



House, H. Wayne, ed.

Intelligent Design 101: Leading Experts Explain the Key Issues

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When this book initially arrived on my doorstep I was fairly curious about it. Intelligent Design (ID) is not a subject that I have paid much attention to in my studies, nor one that I have cared much about in my faith. I've always been content to believe that there is a Creator and leave it at that. To be quite honest, when I see proponents of ID on television programs or hear them on radio broadcasts, I usually find myself wanting to distance myself from them and their beliefs. What little exposure I have had to this subject has come from hearing what have appeared to be (to me at least), fundamentalist Christians. I've seen and heard them debate with vigor and often vitriol, claiming that any and everyone who has disagreed with them have been naturalists, atheists, or some even, (if they were Christian) heretics! Well, the picture painted in this book is very different (for the most part).

Intelligent Design 101 is a collection of seven essays on the subject from some key players from the Christian side of the debate. They range from polemical ("Bringing Balance to a Fiery Debate" - Phillip Johnson), to long and drawn out ("Finding Intelligent Design in Nature" - Casey Luskin), to thoughtful and well written ("Intelligent Design and the Nature of Science" - J. P. Moreland), to enlightening ("Darwin's Black Box: Is Irreducible Complexity Still a Conundrum for Darwinism?" - Michael J. Behe), to admittedly boring ("Darwinism and the Law" - H. Wayne House).

I was pleased to find out that issues such as the age of the Earth and the span of Noah's flood were not discussed in this book. In other words, these were not essays on Christian fundamentalism and "creationism", but rather, they were essays arguing that ID is a legitimate scientific theory that needs to be considered. J. P. Moreland and Eddie N. Colanter both did well in their respective essays to bring the philosophy of science into focus. Moreland gave what I thought were adequate answers to objections that ID is just a "god of the gaps" theory. He notes that if ID is a "god of the gaps" theory—which is to say that people assert 'God did it' when they have no other explanation—then ID

opponents can be charged with a "naturalism of the gaps" argument because they always hold out for a naturalistic explanation even when one does not present itself.

One thing I noticed in this volume was that the authors were against evolution of all sorts, to include theistic evolution. In the introductory essay, Phillip Johnson says: "*God-guided evolution isn't evolution as the scientific profession uses that term.*" (29) J. P. Moreland said:

Its commitment to methodological naturalism is why theistic evolution is inadequate to address the nonempirical problems relating to the possibility of religious knowledge and the overall marginalization of religion. Theistic evolutionary theory is based on the view that there may be a god, but the history of the cosmos and the development of life provide no scientific evidence for an intelligent designer, that is purely describable by naturalistic processes. (56)

In the end, this book seemed as much anti-evolution as it did pro-ID. My question, as someone completely ignorant of the subject is this: can evolution be the mechanism by which the intelligent designer created? Methodological naturalism may not account for the non-empirical problems, but does it account for the empirical evidence? Shouldn't that be our concern? While I felt some of the arguments in this volume were compelling (namely that ID is in fact a scientific theory), I have a sneaking suspicion that my mind will be changed when reading the works of those with opposing views. That's the problem with being ignorant of a subject, everything sounds good at first. I would recommend this work to people like me with little to no knowledge of the issues discussed. I don't imagine that those who believe in any form of evolution will be persuaded by the arguments set forth in this volume, and it would just be preaching to the choir for those who already hold to ID.