

# **The *Expelled* Controversy: Overcoming or Raising Walls of Division?**

Review Essay  
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*“When the banner unfurls, all reason is in the trumpet.”*  
- Ukrainian Proverb

## **I. Seeking an Open Inquiry**

The movie *Expelled* has attracted national attention as the most recent and explosive salvo in the battle – sometimes represented as a scientific conflict, sometimes as an all out culture war – over evolution, divine design, and the treatment of these issues in American academia. Critics of the movie and the Intelligent Design (ID) movement it represents view the campaign as part of a “holy war on science,”<sup>1</sup> that in many respects involves the intellectual analog of terrorism. Having failed to gain ground in a fairly-waged battle for ideas amongst scientific colleagues, ID advocates are criticized as circumventing the rules of honest intellectual engagement by going straight to school boards and legislators. Having failed there, they are now viewed as resorting to a propaganda campaign of misinformation and vilification<sup>2</sup>.

*Expelled* and the ID advocates it portrays would agree that the battle hasn’t been fairly fought, but attribute this not to their tactics but those of a “Dark Age of totalitarianism” that silences dissent through “Kafkaesque persecution of scientists”<sup>3</sup> and others who challenge the system. *Expelled* portrays those who champion ID or stand up to Darwinism as freedom fighters, struggling against an oppressive intellectual regime that, while it may control the reins of power, does not represent either sound reason or popular sensibilities. The film “exposes the tactics that Darwinists employ to maintain their stranglehold on academia and the scientific establishment.” In fact, it even closes with stirring words from the Declaration of Independence and a celebration of those brave warriors who have given their lives in the fight to preserve the legacy of American

freedoms. Producer Ben Stein concludes, “Freedom of inquiry has been greatly compromised, and this is not only anti-American, it’s anti-science.”

Over the course of this increasingly polarized battle, and especially in the bitter criticisms and umbraged defenses of the film, each side contends that the other not only is wrong, but also is committing the destructive error of the above proverb. [It was taken, by the way, from the famous discussion by Nobel laureate biologist Konrad Lorenz of “militant enthusiasm” – the feverish group think in which “rational considerations, criticisms, and all reasonable arguments...are silenced” by being made to “appear not only untenable but base and dishonorable.”<sup>4</sup>] For many of us who value science, biblical faith, and civil exchange, it is very tempting to echo Mercutio’s lament at the tragic consequences of feuding Montagues and Capulets: “A plague on both your houses!...I was hurt under your arm.” Indeed, our students, and the fabric of social discourse, and the very intellectual questions that have been central to western civilization all appear to have been injured “under the arm” of this feud.

But not so fast with a plea for moderation. If it is important to avoid the fallacy of false extremes, it is also important to avoid the fallacy of the supposedly golden median. Maybe we need, as lifetime Darwin critic Tom Bethell claims in his movie review, to “reject what might be called the diplomatic option, [which] seeks to keep everyone happy” by seeing reconcilable truths on both sides. For in so doing “it puts diplomacy before truth.”<sup>5</sup> It is of course possible that one side is just plain wrong, not only in claims but also in tactics. For this reason, it is crucial both to hear sympathetically and to assess carefully the film’s claims. It is especially important for Christians to do this, for the internal coherence of our faith and the integrity of our social witness are at stake.

What I want to do in this review essay is carefully assess the claims of the film, plus those made in the recent firestorm of criticisms and defenses. It is not targeted at scholars, but it is offered to the thoughtful. “Is there no shorter way of coming to Geometry...?” King Ptolemy is reputed to have asked Euclid. “Sire, there is no royal road to geometry.” Polemical soundbites criticizing and defending the movie notwithstanding, there is no short way to the truth of these issues. While the following assessment is lengthy, it contains segments dealing with each major claim of the film, which may be read separately.

Before examining the specific claims of the film and its critics, I should make explicit two starting commitments that virtually all Christians will bring (and atheists will reject) in coming to the issues. First, along with all monotheists in the Abrahamic traditions, Christians believe that the earth and the history of humanity are not the accidental byproducts of a purposeless cosmos, but the creation of a wise and loving God. Moreover, God has not left Himself without witness, but His creation bears wondrous testimony of its Creator (in ways not all agree on). Second, and this is a somewhat distinctive and contentious claim of the Christian revelation: human beings are prone to misidentifying the signature of divine artistry, and in fact may actively work to deny it. The scandalous message of the incarnation is that even when the Artist himself entered his creation, its interlocking systems of thought and power not only failed to recognize

him, but also despised him. No disrespect intended, but in a sense Christianity is the ultimate conspiracy theory, involving the disturbing proposal that the self-deceiving vulnerabilities of human personality and the self-justifying mechanisms of cultural control are tilted away from God's testimony, and are largely blind to the direction of this tilt.

At face value, both of these affirmations seem to concord with the film's major emphases: there is evidence of a purposeful creator, and there is a reigning ideological commitment to excluding, even punishing, those who advocate this point of view. In fact, at a general level many Christians would not even need a movie to be convinced of this. But the film attempts to go beyond the general, by portraying very specific examples of this dynamic. If there is *bona fide* scientific evidence for design, it's in the details; and if there is institutionalized commitment to suppressing such evidence, it's in the details as well. Therefore it's important to take a hard look at the claims, or as the film encourages, to examine the issues without ruling out one option in advance. In exploring these issues with my own students, I invite them to begin by taking to heart the advice of Proverbs, which exhorts us to unwavering self-honesty: "He who gives an answer without first hearing of the matter, it is his folly and shame." The importance of this proverbial counsel is amplified by the theological notion I mentioned above, of a delusional conspiracy that resists the gospel. For it is not just Rome, but also Jerusalem that conspires. The community of faith is not immune to misidentifying the enemy, in the very name of orthodoxy. The need here, as always, is to "examine everything carefully and hold on to the good" (I Thes 5:21).

So here we go; maybe we can even have some fun. The film claims that it "exposes the frightening agenda of the 'Darwinian Machine'."<sup>6</sup> Three grave questions are raised and answered about the nature of that machine.

## **II. Is Evolution Wedded to Atheism?**

To the significant credit of *Expelled*, it acknowledges that there are at least two different debates involved in what is often thought of as the singular "ID controversy." The first is a scientific claim about the adequacy of evolutionary theory versus alternatives proposed by ID advocates and others. The second is a philosophical dispute, not just about Creator or no Creator - this we've always had - but also over whether evolutionary science is necessarily wedded to atheism. The movie takes a very clear stand on this crucial question. Despite what some compromisers "would lead us to believe," Ben Stein says, it "appears Darwinism does lead to atheism."

This is a hugely important claim, which is undoubtedly the core issue in the cultural debate over ID. It is the reason the ID movement musters such passionate commitment and why it is, in fact, a "movement" at all. In the movie, ID proponent Jeffrey Schwartz concludes, "The conflict over the principles of evolution has become a religious war; it is no longer a conflict over science." Whether or not the debate was ever primarily over science, the film is correct in identifying it as being a world-view conflict that is largely religious in character. The question we desperately need to address is whether this is a

conflict that must be fought, and what is the evidence presented in the movie for going to battle? *Does Darwinism “lead to atheism”?*

To start with, a crucial contribution of the film is its making abundantly clear something that should be but has not always been clear to the public at large: it is not just ID advocates, but also many of the world’s leading evolutionists who think Darwinism is completely incompatible with theism or any other tenets of the major religions. Cornell historian of biology and AAAS Fellow William Provine, interviewed in the film, famously asserts that the clear implications of naturalistic evolution are “no gods worth having exist, no life after death exists, no ultimate foundation for ethics exists, no ultimate meaning in life exists.”<sup>7</sup> Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, and numerous other prominent interpreters of evolution make similar claims in the public square. In an exquisitely painful interview sequence – which I must confess to having taken some enjoyment in – Dawkins is made to look arrogant, superficial, and foolish as he vacillates between brandishing his ideas and squirming under their scrutiny. The interview appeared to me like it was set-up under false pretenses (something the film’s supporters deny, but a charge that, along with claims of other misrepresentations, Dawkins spends the majority of his response to the film making – fairly convincingly, if whiningly<sup>8</sup>). For better or worse, Dawkins does get just a measure of the scorn he so lavishly dished out in his own highly contrived anti-religion documentary, *Root of All Evil*.

But should we be seeking to mete out scorn for scorn in the public intellectual arena? And tactics aside, none of this dialogue demonstrates evolution and religion must conflict, only that some polemicists *say* they do. Indeed, the film cuts to an extended disparagement of Dawkins by anti-Darwinian popular writer, David Berlinski, who eloquently if virulently chastises him for being philosophically bungling and utterly inept. Yet this contribution to the nascent tradition of Dawkins-bashing – a tradition increasingly celebrated by the religious and irreligious alike – actually works against the movie’s claims. If Dawkins really is philosophically incompetent, why should anything he says about evolution’s metaphysical implications carry any weight at all? Physicist-priest John Polkinghorne, one of the most esteemed scholars of science and religion featured in the movie, rightly reminds us that “metaphysical claims need to be defended with metaphysical arguments.” Dawkins doesn’t provide such arguments. And neither does anyone else in the movie.

Now even without argument, it is clear by inspection that atheism must entail evolution: for anyone who rejects the possibility of an intelligence behind the cosmos, there is no viable alternative to some sort of naturalistic evolutionary account of origins. But the reverse – that evolution requires or logically leads to atheism as Stein claims – well, this is not clear without argument. For a film wanting to engage a popular audience, it’s not surprising that it raises this issue via personal stories of individuals who (now claim to have) lost some kind of theistic belief upon encountering evolution. But for a film that not only raises the question but ends up endorsing a conclusion, two things seem to be lacking.

First, conspicuously absent are any personal stories on the other side, that could have been drawn from thousands of scientists who simultaneously accept evolution and embrace a vibrant religious faith, many of whom testify that their belief in God has actually been deepened in light of evolutionary science and the grandeur of life's history. This is a regrettable omission, particularly in light of the fact that the film's own promotional materials emphatically claim, "Unlike some other documentary films, *Expelled* doesn't just talk to people representing one side of the story."<sup>9</sup> But an important side of the story is entirely unrepresented - that which could be told by any one of the internationally prominent Christian biologists who have recently made major contributions as "Mercurios" by arguing evolution and faith don't have to be at odds.<sup>10</sup> Richard Dawkins criticizes this as the "Neville Chamberlain option" of appeasement, and in his movie review, ID proponent Tom Bethell points out that, on this point, "The advocates of intelligent design agree with him..."<sup>11</sup> So what *Expelled* ends up presenting is, in fact, just one side of the crucial "Darwin → Atheism?" debate, upon which the militant Darwinists and anti-Darwinists happen to agree.

Maybe though, in spite their scientific accomplishments, the Mercurios don't really understand evolution. In his film review that comments on this point, President of the ID-sponsoring Discovery Institute (DI), Bruce Chapman, claims something worse than simple misunderstanding is going on. Chapman contends that "scholars seeking a compromise" by suggesting "God did the creating, but did it through Darwinian evolution," have allowed their imaginations to construct "a form of comforting self-delusion."<sup>12</sup>

And here is the second lack. I may scandalize my colleagues by suggesting this, but the problem is actually not that Chapman, or Bethell, or Dawkins, is entirely wrong. Some interpretations of Darwinian theory are indeed incompatible with some understandings of divine purpose, and waving the wand of happy imaginings does not make conflicts disappear. The trick is to see where the genuine as opposed to manufactured conflicts are, which ones can be solved by the concessions reason recommends, and which ones cannot be avoided without conceding reason itself. A popular film cannot resolve these issues, but *Expelled*, like Dawkins, doesn't seem to let on that these are issues at all. What appears to be waved off without consideration is even the possibility of mutually enriching commerce between faith and evolution.

"Implicit in most evolutionary theory is either there is no God or he can't have anything to do with the world," the typically very fair-minded journalist Larry Witham asserts in the movie. But this provocative comment could have been used to stimulate rather than settle conversation. Hmm...*most* evolutionary theory? If such implications do exist, but don't exist for all verions, how do we distinguish between the ones that do and don't harbor atheism? How do we know it's "most," and would it make a difference if it were only "some", or even "just a few crackpot extremes"? How could a scientific theory, which just offers an account of how nature operates, ever tell us – even if it's a wrong theory about how the world works - that there is no God beyond the world's workings? Or if there is a God, why would belief that certain features of the world are explainable

by natural law, mean that God has “nothing to do” with those features or the law that supports them?

Again, there are limits to what can be addressed in a general interest film, but the public is eager to engage and able to have fun with questions about science and meaning. It would have been thrilling to see a theism-friendly, sophisticated exploration of these issues. And even if *Expelled* wanted to take a very strong stand on an extreme answer to the questions, that would have been stimulating. But the stand seems to have been taken, without letting in the questions. At least on this question – “does evolution lead to atheism?” - the movie seems to have forgotten the Proverb. I don’t happen to think all ID theorists are intellectual terrorists. But ironically, in failing to distinguish genuine enemies of religion from passionate advocates of evolutionary theory – by pitting itself against the evil empire of Darwinism – this part of the film seems to confirm the very stereotype it seeks to debunk.

### **III. Do “anti-science bigots... censor scientists and stifle science”?**

The central and very powerful thesis of *Expelled*, is that it is not just God who has been “expelled” from the reigning intellectual worldview, but also, sound science and those pursuing it are being expelled from the academic enterprise. This involves, as ID advocate Bill Dembski claims, suppression of ideas by a strategy of “widespread persecution -- destruction of livelihoods, careers and reputations.”<sup>13</sup>

All negative personnel decisions are messy and are almost invariably interpreted or overtly spun in diametrically divergent ways. In 27 years of academic work, I have never seen someone lose their job – including for reasons of clear moral breach – who did not remonstrate with charges of impropriety. Conversely, in cases of demonstrably unsound and subsequently overturned negative decisions – including some recent nationally prominent examples – those making the initial decision never fail to argue for it in light of institutional policy. Termination is a bit like divorce. Sometimes there’s a clear villain, usually there is not; those on the inside typically claim it is the other party, and those on the outside better be careful about taking just one party’s word.

Complexity notwithstanding, a couple of things about the academy are clear to anyone who is not, in Richard Dawkins’ phrase about evolution-doubters, “ignorant, stupid, or insane.” One, there is surely a leftward ideological tilt in academic life. It is simply not intellectually svelte to be a Bush supporter, a pro-life advocate, a Rush Limbaugh dittohead...or an evangelical Christian. Two, it is absolute professional suicide to be a young earth creationist in a geology department or an anti-evolutionist in a biology department at any institution outside of a few parochial colleges. And it may be just as bad to be an ID advocate in any science department. The question is, is the latter due to the suffocating influence of the former: does the exclusion of ID and other criticisms of evolution represent “the ugly specter of academic suppression” imposed by “anti-science bigots”<sup>14</sup> enforcing a materialist ideology? The film’s crucial assertion is: “Yes.” It

makes this allegation by addressing two questions: are ID advocates expelled, and if so, are there proper grounds for doing so?

*Are ID advocates expelled?*

The film gives several examples purporting to represent people being persecuted or forced out of their jobs by the Darwin Machine's intolerance of new scientific ideas. In each case, the film cites facts that are demonstrably true and, at face value, genuinely disturbing. But there are also important facts that are either omitted, or are readily misconstrued from the film. And many of the ensuing published responses to the film – both criticisms and defenses – seem to be highly interpretively biased. There are three main cases, examined here in order of what seems to be increasing seriousness and complexity.

Case 1. Caroline Crocker lost her position teaching biology after lecturing on ID, no question about it. The film puts it this way: “After she simply mentioned Intelligent Design in her cell biology class at George Mason University, Caroline Crocker’s sterling academic career came to an abrupt end.” Here is what seems clear from the public record. Dr. Crocker did not “simply *mention* ID” in her instructional responsibilities – she lectured on and advocated views that advanced ID and denied evolutionary common descent. Both the Washington Post and the DI have essays describing how she begins class with a slide of an arrow and a question mark running between a monkey and a human.<sup>15</sup> An essay praising her linked from the DI website quotes an appreciative student: “She has finally expressed what others didn’t dare say, but what I always thought...people have a soul, one can’t put them on the same level as animals. To believe in evolution would mean that death would be the last word.”<sup>16</sup> However, other students were apparently not nearly so appreciative, and there were complaints about the teaching.<sup>17</sup>

Although she was not fired, it does appear that she was instructed not to lecture on this material again. After her temporary appointment expired (she did not have a permanent position at George Mason), she was not rehired to teach more classes. However, her career did not “abruptly end” at that point. She had another appointment at a Northern Virginia Community College. She lectured against evolutionary theory there as well, in the presence of a national reporter, and included standard creationist criticisms of the fossil record.<sup>18</sup> She was not invited back there either, after which she secured a research appointment. Since temporary teaching positions are granted on a contingent basis, there is no assumption of continuity and no obligation to provide reasons for not renewing. But with or without the Caroline Crocker story, both ID advocates and their critics would agree on this: nobody who uses the biology classroom to advance views that reject evolutionary common descent, is going to be in the classroom for long at a major university. What ID advocates and critics do not agree on (and not even all ID advocates agree on) is whether or not this should be the case. [That’s the second question.]

Case 2. Richard Sternberg has two Ph.D.’s in biology and a significant record of published research related to evolution. He is a Christian and a supporter of ID. As

editor of a small-circulation scientific journal, *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington*, he accepted for publication a paper that advocated ID.<sup>19</sup> The paper and the decision to publish it were publicly repudiated by the journal<sup>20</sup>, and Sternberg was severely criticized – some say chastised - for his role. Sternberg stepped down from the editorship. *Expelled* claims “The paper ignited a firestorm of controversy merely because it suggested intelligent design might be able to explain how life began...[Sternberg’s] life was nearly ruined when he strayed from the party line...”

This is a more turbid case, but the following seems clear. First, the film mischaracterizes the focus of the paper, which was not about the beginning of life, but about the origin of major new kinds of organisms. This is actually not just a minor point, because evolutionary theory doesn’t propose an explanation for life’s origin, nor do we even have an agreed upon theory from any scientific field outside of evolution. But we do have a virtually universally accepted theory for the origin of biotic diversity. That alone does not make it a correct theory, but it does mean that repudiating it is going to create a spectacular firestorm. But so would claims of geocentrism in an astronomy journal. Of course the challenge in science, as with forestry, is which fires to put out and which to let burn. But that is the second question again.

Was Sternberg’s life ruined? We can’t assess that statement and it’s not clear from the film why Stein makes such a striking claim. What does seem clear from the public record is the following. After the article was published, rumors circulated that Sternberg was a young earth creationist. He’s not. Rumors circulated that Sternberg, contrary to standard policy for scientific publications, did not send the paper out for peer review. He definitely did. It was also claimed that Sternberg did not conform to the journal’s typical standards for seeking input from an associate editor. This is contested. Finally, it has been documented that communication between those associated with the journal and the Smithsonian Institution (involved in the journal’s publication) and/or the National Center for Science Education (a leading anti-creationist organization) inquired about Sternberg’s religious beliefs, political affiliations, and even discussed whether he should be terminated, formally disciplined, or made to resign.<sup>21</sup> And it was decided none of these things should occur.

So what actually did happen? Sternberg stepped down from his post as editor, but everybody agrees this has nothing to do with the article, and his term was set to expire before it appeared anyway. He was not fired or asked to resign at the Smithsonian. In fact, he didn’t even have a job at the Smithsonian to begin with (he is an employee of the National Institutes of Health). His was a courtesy appointment as a researcher, which was not rescinded. But after the term ran out, it was commuted to a lower prestige designation. From here the claims seem to get considerably more modest and also a bit more difficult to adjudicate. Sternberg claims his name was taken off his door, he had to move to worse work space, had to trade in his master key for another key, had to endure bureaucratic demands that others did not, and had his access to collections restricted. The Smithsonian claims some of this happened and some didn’t, but much of what did happen also happened to others for reasons of general policy, some even before the article came out. The worst case scenario – which does not seem altogether unlikely – is that



Sternberg indeed experienced a hostile work environment. It seems clear that colleagues viewed him as having betrayed the standards and reputation (but not the policies) of the organization, they were ticked with him, and as is not uncommon in such situations, he was subjected to gossip and the diminution of discretionary professional courtesies.

If Sternberg used his position to get an article published, of tawdry scientific merit, but which he had a vested ideological interest in promoting, then this actually seems to be getting off easy. On the other hand, if he published something containing credible arguments for a position, however heretical, which he took pains to have thoroughly reviewed by competent scholars, then he has taken some regrettable lumps for being an iconoclast. Whether or not his life was ruined, the latter scenario would raise sobering questions about free inquiry. Which is the case? In terms of the review process, we know it occurred, but we don't know if this highly controversial paper was assessed by an appropriate range of scholars, or primarily, if only, by sympathizers. Sternberg will not reveal their identities out of concern for piercing the "veil of peer review," the promise of anonymity many feel is essential for candid evaluations. [However, he could ask if they would be willing to identify themselves.] With respect to the crucial question of whether the article was credible, well, that brings us back to the importance of question two.

Case 3. Guillermo Gonzalez is, in the account published in the journal *Nature*, "a young astronomer with dozens of articles in top journals; he has made an important discovery in the field of extrasolar planets; and he is a proponent of intelligent design."<sup>22</sup> On the faculty at Iowa State University, Gonzalez has 68 career scientific publications, many of them highly cited in his discipline, plus a Cambridge Press textbook, plus... a popular book arguing that there is evidence for intelligence underlying the structure of the cosmos. After publication of the ID book, his "rising profile led a group of 131 faculty members to sign a petition disavowing ID," out of concern over seeing – as an outspoken atheist colleague who helped lead the signature drive claimed – "Iowa State mentioned as a place where intelligent-design research was happening."<sup>23</sup> Gonzalez's belief in ID was discussed amongst colleagues, and when he came up for tenure the issue was considered as part of the process. He was denied tenure last year. This is the skeleton description as given in *Nature*, and similarly in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.<sup>24</sup> It seems that few dispute these facts.

In *Expelled*, Ben Stein claims simply and emphatically that tenure for Gonzalez "was denied due to his connection with intelligent design." The process involved, in a headline of the DI, "vitriol towards intelligent design, disregard for academic freedom, and... a plot to oust an outstanding scientist."<sup>25</sup>

Maybe so – and even a "maybe" on something this serious deserves earnest concern. But the evidence that such a plot was the cause of Gonzalez being unfairly denied tenure due to viewpoint discrimination, is difficult to assess underneath the outraged claims on each side. What is not ambiguous is that both those who criticize and those who defend the decision have over-simplified and at times massaged the facts.

The most important factor for attaining tenure at Iowa State is scientific publication. The DI claims that “The denial of tenure is all the more incredible given the fact that Dr. Gonzalez exceeds by 350% the number of peer-reviewed journal publications required by his department to meet its standard of excellence in research.”<sup>26</sup> But that is untrue. The recommended standard is 15 publications, and Gonzalez did have 68 lifetime pubs, which indeed represents a 3.5 fold excess. But tenure decisions for junior faculty are about likelihood of continued productivity in the department, not past accomplishments before joining the university, and therefore standards focus on publications of work done *at the institution*. No one disputes this, so it is bewildering that anyone commenting on tenure would conflate these issues. On the other hand, figures cited by the National Center for Science Education (NCSE: a leading anti-creationist organization) suggest that his record was borderline and steadily declining.<sup>27</sup> But to conclude this, it was necessary to throw out a number of his peer reviewed publications from consideration. This was justified by assuming - perhaps correctly but without confirmation - that these pubs would not count significantly for tenure because they appear to be reanalyses of existing data.

What’s the truth here? From his c.v., Gonzales looks to have about 26 publications after joining ISU, and more relevantly, 20 papers from the year after he came to Iowa. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* commented that at first glance, Gonzalez had, at the assistant professor level, “amassed a better publication record than almost any other member of the astronomy faculty.”<sup>28</sup>

However, tenure is not about first glance, and the interpretation of that record along with other important factors suggesting future productivity may be more of a mixed bag. How many papers were reanalyses of old data? How many new ideas or new collaborations were forged? How many highly cited studies were conducted? On the one hand, the citations of his work by peers was undeniably stellar – the second highest in the entire department.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, citations were declining, and emphasized earlier work done before he came to Iowa. Were his best years behind him? His record of grant funding for research was distinctly below departmental norms, being 6-7 times less the \$1.3 million typical of other assistant professors. And although grantsmanship is not emphasized in the written descriptions of tenure expectations, it is common in academia, and Gonzalez was informed of this expectation at mid-tenure review, prior to the ID flap. The DI challenges the issue of grants: “91% of ISU faculty considered for tenure this year received it. Did they all receive more than a million dollars in grants in order to get tenure?”<sup>30</sup> But this is misleading. First off, the tenure rate that year in the university at large is not the issue, but the issue is the recent tenure ratios in the department – which involves a 1/3 denial rate over the previous decade. Second, the university-wide grant history is irrelevant, especially since disciplines outside the sciences are vastly less funded. The average funding within the department was \$1.3 million, compared to Gonzalez’s \$200,000 or so. The irony is, it could well be the case that Gonzalez was shafted, but these arguments in his defense do not help those of us at a distance understand, much less have confidence, in the outcry.

Finally, the tenure process involved requests for input from nine scholars external to the university. Five of these recommended tenure. Is this half empty or half full? The fact

that one could even ask the question reveals it's not an easy call either way. Other astronomers who have publicly commented on the case have been cautious.<sup>31</sup> Neither his record of accomplishment nor the professional colleagues across the nation who gave input to the review, provide evidence of such plain deficiencies as to offer support for someone outside the process – like NCSE - concluding with any confidence that Gonzalez “flunked out”<sup>32</sup> because of a “weak academic record” that was “enough to deny him tenure.”<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, the DI claim seems even more exaggerated, almost bizarre: “it’s clearly preposterous to claim that Dr. Gonzalez is somehow deficient as a scientist. If anything, the problem is likely that he is too good.”<sup>34</sup> True to the Ukrainian proverb with which this essay began, the extreme sides of this controversy refuse reasonably to concede even the possibility of ambiguity.

From the outside at least, it looks like – as with many tenure decisions – this one could have gone either way. But that doesn’t rule out the possibility of bias against him for his ID views. It is still reasonable to ask whether Gonzalez’s support for ID contributed to the review process, and if so, did it tip the decision? The answer to the first question is clearly yes; the answer to the second is that there is some evidence that argues for yes, but it is more difficult to assess. We know from records now public that ID was considered, and the extent to which it was considered was later denied. Some at the university said it wasn’t considered at all. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* commented that “Members of his department have said they voted against tenure based on the potential of his future scholarship, but e-mail records a year before their decision showed that they had also considered his support for intelligent design as a problem in his tenure case.”<sup>35</sup> Ok, it was considered. How much? In an interview with *Nature*, Department Chair Eli Rosenberg “concedes that Gonzalez’s belief in intelligent design did come up during the tenure process. ‘I’d be a fool if I said it was not [discussed],’ he says. But, he adds, ‘intelligent design was not a major or even a big factor in this decision’.”<sup>36</sup> Ok, not much. But in private documents obtained, Rosenberg argues that support for ID demonstrates “The fact that Dr. Gonzalez does not understand what constitutes both science and a scientific theory [which] disqualifies him from serving as a science educator.”<sup>37</sup> That sounds like quite a bit.

These (and other) statements suggest that the conviction that ID is pseudoscience may have contributed in a serious way to the decision. A very interesting aspect of this particular case, is that the approach to ID taken by Gonzalez in his book involves the emphasis on intelligence being evident in the very structure of laws, not in their supernatural abridgement by deity. Unlike the other two cases above, the book is not anti-evolutionary or even necessarily “interventionist” in its view of natural processes.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, the book was enthusiastically endorsed by several internationally recognized scholars, who are also emphatic *critics* of the DI and ID.<sup>39</sup> Understandably, *Expelled* claims, along with the DI, that “The denial of tenure to Dr. Gonzalez is blatant discrimination and violates both academic freedom and free speech.”<sup>40</sup>

But there is a leaping over an important question here. Assume for purposes of argument that a repudiation of ID entered into the tenure decision, and even that it exerted a determinative influence. [The first is undeniable and the second is certainly possible if

not highly likely.<sup>41]</sup> *Would* that be a denial of academic freedom? Academic freedom does not involve the liberty to say absolutely *anything* in the name of one's discipline. Moreover, for non-tenured faculty on a probationary appointment, it doesn't even involve the freedom to research *any* topic. Each of the above cases ends up butting against the second question:

*Should ID advocates be expelled?*

After concluding that ID is being suppressed, Ben Stein asks the fascinating and absolutely essential question: "but maybe it should be suppressed?" He at least rhetorically considers the possibility – as he must, in an honest examination – that ID might be like teaching the earth is flat in a geography class or there was no Holocaust in a history class. Surely it is possible for some ideas to be so thoroughly discredited and so incompatible with academic integrity that anyone who endorses them justifiably relinquishes credibility as a competent practitioner of a discipline. And if so, is ID (or rejecting evolutionary common descent) such an idea?

Unfortunately, on just this question – the one on which the entire point of the film most crucially hangs – it remains almost completely silent. In order to assess the point, we need to know what "the idea" of ID entails, and then what some of the arguments might be that support it, and then whether such arguments are properly scientific or perhaps better dealt with in philosophy. Even the first question is left hanging. What, besides believing that an intelligent Creator made the cosmos, does ID actually stand for? Don't many on the "other side" of ID – including committed evangelical Christians – also believe this about the cosmos? Ok, is it that ID argues there are *reasonable grounds* for believing in an intelligence behind the universe? But many critics of ID accept this as well. Is it that science is unable to explain the origin of life and design is? But Gonzalez's book doesn't claim this. Is it that evolutionary common descent is false, and design explains origins of taxa? But Michael Behe – perhaps the most famous ID advocate in all the world (and not included in the film) – doesn't believe that. Ok, is it just that there are *some* things that natural law is inadequate to explain, which point to an intervening intelligence? But fine-tuning arguments for design don't rest on the inadequacy of law, rather on their wondrous endowment pointing to an *underlying* but not necessarily intervening intelligence.

If you don't know what the candidate stands for, it is not clear who deserves a vote. Or perhaps a better metaphor closer to the point of the film – if you don't know whether someone is even a citizen of the realm, it's not clear they deserve a vote. Is ID a bona fide citizen of scientific inquiry? I am not raising this to be insulting, nor am I even providing an answer. The film rightly raises the question of citizenship on its own. But it doesn't ever seem to check for a passport.

Now one important thing the film does do in this section, and does entertainingly, is ask whether we have an elected official, or even a solid majority candidate, for an explanation of life's origin. We don't. The fun of science is in wrestling with what we don't understand, and the danger in science is in pretending we understand when we

don't. So this is a welcome point for the film to drive home: we don't know. But it is not actually a relevant point to the question of what ID is and whether it should be allowed or suppressed – for several reasons.

First, it doesn't have anything to do with the actual cases of viewpoint suppression the film purports occurred. Crocker and Sternberg didn't get into trouble because they questioned a non-existent theory of life's origin. They were challenged over claims that rejected the theory of evolutionary common descent, virtually universally regarded to be the central and one of the best established ideas in modern biology. And the Gonzalez case had nothing to do either with evolution or the origin of life. In relation to the only cases the film presents, the origin of life question is a red herring. Second, the film focuses on the freedom to challenge the "Darwinism machine," and in a scene reminiscent of the old Chic tract "Big Daddy," its trailer even opens with Ben Stein getting into trouble for challenging his evolution teacher about where life came from. But the question of life's origin has nothing to do with Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection.<sup>42</sup> More red herring. Third, merely lacking an explanation of life's origin is not evidence for design. [And ID advocates are sophisticated enough to agree with this completely.] One complaint often leveled against ID is that it involves an argument from ignorance. While this criticism is over-employed,<sup>43</sup> the film's emphasis on what we don't understand about life's origin is vulnerable to this claim.<sup>44</sup> Not having a good naturalistic theory doesn't tell us that ID is a good theory, or whether it is even a scientific theory of any kind.

Fourth, the film tries to avoid the fallacy of arguing from ignorance, by another classic fallacy: the forced dichotomy. A major emphasis of the film is the illegitimate either / or featured in its own promotional materials: "Were we designed or are we simply the end result of an ancient mud puddle struck by lightning?" But having a natural explanation for life's origin wouldn't preclude being designed. Setting aside the dismissive image of the mud puddle, a proposal for "just the right lightning bolt" would be concordant with both natural law and divine endowment<sup>45</sup> Ironically, this is analogous to what the classical fine-tuning arguments propose, which Gonzalez's ideas are similar to. The "God versus lightning" dichotomy in the film is never argued for. And it may actually exclude from the design camp the film's featured expellee, Gonzales, perhaps the most scientifically productive advocate of ID in the world.

In any case, it turns out that whatever the content of design theories might be, *Expelled* does not give us tools for determining whether the theories as advocated by the exemplars in the film, are in fact intellectually bogus or legitimate. And importantly, even if they are legitimate, by what criteria would they be deemed *science*, in contrast to, say, philosophy? Or religion? These questions of how science is demarcated are fascinating, and ID proponents and critics have interesting things to say on the matter. But they aren't said in the film.

In fact, in the film, Discovery President Bruce Chapman responds to the criticism that ID is not science, but religion, by saying "This is a red herring: when people don't have an argument, they throw sand in your eyes." Leaving aside the delightfully mixed metaphor

(did the sand come off the herring?), the criticism is not a red herring. Nearly everyone familiar with the western intellectual tradition, and even most critics of ID, consents that the issue of an intelligent creator of the cosmos involves an intellectually legitimate question. But if ID is to be taught in the science classroom, the film must at least make a case, first off, that ID's answers to this question are reasonable, and second – a different question – that they are reasonable *science*, rather than philosophy or religion. The question can't be dismissed as “sand in the eyes.”

Perhaps one of the reasons that the film does not explore this crucial issue is because ID advocates themselves are conflicted about it. They claim it is strictly scientific. But they also claim "Intelligent design is just the Logos theology of John's Gospel restated in the idiom of information theory."<sup>46</sup> And the founder of the ID movement, Phillip Johnson, acknowledges "Our strategy has been to change the subject a bit so that we can get the issue of intelligent design, which really means the reality of God, before the academic world and into the schools."<sup>47</sup>

It may sound like I'm asking for far too much in a popular documentary. But even just raising some of these questions in a serious way would convey the depth of these issues and a sense that the goal of the film is to get people to follow reason rather than the trumpet. Without really engaging the issues of merit, the movie ends up being a stirring story of David and Goliath<sup>48</sup> – the underdog upstart versus the powerful giant. But beyond appealing to our inclination to root for the little guy, it doesn't help us understand what the little guy's *claim* to the land really is. The majority certainly isn't always the only voice worth listening to; but neither does the minority deserve to be heard just by virtue of being a minority.

So in response to his own question - “does it deserve to be suppressed?” – Stein never really provides us with a justified answer. We do get a stirring tribute to those who have given their lives to protect freedom, along with a reading from the Declaration of Independence. “We hold these truths to be self-evident...” the document famously proclaims. But of course not all truths, much less all purporting to be truths, are self-evident. Some require argument. What *Expelled* lacks is exactly that.

### **Did Darwin lead to Hitler?**

Without question, *Expelled*'s single most riveting though not necessarily central claim, and the one that has turned out to be a lightning rod for contention, is the assertion that Darwin inspired the Holocaust. Strictly speaking, this question is not really germane to the film's purported emphasis on whether or not ID should be part of science. Arguing against an idea on the basis of supposedly negative social consequences is called the consequentialist fallacy. Russian Marxism, for example, wrongly rejected traditional genetic theories in favor of Lysenkoism for this very reason.

But still, the question is hugely important in its own right. On the one hand, any understanding we can muster of “horrendous evil” is crucial for making sense of the

world and for attempts to make it better. On the other hand, there is a terrible tradition of dishonoring the moral gravity and the victims of the Holocaust, and sabotaging civil conversation, by manipulatively using Nazism to vilify those one disagrees with. Every American president from JFK to George W. Bush has been equated by their critics with Hitler. This is not only unfair to them but also grossly dismissive of truly Hitlerian malice. In fact, the Holocaust has been used by critics to vilify *Expelled*. Prominent bioethicist Art Caplan calls the film a “toxic mishmash of persecution fantasies...and a very repugnant form of Holocaust denial from the monotone big mouth Ben Stein.”<sup>49</sup> Rod Rose claims, “If you believe the Holocaust was funny, you’ll love ‘Expelled,’ an anti-science, anti-intelligence propaganda bolus ejected from the mind of Ben Stein.”<sup>50</sup>

I don’t believe the Holocaust was funny, nor does the Jew, Ben Stein, nor do I believe it is acceptable to use hyperbolic claims of Holocaust denial or finding the Holocaust comical, as rhetorical devices of criticism. Like a number of others speaking to the issue, my own stake in this is personal. I am the son of a German Jewish refugee from Hitler, and I have held my father in my arms as he wept in front of the empty graves of his family, marked by tombstones that simply said “ermordet in Riga.” I do not say this to play an emotional trump card, but to plead *against* playing the ultimate emotional trump card of Holocaust shaming as seems to be the case here.

The question is whether *Expelled* has done the same thing. Let’s take a serious look. This is far too serious an issue to be settled by film clips or sound bites on one side or another.

There are several ways Darwinism (or any idea) could have contributed to the Holocaust. The most modest way is that evolutionary theory could have been used “merely” as a justification for what Nazi social architects wanted to do anyway. Politicians do this kind of justifying behavior all the time. So do our children! So do all of us. Or, it could actually have contributed to the thinking of some master race theorists, even if such ideas were neither advocated by Darwin himself nor employed by all Nazi thinkers. The historical record amply and indisputably confirms the fact that references to Darwin and to ideological principles attributed to the evolutionary process were frequently employed by the intellectual architects of the Reich, at the very least in this way. That Darwin was used (or abused) in Holocaust thinking seems uncontested.

But it is also not necessarily very interesting. Darwin has been used in this way for many other social movements very different from fascist eugenics: e.g., racial egalitarianism, feminism, anti-feminism, Marxism, and free enterprise capitalism. Big ideas can be used, or misused, for all manner of big causes, and Darwinism – like the Bible – has been claimed to justify or inspire many. In fact, the Bible and the Christian tradition themselves were used to justify the anti-Semitism of the Holocaust. Martin Luther’s fierce denunciation of Jews (“everyone would gladly be rid of them,” “we are at fault in not slaying them”)<sup>51</sup> was frequently referred to by Hitler and other influential anti-Semites. Luther was lauded as the “greatest anti-Semite of his time,” and the infamous Kristallnacht on the night of November 9/10, when my own grandfather was taken to a concentration camp, was celebrated with the applauding observation that “on Luther’s

birthday, the synagogues are burning in Germany.”<sup>52</sup> Not just Luther, but Jesus gets in the story too. Hitler personally claimed

My feelings as a Christian point me to my Lord and Savior as a fighter... How terrific was His fight for the world against the Jewish poison. Today, after two thousand years, with deepest emotion I recognize more profoundly than ever before, the fact that it was for this that He had to shed His blood upon the Cross.<sup>53</sup>

These words stun me, as they should any follower of Christ. I believe they betray a monstrous distortion of the life and message of Jesus. [And there is considerable evidence that Hitler didn't believe them anyway, but merely used them to manipulate the religious emotions of others.] Either way though, the point is that they *did* successfully manipulate Jew hatred. The question we should ask – regarding Christian or evolutionary ideas – is did right understanding of such ideas reasonably *lead* to Nazi racism?

If so, there are two ways this could occur, and *Expelled* features advocates of each interpretation of Darwin's influence. The strongest and most pernicious way would be for Darwinism to “lead” to Hitler by advancing ideas that logically entail it. When historian and ID advocate Richard Weikart – author of *From Darwin to Hitler* - is asked in the film, “Was Hitler insane?”, he answers that he was not insane but just took an idea to its logical conclusion. I am not a clinically trained mental health professional (and neither is Weikart). But if a man who orchestrates the mass murder of millions as a life ambition, who endorses not just violence but terror as a preferred means of social control, who has episodic fits of rage, depression, and schizophrenia, who utterly fails to develop adult friendships or attachments, who murders or drives to suicide his two primary erotic partners, and who does all this with the confidence that he is the greatest German who has ever lived and the divinely appointed, infallible Savior for the next millennium – if that is sane, I'll take the blue pill.

Of course Hitler may well have been gravely mentally ill (as many serious studies of his personality conclude), and yet still have been clever enough to see the logical entailments of a Darwinian worldview that Weikart argues are there. The problem with this is that many of the most important aspects of the Hitlerian program have nothing at all to do with Darwin (such as Germanic superiority, Jewish vileness, a racial view of human history). And those ideas that are attributed to Darwin (such as natural selection makes might right in social policy) were actually not advocated but repudiated by Darwin and his immediate colleagues. Nor have ensuing generations of self-professed Darwinians and modern evolutionary biologists been led to conclusions that are remotely similar. Clearly the horrors of Nazism cannot be inevitable outcomes or logical extensions of Darwinian theory.

So another option is that Darwinism did not “lead” to Hitler – the road to the Holocaust is paved with something else – but perhaps it provided some of the necessary gas to get there. Movie producer Ben Stein appears to endorse this option, saying “Darwinism does not lead inevitably to Hitler” but it may have “inspired” such ideas. In his film interview David Berlinski makes this same distinction with the very emphatic claim that for the atrocities of the Reich “Darwin was not a sufficient idea but a necessary one.”



Ok, so the movie claims that Darwin was “necessary”- not the whole recipe but a crucial ingredient in the stew, or golden spike in the tracks – and without it we never could have had the evils of the final solution. But there are also serious inadequacies with this seemingly more modest assertion. For one thing, there have been many programs of racial extermination – before and after Darwin – that made no appeal to evolution. So the idea isn’t necessary to such evils. And looking specifically at the Holocaust, there are important factual problems with the claim even when applied just to this phenomenon.

Problem one. The film quotes an extended and seemingly damning passage from Darwin on the effects of bad breeding. ‘...No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man. Hardly anyone is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed.’ If anything seems like a “necessary” idea to German master race theory, it surely is this. But just a minute. Actually, the influence of breeding is not Darwin’s idea at all – he is merely pointing out what we have known for literally thousands of years since humans domesticated animals. And most importantly, Darwin himself emphatically *disavows* any such program for humans. The quote given in the movie completely excises a large section and a crucial qualifier in the middle of passage – “excepting in the case of man himself”. And it entirely leaves off Darwin’s conclusion: we cannot restrain our sympathy “without deterioration in the noblest part of our nature” and if “we neglect the weak and helpless, it could only be for contingent benefit with an overwhelming present evil.”<sup>54</sup> Darwin explicitly asserted that refusing to help, let alone destroying, the needy and the infirmed is both contrary to our nature and morally repugnant. The very opposite of Hitler and sadly, the opposite of the views ascribed to him by *Expelled*.

Problem two. The film claims that Darwinism involves a “deprivileging of human life,” which was instrumental to the Holocaust. There is absolutely no question that Darwinism, when wedded to atheism, can and for some does lead to this devaluing, and many Darwinians not only recognize but also overtly endorse this.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, many prominent Darwinists, including Richard Dawkins himself, repudiate this and argue that Darwinian theory actually helps illuminate what is most distinctive and precious in humanity. We are capable of “nurturing pure, disinterested altruism -- something that has no place in nature something that has never existed before in the whole history of the world...We, alone on earth, can rebel against the tyranny of the selfish replicators.”<sup>56</sup> And of course for a Christian who accepts evolution, there is no necessary devaluation at all. Humans are made in the image of God, by virtue of divine decree and special relationship to the Creator, whether the mode of creation was by primary or secondary, supernatural or natural, causes.

But for purposes of argument, what if Darwin does lead to devaluation, at least for some thinkers? Contrary to what the film claims and what it might seem on the face of things, it is actually not the deprivileging or devaluing of human life that was necessary to fuel the Holocaust fires. Rather, it is the *selective* deprivileging and devaluing of *some* lives. It is not that humans are claimed to be mere animals with no value, terrible though this would be. It is that some humans are super valuable – *Übermenschen* – and others are

subhuman, toxic pollutants. This is the essence of monstrous notions of “race hygiene” and, in fact, is the core of all genocidal attempts to eliminate groups of people who are viewed as evil or inferior. People are treated inhumanely, when they are viewed as distinctively inhuman or somehow essentially different than ourselves.

This has nothing intrinsically to do with Darwin. It is a tragically archetypal human problem embodied in the self-deluded profession of the Pharisee, “I thank you, Lord, that you have not made me like that other man.” And the modern versions of this sentiment, so destructively tied to racism, are themselves pre-Darwinian. The monumental race based interpretation of human history that inspired all future versions - *On the Inequality of Human Races* – was written by the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Frenchman, Arthur de Gobineau, before Darwin ever published anything about evolution.

Problem three. Many of the most prominent advocates of the above ideas knew little about Darwin, or actually repudiated him. So how could Darwinism be necessary for the Holocaust? Gobineau was skeptical of evolution, famously quipping “I’m not sure if humans came from apes, but we’re certainly heading in that direction.” Houston Chamberlain, the biologist whose massively influential racial meta-narrative modified Gobineau’s ideas into hatred of Jews and elevation of Germans, rejected Darwin outright. In his magnum opus of race, *Foundations of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*,<sup>57</sup> he passionately pleaded for Germans to recognize that the entire “moral and intellectual history of Europe” was a dramatic struggle between the contaminating chaos created by Jews and half-breeds, and the great attainments of civilization created by the masterful Germanic spirit. He thought Darwinism was part of the problem, not cure, and emphatically decried “the evolution mania and the pseudo-scientific dogmatism of our century” and “the frenzy produced by the dogma of evolution, which has led to such confusion of thought in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.” Speaking of the “powerful influence” exercised by “a manifestly unsound system like that of Darwin” the following could almost have come from *Expelled*:

And so we have seen the idea of evolution develop itself till it spread from biology and geology to all spheres of thought and investigation, and, intoxicated by its success, exercised such a tyranny that any one who did not swear by it was to be looked upon as a simpleton.<sup>58</sup>

An intellectual freedom fighter! And Chamberlain did not stop with critiquing the excesses of Darwinism. He advocated a wholesale rejection of scientific materialism (sharing this goal, but surely not others, with the agenda of the DI, which “seeks nothing less than the overthrow of materialism and its cultural legacies”<sup>59</sup>). For his doctoral work he argued that the major mechanistic theories of the day could not explain how water could flow so high up trees from their roots, and postulated a non-material “vital force.” It turns out that plant water relations was an area of emphasis in my own doctoral work as well, and Chamberlain was entirely correct to reject existing mechanistic theories as being inadequate. But he was wrong to conclude that because we couldn’t explain it then, we needed a special non-material cause. We have since discovered a fascinating explanation for the “ascent of sap.” This points out the danger of arguing for special forces on the basis of gaps in present understanding. In any case, it turns out that Chamberlain was never awarded his doctorate. *Expelled?*

Not really, and he was certainly not expelled from social influence. Chamberlain arguably became one of the most expansive master-race theorists in Germany, if not all history. In addition to repudiating Darwinism and rejecting scientific materialism, his views were anchored in a spiritual, explicitly Christocentric understanding of history. “The birth of Jesus Christ is the most important date in the whole history of mankind... ’history’ in the real sense of the term only begins with the birth of Christ... non-Christian peoples have no true history, but merely annals.” For Chamberlain, Jews were the resistors of historical progress. Germans were the intellectual, moral, and even biological heirs of divine destiny. (Thus, “Christ was no Jew” and there was “not a drop of genuinely Jewish blood in his veins.”)

Chamberlain’s thinking does not appear to involve mere religious posturing but genuine conviction: “having once seen Jesus Christ — even if it be with half-veiled eyes — we cannot forget Him...[nothing]can dispel the vision of the Man of Sorrow when once it has been seen.” His book was widely discussed throughout Germany, being required reading in civic life. Early in his political career, Hitler visited the nationally prominent ageing anti-Semite several times in his family home. After one such visit, Chamberlain wrote “Most respected and dear Hitler...That Germany, in the hour of her greatest need, brings forth a Hitler is proof of her vitality...May God protect you!”<sup>60</sup>

Given this gripping story, and others, it is not difficult to see how some make the case that it is Christianity that led to or at least inspired the Holocaust. And not just Christianity, but a Darwin-rejecting, special causes-promoting, transcendental interpretation of history not unlike some forms of contemporary anti-evolutionism. In *Fighting Words: Origins of Religious Violence*, religion scholar Hector Avalos concludes that “Nazi racism is a synthesis of modern pseudoscience and biblical concepts of ethnocentrism and genealogical purity...In this regard, Nazi ideology is similar to creationist ideology...”<sup>61</sup>In a recent lecture responding to *Expelled*, Avalos claimed “Hitler was a creationist who used biblical and theological rationales in his policies.”<sup>62</sup>

So which is it – Hitler was a Darwinist, or Hitler was a creationist?

And here’s a final, fascinating twist to this story: Hector Avalos is the atheist professor at Iowa State who coauthored and spearheaded the petition against ID after the publication of Gonzalez’s book.

What a densely tangled web. Are Avalos’s conclusions suspect because of his stringently anti-religious commitments? If so, we’d have to apply the same logic to questioning the conclusions of Weikart and *Expelled*. But such criticisms entail the genetic fallacy – criticizing an idea on the basis of its origin. No, Avalos’s and *Expelled*’s assertions stand or fall on the merits of evidence, and they by no means exclude each other, or other proposals. It appears both conclusions entail a kernel of truth surrounded by a nutrient endosperm of over-simplification.

Both Darwin and the Bible were seized upon by anti-Jewish zealots in search of a legitimating ideology. Hatred is notoriously indiscriminate in what it cobbles together to justify itself. Hitler, in particular, evidenced little regard for learning and – as the historical sources cited by recent defenders and critics of *Expelled* acknowledge – he extracted whatever was useful to support his preconceptions, from widely ranging popular, crude sources.<sup>63</sup> In the case of Darwinian and Christian tradition though, there really exist disturbing themes that were (and are) amenable to misuse. However the fundamental ideas of the Holocaust were not just absent from, but contrary to the founders of each tradition. This would seem to represent something considerably weaker than being “necessary for,” but rather involves being “amenable to” distortion and employment by Nazism.

In the current public controversy raised by *Expelled*, many of those most prominently linking Darwin to Hitler are Christian anti-Darwinians. Many of those most prominently defending Darwin and blaming Christianity are evolutionary atheists.<sup>64</sup> Surprise, surprise – each blaming the other. Ironically, it is precisely this out-group blame casting, the impulse to find a moral scapegoat for life gone awry<sup>65</sup> that, if anything, could be identified as the ultimate cause of the Holocaust. This is not to say that great evil does not have ascribable proximate causes, and that ideas, individuals, and societies cannot be assigned responsibility. But ought not the task of moral assessment – even at the historical level - begin with ourselves and our own traditions?

In the view of many, a film that employs case studies of the sufferings endured by four Christians, who support an American anti-Darwin movement made up almost entirely of Christians, the ideas of which are represented in the movie by interviews with sympathizers who are nearly all Christians – a work that does this by employing the murder of six million Jews in a criticism of these Christians’ enemy is – at best – rhetorically inastute and gravely insensitive.<sup>66</sup> In response to these issues, the Anti-Defamation League issued a formal statement about the film:

The film *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed* misappropriates the Holocaust and its imagery as a part of its political effort to discredit the scientific community which rejects so-called intelligent design theory. Hitler did not need Darwin to devise his heinous plan to exterminate the Jewish people and Darwin and evolutionary theory cannot explain Hitler's genocidal madness. Using the Holocaust in order to tarnish those who promote the theory of evolution is outrageous and trivializes the complex factors that led to the mass extermination of European Jewry.<sup>67</sup>

Of course mining for critical quotes doesn’t validate a criticism, and the debate over Darwin and Hitler rages with vigor and virulence in the wake of *Expelled*.<sup>68</sup> Polemicists notwithstanding, did *Expelled* mistreat the issue of the Holocaust itself? Sadly, even if there were merit to the Darwin → Hitler claim, the answer would still be yes. The immensely complicated intellectual topic was over-simplified, and the gravely important moral issue was rendered by the film with painfully inadequate nuance and dignity. Moreover, the DI makes this worse rather than better by claiming, in response to vitriolic reviews that emphasize this feature of the movie, that “Actually the discussion of the influence of Darwinism on the Nazis in *Expelled* lasts only about ten minutes...”<sup>69</sup>.

“Only” 10 minutes on the Holocaust? First off, when it comes to the commandeering gravitas of the Holocaust, there is no such thing as “only” a few minutes of emphasis. The images rightly conscript attention and leave their indelible stamp on the film and on the viewer. Second, what does it say about respect for one of the gravest moral catastrophes of history, to spend only a few minutes making a complicated, serious, and highly controversial claim about its cause?

Regrettably, it doesn't stop just there. There have been ugly, destructive personal castigations of Stein himself as being a self-loathing Jewish anti-Semite, or as having committed a “blood libel on Western Civilization.”<sup>70</sup> This is awful, and it could even be seen as playing the emotional trump card of racism that Stein is being accused of himself. Ben Stein does not condone Jew hatred any more than Darwin inspired it. The infinite regress of moral accusation can be broken by recognizing that not all who mishandle the topic of racism, endorse it. Yet having said this, things are not helped by Stein's response to concerns that the topic was mishandled, which he begins with the line: “Let's make this short and sweet.”<sup>71</sup> Short and sweet on setting right an offense over how the Holocaust was treated, perpetuates if not confirms the perceptions that need to be corrected. Stein then deals with Darwin, imperialism, and the Holocaust - in 800 words. And he concludes by suggesting, with no discussion of the science at all, that maybe we would be better off without Darwinism in preference to a new theory. Why? “We are just pitiful humans. Life is unimaginably complex. We are still trying to figure it out. We need every bit of input we can get. Let's be humble about what we know and what we don't know, and maybe in time, some answers will come.”<sup>72</sup> Oh, Ben – yes! But physician, heal thyself. Why could you not have followed this wise counsel in the treatment of the “unimaginably complex” issue of the Holocaust, not to mention the grand questions of science and religious belief currently in need of a healing touch.

## V. Concluding Comments: Walls Torn Down?

*“Something there is that doesn't love a wall, That wants it down!”*

In his poem, “Mending Wall,” Robert Frost laments a wall and wants it down, yearning for “gaps even two can pass abreast.” *Expelled* also wants a wall down. The powerful image of the Berlin Wall along with grim, totalitarian guards to keep it secure, is used prominently in the film to decry the barriers that exclude those who question the Darwinian regime. “The day Darwinism and Intelligent Design can be fairly discussed without fear of reprisal represents the removal of a barrier even greater than the Berlin Wall. When future intellectual historians describe the key events that led to the fall of “Darwin's Wall,” Ben Stein's *Expelled* will top the list.”<sup>73</sup>

In the biblical tradition, future generations looking back on Israel's history viewed Joshua at the top of the list in charging against the wall that fell at the trumpet blast. Perhaps Ben Stein is ID's Joshua. But as trumpets are lifted to rally against the wall, it would be good to make sure it is not the case that “all reason is in the trumpet.” I would like to close with two questions.

First, exactly why is it that this wall should come down? In his elegant poem, Frost also quotes the proverb, “Good fences make good neighbors.” It could be that some walls have sound reasons for being left up. At face value this just seems like a dumb question, to which the seemingly obvious response is “Not this wall!” *Expelled’s* rationale for wanting it down is made very clear: “Our movie is about freedom — the freedom to discuss alternative views of how life began on our planet, the freedom to ask reasonable questions about the adequacy of Darwin’s theory, and the freedom to challenge an entrenched establishment.”<sup>74</sup>

But walls don’t just present barriers to freedom; sometimes walls are necessary to protect freedom. All communities, including academic communities and their disciplines, stay healthy – and free - by balancing liberties and constraints, and also by distinguishing between those who have and do not have appropriate credentials for membership. In choosing the Berlin wall as the image, the film settled this question without actually asking it. Tear it down! Yet what if we considered another wall – the one that Israel has built, or the one proposed at the Mexican border of the US?<sup>75</sup> These walls are much more complicated. They are believed to be monstrous abridgements of freedom by those who are kept out, but are believed by those who endorse them, to be justified and necessary means of protecting liberty.

*Expelled* doesn’t ever ask what kind of wall we’re dealing with. By this I don’t mean to suggest, as some do, that ID advocates or Darwin deniers are necessarily intellectual terrorists needing to be walled out. A gentler though still contentious image might involve that of the illegal resident. Are those who reject common descent (for example), in a sense “illegal residents” in biology departments in a way analogous to a geocentrist in an astronomy department or a young earther in a geology department? While this sounds insulting, Stein himself explicitly acknowledges that the question of legitimate exclusion is necessary to ask. However it isn’t ever answered.

In the wake of numerous strong criticisms of the film on this very point, the DI has claimed that “*Expelled* is not a film about intelligent design, rather it's about academic freedom.”<sup>76</sup> However this distinction doesn’t work: you can’t address one without the other. Nobody thinks academic freedom involves completely open borders – the right to teach *anything* in the classroom. There are millions of Americans, including Ph.D.’s, also including some of my very dearest friends, who believe the earth is 10,000 or less years old. Is *Expelled: The Sequel* going to be about tearing down academic freedom’s Radiometric Wall and getting young earth views into university origins classes?<sup>77</sup> *Expelled III* is going to take on unfair exclusion of geocentrism?

Of course this is unlikely, and for good reason. In spite of what some anti-ID polemicists say, there is a continuum of rational justification from geocentrism to young earthism to those who reject common descent to the proposal of intelligent agency. And our culture has navigated a nuanced solution to questions of freedom and constraint along this continuum. Freedom of speech applies to the whole range, and one can even have a governmentally-approved, tax exempt organization promoting any of these views. But it

is unlikely that a university with geocentrism as a core curricular commitment would be accredited. On the other hand, there are fully accredited universities that have young earthism as a central curricular distinctive.<sup>78</sup> In fact, you cannot teach at such institutions in any capacity, if you do not affirm this distinctive. And there are even more academic institutions that are committed to the special creation of Adam without common descent. In these institutions as well, you cannot teach in any department without sharing this view. And of course there are vastly more institutions where both an old earth and common descent are viewed as constituting normative paradigms, indeed “facts” of science. You are going to be in trouble if you reject these views although, interestingly, there are those who do oppose them in many departments.

So completely apart from the question of which views are sufficiently reasonable to warrant the protections of academic freedom – which *Expelled* does not address – the film’s agenda leaves us with another unanswered question. How should the above situation actually be changed? Baylor - a private, religiously-affiliated university featured in the film – is portrayed as offending academic freedom by failing to allow a full range of positions, including ID and rejection of common descent. Presumably this offense should be corrected. But Biola - another private, religiously-affiliated university featured in the film – endorses, indeed *requires*, acceptance of design and rejection of common descent.<sup>79</sup> Presumably this does not need to be changed? That seems to involve a grievously incoherent double standard, but it is not just this that begs resolution. Another fascinating question is, what if *Expelled’s* general agenda prevails, and “academic freedom” is officially construed to require that legitimate institutions of higher education be open to all sides of these issues –including and perhaps especially hiring individuals who espouse the entire range of positions? This sword cuts both ways, and would raise serious problems for the accreditation and receipt of federal funding by schools serving the constituency most friendly to ID.<sup>80</sup>

I’m confused. [I’m sure this is evident – and it may be the only factual claim on which polemical supporters and critics of *Expelled* are likely to agree!] But the film’s argument for supporting ID in the name of academic freedom, to the meager extent it exists, just seems incoherent. And yet, the conflation of science with scientism (the view that only science is knowledge), the exaggerated assertions of what science can presently explain coupled with claims that it disproves God, and the American academy’s hostility toward biblical faith in particular – all of which relate to the film’s theme - are real and worthy of concern. However, an incoherent assessment of a worthy concern is exactly “the trumpet” we should be very loathe to have call us to action.

This raises the second question about the trumpet *Expelled* is sounding, and by far the most important question that can be asked about the film. Will *Expelled*, and the larger movement it represents, tear down or build up the cultural walls that so destructively inhibit pursuit of truth in general and, in particular, the credible expression of what Christians believe to be God’s truth? Sadly, it seems almost certain that walls will be, indeed are being, raised.

For one thing, the style of the film – which has been widely compared to the style of a Michael Moore documentary (high praise for many) – is at best ill-suited to the case for an intelligent Designer that most IDers want to see sympathetically considered, and is at worst open to charges of manipulation and straight out lack of integrity. Some aspects of this are easily recognized (and may be criticized or appreciated) by anyone who sees the movie. The exclusion of median points of view, the kind of questioning and editing and even lighting of interviews to make conversants look either reasonable or silly,<sup>81</sup> the emotional “guilt-by-association” technique of continually connecting the views you want to critique, to old footage of communists, Nazis, the Berlin wall, death campus...

But some things involved in this approach will not be apparent to the audience. The film begins and ends with Stein delivering a lecture on academic freedom at Pepperdine University to an applauding lecture hall – of hired or invited stand-ins. And the movie’s interviews with those who do not support ID were obtained by what seems to involve a serious omission if not misrepresentation of the film’s focus. They were told that the movie was titled “*Crossroads*” on the “intersections of science and religion.” But of course the movie is titled “*Expelled*,” and it involves not the intersection, but the abject exclusion of those who believe in design, from discussing the worldview conflict over Darwinian science. In response to claims of misrepresentation, the producers asserted: “just to set the record straight, the film was titled *Expelled* only after we began to see the disturbing pattern and shocking information that the footage reveals!”<sup>82</sup> Yes, documentaries, like any good journalism or research, may change emphasis in response to following the evidence where it leads and encountering unanticipated information.

But there are two problems with this claim on behalf of *Expelled*. First, Stein himself is on record as saying that when he was initially approached by the producers – of course long before interviews were conducted - “they described to me the central issue of *Expelled*, which was about Darwinism and why it has such a lock on the academic establishment when the theory has so many holes.”<sup>83</sup> Second, maybe they did have the agenda of expulsion set from the start, yet still the *name* may have been changed in response to “shocking information the footage revealed.” The problem here is that the domain for the website ([expelledthemovie.com](http://expelledthemovie.com)) was registered months before interviews were conducted or invitations – which used the title *Crossroads* – even went out.<sup>84</sup>

The *seemingly* unavoidable conclusion here is that interviewees were misled by having the film’s true focus and title concealed from them, and such concealment was itself concealed by what appear to be subsequent fabrications. On this issue, it is extremely important not to betray the Proverbial warning about deciding before fully hearing, with which this essay began, thus perpetuating the cycle of vilification I am here lamenting.<sup>85</sup> Maybe there are explanations for these things, and if so, it would be a relief, not a disappointment, to hear them. But in the extensive research of well over a hundred documents studied for this review, I have not been able to find any responses to the above factual claims.<sup>86</sup> In the most recent public response to these concerns, David Berlinski acknowledges he “knew precisely what the film proposed to do” (something nobody doubts), and then simply asserts: “So did they.”<sup>87</sup> That is not an answer, nor is pointing out, as both he and Chuck Colson have, that “Each of them signed a release...”<sup>88</sup> The



“tough it out, you signed a release” response is not very comforting to those of us who are hoping for evidence of good faith. After all, participants in the movie *Borak* also signed a release.<sup>89</sup> In a film about truth and its open discussion in our culture, it would seem important to provide reassurance of having been truthful.

Finally, in addition to the style and the practices of the film, its very claims are certain to raise, not lower, walls. I don't just mean, or even mean at all, the strong advocacy of ID's controversial ideas. And I don't even mean the fact that moderate positions are not considered, or important arguments are assumed but not made, or even that factual information is left out or misrepresented. But I mean very specifically the bold assertion made by the film – and the legions of statements that have been made to support it – that the ideas and institutions and individuals associated with the “Darwinism Machine” are not just thinking wrongly, they're *doing wrong*. They're not just errant, but bad.

Of course there are times when intellectual and moral repudiation need to be wedded. But those weddings ought to benefit from the wisdom of more premarital counseling than *Expelled* seems to have received. And even when such marriages are entered into cautiously and advisedly, we know that not everyone will celebrate. So walls will be raised - on both sides – that typically escalate from mistrust, to vile accusation, to personal loathing. For example, this positive movie review linked at DI condemns Darwinists' hatred, but may just reveal the author's own: “The object of hatred by the automatons of hoary Darwinism are not just honest and open minded thinkers...but also hated is the very idea of a Blessed Creator... These haters have no compunction about destroying careers simply for the sake of intellectual terrorism.”<sup>90</sup>

Unarguably, the ID crowd has no monopoly on the rhetoric of loathing and abhorrence. In fact, ever looking for a voice on this issue that will “speak the truth in love” - my own reading of scores of reviews, commentaries, and responses suggests that the rhetoric of *Expelled*'s critics is more often wanting in love,<sup>91</sup> *Expelled*'s advocates more often wanting in truth.

This does not bode well for walls being overcome. Even Bill Dembski, who predicts they'll be a tumblin' down, nevertheless acknowledges that people either love or hate the movie based on what they already think.<sup>92</sup> What kind of walls to truth are overcome by a process that doesn't open but rather hardens and polarizes people in what they already think? Primarily the kind of walls that are vulnerable to the trumpet blast, and that can be overcome not by the gracious invitation of reason but by force of law. Indeed, as *Expelled* was in production, the DI was building a website promoting legislation that would give ID and anti-evolutionism statutory access to the classroom.<sup>93</sup>

What do we gain if we get enough people who already believe in God to pass a law that makes it illegal to exclude speaking of a designer in the science classroom – and in so doing - perhaps compromise science, and certainly make it much less likely that those who do not believe, will consider listening even outside the classroom? In an extended and thoughtful response to the film by Hugh Ross of the prominent Christian apologetics

organization Reasons to Believe (themselves no friends of universal common descent or naturalistic theories of life's origin), they affirm that the

approach of seeking the right to be heard avoids denigrating the scientific enterprise, either its individuals or institutions...we have encountered no significant evidence of censorship, blackballing, or disrespect. [and] have witnessed an increasing openness on the part of unbelieving scientists to offer their honest and respectful critique. Our main concern about *Expelled* is that it paints a distorted picture. It certainly doesn't match our experience. Sadly, it may do more to alienate than to engage the scientific community, and that can only harm our mission.<sup>94</sup>

While both are important, earning the "right to be heard," as Ross emphasizes, is surely not the same as demanding the "right to speak," as *Expelled* focuses on. *Expelled* never ends up convincingly demonstrating that the latter is in any real jeopardy, but sadly, it does much to jeopardize the former. Contrary to the furious responses many of my friends in biology have had and the enthusiastic responses many of my evangelical friends have had to the film – I think Ross's assessment is best: sadly. Sadly, the film contributes to an approach that has raised rather than lowered walls between Christians and the surrounding culture. Sadly, it raises the already growing walls of suspicion about any scholarly attempts to explore the relationship between science and faith. Sadly, it raises walls that don't protect but constrain the spiritual growth of our students, if they are driven to believe they must choose between God and evolution. And most sadly, it is raising all these walls unnecessarily, along a border that is never demonstrated to have been accurately surveyed, much less to be in need of defending.

"Why do walls make good neighbors? Isn't it  
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.  
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know  
What I was walling in or walling out,  
And to whom I was like to give offence.

- Robert Frost, "Mending Wall." <sup>95</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, "Onward Christian Soldiers: The Holy War on Science" by philosopher Robert Todd Carroll, author of *The Sceptics Dictionary*. ([www.skeptdic.com](http://www.skeptdic.com))

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *Expelled Exposed*, the website dedicated to critiquing the film by the National Center for Science Education (<http://www.expelledexposed.com>).

<sup>3</sup> Bruce Walker's review of the film in *American Thinker*. April 20, 2008. ([http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2008/04/post\\_83.html](http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2008/04/post_83.html)). This and much of the other support for the film and its claims cited in this essay, can be accessed by direct links from the movie's website (<http://www.expelledthemovie.com/>) and/or the website of the Discovery Institute (<http://www.discovery.org/expelled/>)

<sup>4</sup> Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression*. 1974. Harvest Books. p269.

<sup>5</sup> Tom Bethell's review of *Expelled* in *The American Spectator*, February 2008. ([http://www.spectator.org/dsp\\_article.asp?art\\_id=12759](http://www.spectator.org/dsp_article.asp?art_id=12759)) Available by link from Discovery.

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<sup>6</sup> “What Happened to Freedom of Speech.” *Expelled* press release, (<http://www.prnewswire.com/cgi-bin/stories.pl?ACCT=104&STORY=/www/story/08-22-2007/0004649742&EDATE=>)

<sup>7</sup> William Provine, “Evolution: Free will and punishment and meaning in life.” Second Annual Darwin Day Celebration, University of Tennessee Knoxville. February 12, 1998. (<http://eeb.bio.utk.edu/darwin/Archives/1998ProvineAbstract.htm>)

<sup>8</sup> Richard Dawkins, “Lying for Jesus?” (<http://richarddawkins.net/article.2394.Lying-for-Jesus.Richard-Dawkins>). For more comment on the issue of misrepresentation, see the last section of this essay.

<sup>9</sup> *Expelled* press release, *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Specifically, Francis Collins, head of Human Genome Project and author of *The Language of God*; Cambridge paleontologist Simon Conway Morris, author of *Life’s Destiny*; Ken Miller, author of the best-selling *Finding Darwin’s God*.

<sup>11</sup> Bethell’s American Spectator review, linked from Discovery.

([http://www.spectator.org/dsp\\_article.asp?art\\_id=12759](http://www.spectator.org/dsp_article.asp?art_id=12759))

<sup>12</sup> Bruce Chapman, “An intelligent discussion about life.” *The Seattle Times*, April 17, 2008. Quote is from a footnoted version at: <http://www.discovery.org/a/4522>

<sup>13</sup> William Dembski, “The difference ‘Expelled’ will make.” Baptist Press, April 18, 2008. Available by link from Discovery, and at

<http://www.bpnews.net/BPFirstPerson.asp?ID=27872>

<sup>14</sup> “Academic Freedom Expelled from Baylor University.” Discovery Institute, Evolution News & Views.

[http://www.evolutionnews.org/2007/09/academic\\_freedom\\_expelled\\_from.html](http://www.evolutionnews.org/2007/09/academic_freedom_expelled_from.html)

<sup>15</sup> Shankar Vedantam, “Eden and Evolution.” *Washington Post*. February 5, 2006.

(<http://www.discovery.org/a/3516>). And linked from the Discovery Institute: Markus Gunther, “Did Humans Descend from Monkeys?” *Mannheimer Morgen*. May 10, 2006.

<http://www.discovery.org/a/3516>

<sup>16</sup> Gunther article, above.

<sup>17</sup> Several articles on the Crocker incident report that it involved student complaints. While this claim entails confidential personnel information, there are publicly accessible criticisms of her teaching at <http://www.ratemyprofessors.com> However, anyone can post to these sites. Even assuming the vitriolic complaints about her including religious views in the science classroom are authentic posts from enrolled students, it would be interesting to examine the complimentary problem of atheistic faculty using the science classroom to criticize students’ religious beliefs.

<sup>18</sup> Washington Post article, above.

<sup>19</sup> Stephen C. Meyer. 2004. “The origin of biological information and the higher taxonomic categories.” *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington*. 117(2): 213-239.

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.ncseweb.org/resources/news/2004/ZZ/608\\_bsw\\_repudiates\\_meyer\\_9\\_7\\_2004.asp](http://www.ncseweb.org/resources/news/2004/ZZ/608_bsw_repudiates_meyer_9_7_2004.asp) See also the AAAS statement on “Intelligent Design and Peer Review.”

[http://www.aaas.org/spp/dser/03\\_Areas/evolution/issues/peerreview.shtml](http://www.aaas.org/spp/dser/03_Areas/evolution/issues/peerreview.shtml)

<sup>21</sup> The Discovery Institute’s selective and interpreted citations of such communications can be found on their website, which also provides links to extensive original documentation. As far as I know, no one has contested the authenticity of these

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attributions.

[http://www.evolutionnews.org/2006/12/the\\_house\\_government\\_reform\\_su.html](http://www.evolutionnews.org/2006/12/the_house_government_reform_su.html)

<sup>22</sup> Geoff Brumfiel. 2007. "Darwin skeptic says views cost tenure." *Nature*. 447:364.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*. See also Richard Monastersky, "Intelligent Design vs. Tenure." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 1, 2007. <http://chronicle.com/weekly/v53/i39/39a00901.htm>.

"Intelligent Design and Tenure: Not in the Stars." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 7, 2008. <http://chronicle.com/news/article/3900/intelligent-design-and-tenure-not-in-the-stars>

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.evolutionnews.org/2007/12/secret\\_isu\\_faculty\\_emails\\_expr.html](http://www.evolutionnews.org/2007/12/secret_isu_faculty_emails_expr.html)

<sup>26</sup> "Intelligent Design Scientist Denied Tenure Despite Exceeding Standard Requirements" May 14, 2007.

<http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=4051&program=DI%20Main%20Page%20-%20News&callingPage=discoMainPage>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.expelledexposed.com/index.php/the-truth/gonzalez>

<sup>28</sup> also Richard Monastersky, "Intelligent Design vs. Tenure." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 1, 2007. <http://chronicle.com/weekly/v53/i39/39a00901.htm>.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>30</sup> "The Truth about Research Grants, Gonzalez, and ISU"

[http://www.evolutionnews.org/2007/06/the\\_truth\\_about\\_research\\_grant.html](http://www.evolutionnews.org/2007/06/the_truth_about_research_grant.html)

<sup>31</sup> Monastersky, *ibid*.

<sup>32</sup>

[http://www.ncseweb.org/resources/news/2008/ZZ/868\\_emexpelledem\\_flunks\\_the\\_t\\_4\\_1\\_5\\_2008.asp](http://www.ncseweb.org/resources/news/2008/ZZ/868_emexpelledem_flunks_the_t_4_1_5_2008.asp)

<sup>33</sup> NCSE, Expelled Exposed. <http://www.expelledexposed.com/index.php/the-truth/gonzalez>

<sup>34</sup> Intelligent Design Scientist Denied Tenure Despite Exceeding Standard Requirements. Discovery Institute. May 14, 2007.

<http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&id=4051&program=DI%20Main%20Page%20-%20News&callingPage=discoMainPage>

<sup>35</sup> "Intelligent Design and Tenure: Not in the Stars" *CHE*, February 7, 2008.

<http://chronicle.com/news/article/3900/intelligent-design-and-tenure-not-in-the-stars>

<sup>36</sup> Geoff Brumfiel. 2007. "Darwin skeptic says views cost tenure." *Nature*. 447:364.

<sup>37</sup> "Secret Emails Reveal How ISU Faculty Plotted to Deny Distinguished Astronomer Tenure" Discovery Institute.

[http://www.evolutionnews.org/2007/12/secret\\_isu\\_faculty\\_emails\\_expr.html](http://www.evolutionnews.org/2007/12/secret_isu_faculty_emails_expr.html)

<sup>38</sup> However, in his support of the Discovery Institute, Gonzalez is associated with these approaches.

<sup>39</sup> E.g., Cambridge evolutionary biologist Simon Conway Morris; Harvard Observatory astronomer and historian of science Owen Gingerich. The endorsements also include ID proponents associated with the DI. <http://www.privilegedplanet.com/endorsements.php>

<sup>40</sup> "Intelligent Design Scientist Denied Tenure Despite Exceeding Standard

Requirements" Discovery Institute, May 14, 2007. <http://www.discovery.org/a/4051>

<sup>41</sup> The strong statements in a series of emails and secret discussions make it clear that several emphatically argued against tenure on this basis. What is not clear, is whether or

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not such arguments carry the day, or whether could have any sway if there were not also some basis for uncertainty about future productivity.

<sup>42</sup> Natural selection requires self-replicating systems, and does not purport to explain their origin. Darwin's theory of evolution starts with the fact of life – an emphasis retained throughout all editions of the *Origin*.

<sup>43</sup> Stephen Meyer and William Dembski (interviewed in the film), and Michael Behe (not interviewed in the film) have all worked on versions of an in principle argument. These claims have been widely disputed on both logical and evidential grounds, but do not necessarily involve arguments from ignorance.

<sup>44</sup> ID advocates actually have more to say on this than was represented in the film.

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, *Fitness of the Cosmos for Life: Biochemistry and Fine-Tuning*. John Barrow, Simon Conway Morris, Stephen Freeland, Charles Harper eds. Cambridge University Press. 2008.

<sup>46</sup> In *Signs of Intelligence: Understanding Intelligent Design*. William Dembski and James Kushiner eds. 2001. Brazos Press.

<sup>47</sup> Phillip Johnson, appearing on American Family Radio, January 10, 2003. Cited in Matthew Bobrowsky. 2005. "Dealing with Disbelieving Students on Issues of Evolutionary Processes and Long Time Scales." *Astronomy Education Review*. 2005. 1(4):95-118.

<sup>48</sup> I wish to thank my valued colleague in biology, Dr. Frank Percival, for this apt observation. I heartily recommend his elegantly thoughtful and charitable reflections, with a title not coincidentally reminiscent of an earlier ASA design-related essay: "Viewing *Expelled* in a Climate of Conflict."

<sup>49</sup> Arthur Caplan. "Intelligent design film far worse than stupid: Ben Stein's so-called documentary isn't just bad, it's immoral." Commentary, MSNBC.  
<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/24239755/>

<sup>50</sup> Rod Rose. "Ben Stein's expulsion of reason." *The Lebanon Reporter*. April 22, 2008.  
[http://www.batesvilleheraldtribune.com/statenews/cnhinsall\\_story\\_113175422.html](http://www.batesvilleheraldtribune.com/statenews/cnhinsall_story_113175422.html)

<sup>51</sup> Martin Luther. *On the Jews and Their Lies*. 1543, translated by Martin Bertram, available online <http://www.humanitas-international.org/showcase/chronography/documents/luther-jews.htm>

<sup>52</sup> From the forward to Bishop Martin Sasse's compendium of anti-Semitic views, cited in *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. Daniel Jonah Goldhagen. 1997. Vintage. p111.

<sup>53</sup> Adolf Hitler, April 12, 1922. From *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler*. Oxford University Press. 1942.

<sup>54</sup> Darwin, C. R. 1882. *The Descent Of Man, And Selection In Relation To Sex*. London: John Murray. 2nd edition, fifteenth thousand. p175. Searchable version available at Complete Works of Charles Darwin Online. <http://darwin-online.org.uk/>

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, James Rachels, *Created From Animals: the Moral Implications of Darwinism*. Oxford, 1999.

<sup>56</sup> Richard Dawkins. *The Selfish Gene: 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. 2006. p201.

<sup>57</sup> Houston Stewart Chamberlain. *The Foundations of the 19th Century*, 2nd ed., published by John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1912. In the discussion that follows I will

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quote liberally from this edition, available online and fully searchable,  
www.hschamberlain.net

<sup>58</sup> lxxxviii “Introduction,” in print edition.

<sup>59</sup> Wedge Document, Discovery Institute.

[http://www.evolutionnews.org/2005/10/discovery\\_institute\\_s\\_wedge\\_document\\_how.html](http://www.evolutionnews.org/2005/10/discovery_institute_s_wedge_document_how.html)

<sup>60</sup> Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Briefe 1882-1924, un Briefwechsel mit Kaiser Wilhelm II, Vol.I (Munich: F.Bruckmann, 1928) pp124-6. Cited in *The Nazi Germany Sourcebook: An Anthology of Texts. 1933-1945*. Roderick Stackelberg and Sally Anne Winkle, eds. Routledge, 2002. p85.

<sup>61</sup> Hector Avalos. *Fighting Words: The Origins of Religious Violence*. Prometheus Books. 2005:p318.

<sup>62</sup> “Expelled wrong on Holocaust.” Thomas Grundmeier in Iowa State Daily, 4/23/08.  
<http://media.www.iowastatedaily.com/media/storage/paper818/news/2008/04/23/News/Avalos.expelled.Wrong.On.Holocaust-3341914.shtml>

<sup>63</sup> David Klinghoffer defends *Expelled* and supports his assertion that “Darwinism contributed mightily to Hitlerism” ([http://www.evolutionnews.org/2008/04/hitlers\\_debt\\_to\\_darwin.html](http://www.evolutionnews.org/2008/04/hitlers_debt_to_darwin.html)) by selectively quoting from the following reference. Whether or not the original source supports or undermines his claim may be judged from is the passage in context: “It was part of his character always to try to create the impression that he had mastered whoe areas of knowledge...Yet it seems all too probable that...Hitler had acquired his knowledge of those areas only from second- or third-hand digests...he went on extracting the elements of his world view from pseudoscientific secondary works: tracts on race theory, anti-Semitic pamphlets, treatises on the Teutons, on racial mysticism and eugenics, as well as popular treatments of Darwinism and the philosophy of history...In actual fact, knowledge meant nothing to Hitler; he was not acquainted with the pleasure or the struggle that go with its acquisition: to him it was merely useful: the ‘art of correct reading’ of which he spoke was nothing more than the hunt for formulations to borrow and authorities to cite in support of his own preconceptions.” Joachim C. Fest, *Hitler*. Harcourt, 2001, p210.

<sup>64</sup> The response of Jewish commentators – Ben Stein and David Klinghoffer notwithstanding – has been primarily critical of *Expelled’s* treatment of the Holocaust.

<sup>65</sup> See, for example, Rene Gerard. *The Scapegoat*. Johns Hopkins, 1989. Or his *Violence and the Sacred*. Johns Hopkins, 1979.

<sup>66</sup> There are countless reviews of the film that claim it was not only insensitive, but morally repugnant on this point. An earlier statement issued by the ADL on the use of the Holocaust in Christian arguments against Darwin posited “a mendacious attempt to score political points in the culture war on the backs of six million Jewish victims and others who died at the hands of the Nazis.”

[http://www.adl.org/PresRele/HolNa\\_52/4877\\_52.htm](http://www.adl.org/PresRele/HolNa_52/4877_52.htm)

<sup>67</sup> ADL Press Release, “Anti-Evolution Film Misappropriates the Holocaust”

[http://adl.org/PresRele/HolNa\\_52/5277\\_52](http://adl.org/PresRele/HolNa_52/5277_52)

<sup>68</sup> There are scores of excoriating criticisms, indignant defenses, as well as more thoughtful assessments. DI Fellow David Klinghoffer has been particularly active in the

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discussion, or perhaps better put, the volley of monologues. He begins his most recent essay in a way that illuminates the sad irony of the debate, decrying its vilifying rhetoric, by vilifying the opposition: “After the release of a controversial new documentary on evolution, public debate spiraled into the gutter. The Anti-Defamation League is making sure it stays there. It was from an obsessive Darwin-defender that I learned...” See: David Klinghoffer, "Don't Blame Darwinism for Hitler! Blame Christianity!" Jewcy.com, April 30, 2008. <http://www.discovery.org/a/5079>

<sup>69</sup> “Dawkins Outraged at Exposure of Link Between Darwinism and Nazi Ideology” Discovery Institute. [http://www.evolutionnews.org/2008/04/little\\_richard.html](http://www.evolutionnews.org/2008/04/little_richard.html)

<sup>70</sup> John Derbyshire, “A Blood Libel on Our Civilization.” National Review Online, April 28, 2008.

<http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=ZGYwMzdjOWRmNGRhOWQ4MTQyZDMxNjNhYTU1YTE5Njk=>

<sup>71</sup> “Darwinism: The Imperialism of Biology?” Ben Stein’s blog on the movie website: <http://expelledthemovie.com/blog/2007/10/31/darwinism-the-imperialism-of-biology/>

<sup>72</sup> Stein, above.

<sup>73</sup> Dembski, Baptist Press, *ibid.* Link from Discovery, and <http://www.bpnews.net/BPFirstPerson.asp?ID=27872>

<sup>74</sup> Statement by Logan Craft, Chairman and Executive Producer of Premise Media, which released *Expelled*. Cited in “Stanford Law School’s Fair Use Project to Represent Filmmakers in Lawsuit Brought by Yoko Ono”

[http://www.businesswire.com/portal/site/google/?ndmViewId=news\\_view&newsId=20080501005471&newsLang=en](http://www.businesswire.com/portal/site/google/?ndmViewId=news_view&newsId=20080501005471&newsLang=en)

<sup>75</sup> I want again to thank my colleague, Frank Percival, for his elegant brief essay, in which he raises this and other important questions. Viewing *Expelled* in a Climsate of Conflict.

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.evolutionnews.org/2008/04/httpwwwdiscoveryorgexpelled.html#more>

<sup>77</sup> ID advocate John Mark Reynolds, interviewed in the movie, is a young earth creationist, as is Discovery Institute Fellow Paul Nelson. Of course ID is not the same as young earth creationism, but whatever it is, its view of science does not entail an open rejection of YEC.

<sup>78</sup> This is not to discount the existence of pressures to revoke accreditation, which so far, have not been successful.

<sup>79</sup> The official statement of the university is the following: “The existence and nature of the creation is due to the direct miraculous power of God. The origin of the universe, the origin of life, the origin of kinds of living things, and the origin of humans cannot be explained adequately apart from reference to that intelligent exercise of power... Therefore, creation models which seek to harmonize science and the Bible should maintain at least the following: (a) God providentially directs His creation, (b) He specially intervened in at least the above-mentioned points in the creation process, and (c) God specially created Adam and Eve (Adam’s body from non-living material, and his spiritual nature immediately from God). Inadequate origin models hold that (a) God never directly intervened in creating nature and/or (b) humans share a common physical ancestry with earlier life forms.” Found at: <http://www.biola.edu/about/doctrinal-statement/>

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<sup>80</sup> Interestingly, no less an ID opponent than Michael Shermer, editor of *Skeptical Magazine*, has argued that academic freedom does not require an institution be open to all sides on these or any other issues it chooses to define its character.

<sup>81</sup> Of course some conversants did not need a lot of help from editing to make them look silly. But consider, for example, the Michael Ruse interview in which he was pushed on speculations involving the role of crystals in life's origin. Ruse is a philosopher and historian of biology. Did he really spend the majority of his interview with Stein talking about biochemical theories of life's origin, or was this a detour Stein engineered and then exploited? The regrettable thing is, while a strong critic of ID, Ruse is consistently respectful of religious believers, he strongly opposes the dismissiveness of Richard Dawkins and those of his ilk, and his own arguments against ID admirably avoid the kind of tactics to which he was subjected.

<sup>82</sup> From the official Expelled website:

<http://expelledthemovie.com/blog/2007/09/28/come-on-guys%E2%80%A6you-can-do-better-than-that/>

<sup>83</sup> "Mocked and belittled." Ben Stein interview in World Magazine. *World*. April 19, 2008, Vol. 23, No. 8. Here is the entire quote: "I was approached a couple of years ago by the producers, and they described to me the central issue of Expelled, which was about Darwinism and why it has such a lock on the academic establishment when the theory has so many holes. And why freedom of speech has been lost at so many colleges to the point where you can't question even the slightest bit of Darwinism or your colleagues will spurn you, you'll lose your job, and you'll be publicly humiliated. As they sent me books and talked to me about these things I became more enthusiastic about participating.

<http://www.worldmag.com/articles/13926>

<sup>84</sup> Of the many sources that present and discuss this information, see John Rennie and Steve Mirsky, "Six Things in Expelled That Ben Stein Doesn't Want You to Know" *Scientific American*, April 2008. <http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=six-things-ben-stein-doesnt-want-you-to-know> Or, "Questionable Interview Tactics" Expelled Exposed, <http://www.expelledexposed.com/index.php/background/interview-tactics>

<sup>85</sup> The most recent and one of the most stunning examples of both villification and judging before hearing, is John Derbyshire's condemnation of *Expelled* as "blood libel" and "creationist porn, propaganda for ignorance and obscurantism" – while fully admitting, "I haven't seen the dang thing." Derbyshire, National Review Online, ibd.

<sup>86</sup> Aside from the 7 month old statement on the Expelled website – made before the additional information came out – there does not appear to be any official engagement with the Crossroads bait/switch issue. And DI, with over 100 links on their site to the Expelled issue, has no hits for Crossroads.

<sup>87</sup> David Berlinski. "The Dang Thing: John Derbyshire and the movie he hasn't seen." National Review Online, May 05, 2008.

<http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=M2M0M2ZiOWE4YzgwNDIyOTI5NWE4NGY1NTYxNmYxNzA=&w=MA==>

<sup>88</sup> Chuck Colson, "Myths about *Expelled*." *BreakPoint Commentaries*, 4/11/2008

<http://www.breakpoint.org/listingarticle.asp?ID=7746>

<sup>89</sup> Stein has written a review of *Borat* that contains some fascinating ironies. First, he accuses the film's maker – Sacha Baron Cohen, a Jew interested in the roots of ant-



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Semitism – of being anti-Semitic in the film. Second, he criticizes Cohen for “making fun of people who have been completely kind to him. This is just infantile and narcissistic oppositional disorder. It's also rude, and it's not very funny.” In: Ben Stein, “I Smell a Borat.” *American Spectator*, 12/27/06.

[http://www.spectator.org/dsp\\_article.asp?art\\_id=10796](http://www.spectator.org/dsp_article.asp?art_id=10796)

<sup>90</sup> Bruce Walker, “Ben Stein's Expelled.” *American Thinker*, April 20, 2008.

[http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2008/04/post\\_83.html](http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2008/04/post_83.html)

<sup>91</sup> Not all strong criticisms of *Expelled* have been vitriolic or ad hominem. See Jeffrey Kluger's “Ben Stein Dukes it Out with Darwin” in *Time*, 4/10/08. While nailing the movie, it closes with analogous criticisms of Dawkins and company. [Nevertheless, DI responded as if it were a one-sided attack piece.] For very emphatic but largely ad hominem free repudiation, see the triad of reviews by Shermer, Rennie, and Minrsky in *Scientific American*, April 2008.

<sup>92</sup> Dembski, “The difference *Expelled* will make.” *Baptist News*, above.

<sup>93</sup> DI, “Model Academic Freedom Statute on Evolution.”

<http://www.academicfreedompetition.com/freedom.php> The model statute proposed by DI would make it illegal to exclude ID by mandating “the full range of scientific views” on evolution must be allowed. Unlike some proposed legislation, it does not mandate the range to be taught. But neither does it demonstrate that there actually is a “range” of legitimately scientific views on fundamentals of evolution like common descent or the antiquity of life. [Indeed, would this statute mandate that a 10,000 year age for the origin of life be allowed to be taught?] The model statute also protects students' rights to be evaluated only on what they understand, not on what they personally believe. This is a different but important issue, and is not irrelevant to recent cases of viewpoint discrimination.

<sup>94</sup> RTB Scholars Expound on *Expelled*, the Movie.

<http://www.reasons.org/resources/apologetics/expelled.shtml>

<sup>95</sup> Robert Frost, “Mending Wall.” <http://writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/frost-mending.html>