophy. So let's wax philosophical for a moment. There is more at stake here than what is science or not. Every one of us has his or her own philosophy of life – one's own grand unifying theory of existence, if you will. Those of us who believe in an omnipotent, omniscient, eternal Creator God, must approve a compatible theory of origins. For some monotheistic scientists that means espousing special creation, and for others, progressive theistic evolution. Those scientists who are atheistic, agnostic or pantheistic must likewise espouse a compatible theory of origins – one that does not require a creator or intelligent design. So now the debate rises to a new level – the definition of science now reflects the subtle but powerful shadings of the personal philosophies (actually, religions) of the ones who are most influential and vocal in society.

I for one do not wish to be bullied by the most vocal and influential entomologists of the ESA simply because they, like Thomas Huxley, must cling to a theory of origins that must exclude the existence or creative

actions of God, based on a one-sided interpretation of observations spiced with much creative and often outlandish speculation (e.g., the notion that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny and the concept of punctuated equilibria). By the way, I know that I am not the only entomologist / scientist who has problems swallowing the macroevolutionary aspects of Darwinism hook, line and sinker. I have friends and colleagues within the ESA and other scientific organizations who feel as I do on this subject; but for the sakes of their reputations, prefer to remain silent on the subject of origins. These individuals are good workbench scientists and field researchers in their own right. Their approach to origins does not diminish their expertise and skills in the laboratory or the validity of their accomplishments.

I strongly recommend that all entomologists / biologists take some time to read (with an open mind) the works of scientists (yes, I said scientists) who offer other interpretations of the geological and biological phenomena that surround us. Not all such writing has merit, but much of it is thought-provoking and worth consideration. As for whether or not states should allow teachers to include intelligent design and creationist arguments along with macroevolution in science classroom discussions of origins theories in public schools -- well, I think it should happen. The scary thing, to me, is that all it takes to prevent such open discussions of origins is for one child's parent to complain to the so-called American Civil Liberties Union (scientists all) that religion is being taught in a public school. Never mind the numerous inconvenient discoveries and fragments of history that continue to be discarded or distorted by those who wish to suppress their implications to macroevolution.

Respectfully submitted,  
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