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A recent article by the paleontologist Richard Fortey in the science pages of the *Telegraph* (January 30, 2007) is devoted to criticizing "intelligent design" creationism. Fortey's [article](#) [4], titled "The Ego and the ID," argues that "intelligent design" proponents succeed in the public sphere by taking advantage of the public's love of fairness and balance. When given equal time by the media, "the scientist when provoked can unwittingly appear to be a fulminating zealot. By contrast, many of the proponents of Intelligent Design (ID) have contrived to appear to be in favour of free speech. Aren't those scientists empurpled with rage and crying 'nonsense' the very picture of a threatened Establishment? ... If evolution is one theory -- then ID is another, or so the argument goes. Only a bigot would object to the airing of the alternative explanations." The issue is further complicated by the public's association of scientists with atheism, Fortey says, and he is quick to note the many theistic scientists who "believe that God should not be introduced into the explanation of nature" because doing so adds nothing to science.

Scientists are angry at and frustrated by efforts to promote "intelligent design" because, Fortey argues, it "serves only to suppress questions -- and science is all about tackling questions head-on. Why should we spend money on setting up experiments to simulate the creation of the first living cell if the motive force was a 'designer'? No experiment can detect such metaphysical seasoning in the primeval soup. ... It wastes time. It suppresses research rather than encouraging it. It's not really a theory, it's a story. It deflects the young from asking the important questions. It serves to kill curiosity rather than encourage it." He concludes, "Sometimes it is right to get angry in the face of unreason. Darwinists are readily labelled. There should be an equivalent term for the proponents of Intelligent Design. May I suggest IDiots?" Fortey is the president of the Geological Society of London and the winner of the Michael Faraday Prize, the United Kingdom's foremost award for communicating science to the public, for 2007; his Faraday Prize lecture, "A Natural History of Scientists," is [available](#) [5] on-line.

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