

Have Design Proponents “Invented” Terms about “Darwinism”?

Some critics have accused intelligent design (ID) proponents of inventing terms such as “Darwinism,” “Darwinist,” or even “Neo-Darwinism” (and similar variations).¹ The reality is that these terms are commonly used by mainstream scientists in the scientific literature—often to describe evolutionists when combating a pejoratively used term which they nearly exclusively use: “anti-evolutionism.” Below are search results revealing the common use of these terms in mainstream scientific journals:²

<u>Darwinism:</u> <i>Nature:</i> 376 hits <i>Science:</i> 44 hits <i>PubMed:</i> 193 hits “Two other sites previously reviewed in NetWatch brim with helpful information. In a section on obstacles to teaching <i>Darwinism</i>, this primer from the University of California, Berkeley, profiles different strains of anti-evolutionism.” (“Standing Up for Darwin,” <i>Science</i>, 308:1847, 6/24/2005, emphasis added)	<u>Neo-Darwinism:</u> <i>Nature:</i> 64 hits <i>Science:</i> 5 hits <i>PubMed:</i> 22 hits “The clamour to revise <i>neo-darwinism</i> is becoming so loud that hopefully most practicing evolutionary biologists will begin to pay attention. It has been said that science often makes progress not because people change their minds, but because the old ones die off and the new generation is more open to novel ideas.” (“Expanding evolution,” by Massimo Pigliucci, <i>Nature</i>, 435:566 6/02/2005, emphasis added)
<u>Darwinian:</u> <i>Nature:</i> 889 hits <i>Science:</i> 153 hits <i>PubMed:</i> 817 hits “Dawkins has generated controversy within the ranks of evolutionary theorists for his strict adherence to <i>Darwinian</i> natural selection (“random mutation plus nonrandom cumulative selection” in his succinct description) as the only mechanism of evolutionary change worth bothering about—Gould called him a ‘<i>Darwinian</i> fundamentalist’...” (“The Blind Godmaker,” by Michael Shermer, <i>Science</i>, 308:205, 4/08/2005, emphasis added)	<u>Neo-Darwinian:</u> <i>Nature:</i> 86 hits <i>Science:</i> 11 hits <i>PubMed:</i> 65 hits “According to the <i>neo-Darwinian</i> account of evolution, such changes are brought about by the interaction of various evolutionary causes, among them selection, drift, mutation, and inbreeding.” (“The Evolutionary Indeterminism Thesis,” by T. Shanahan, <i>BioScience</i>, 53(2):164, 2/2003, emphasis added)
<u>Darwinist:</u> <i>Nature:</i> 39 hits <i>Science:</i> 12 hits <i>PubMed:</i> 14 hits “[Eugenie] Scott, who is perhaps the nation’s most high-profile <i>Darwinist</i>, is frustrated by the scientific community’s inability to grapple with the issue.” (“Who has designs on your students’ minds?,” by Geoff Brumfiel, <i>Nature</i> 434:1062, 4/28/2005, emphasis added)	<u>Neo-Darwinist:</u> <i>Nature:</i> 8 hits <i>Science:</i> 1 hit <i>PubMed:</i> 1 hit “[T]his concept [of developmental constraint] has almost never had an influence on the main stream of research that was done by <i>neo-Darwinists</i>’.” (“The Interaction between developmental bias and natural selection: from centipede segments to a general hypothesis,” by W. Arthyr, <i>Heredity</i>, 89:239–246, 2002, emphasis added)

¹ For example, see allegations by E.O. Wilson in “Charles Darwin: Evolution of a Scientist,” by Jerry Adler, *Newsweek*, Nov. 28, 2005, pg. 53.

² “Hits” indicate the number of articles said to contain that term during a search using that search engine. All searches conducted on September 14, 2005. The following online science journal search engines were used: (a) ***Nature*** (Search engine for the Journal *Nature*; dates back to 1980): search.nature.com/search/?sp_a=sp1001702d&sp_t=advanced&sp_x_1=ujournal&sp-p=all&sp (b) ***PubMed***: ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?DB=pubmed PubMed is “a service of the National Library of Medicine that includes over 15 million citations from MEDLINE and other life science journals for biomedical articles back to the 1950s. PubMed includes links to full text articles and other related resources.” (c) ***Science*** (Search engine for the Journal *Science*; dates back to 1995): http://www.sciencemag.org/search.dtl

Selected Examples of Darwinists Calling Themselves “Darwinists”

Because Darwinists sometimes complain about being called “Darwinists,” it’s helpful to be reminded how they themselves (or other materialists) often use this term when speaking of themselves. Here are few selected examples of Darwinists (and other mainstream scientists) using the term “Darwinist”:

“I’m a Darwinist because I believe the only alternatives are Lamarckism or God neither of which does the job as an explanatory principle.” (Richard Dawkins, in *The Third Culture*, J. Brockman, Ed., Simon and Schuster, 1995, pp. 75–95.)

“A common argument used by anti-Darwinists involves the difficulty of explaining the origin of complex structures by such a process.” (Richard H. Thornhill and David W. Ussery, “A Classification of Possible Routes of Darwinian Evolution,” *Journal of Theoretical Biology*, 203:111-116, 2000.)

“The cultural polarization of America has been aggravated by attacks on religion from the ‘new atheists,’ writers such as Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett, who are die-hard Darwinists.” (Jerry Coyne, “Seeing and Believing,” *The New Republic*, February 4, 2009.)

“When biologists talk of the ‘evolution wars’, they usually mean the ongoing battle for supremacy in American schoolrooms between Darwinists and their creationist opponents.” (Trisha Gura, “Bones, molecules. or Both?,” *Nature*, 406:230-233, July 20, 2000.)

“In his book *The Language of God* (Free Press, 2006), Collins discusses the ideas of Theodosius Dobzhansky, a darwinist and the main architect of the modern synthetic theory of biological evolution.” (U. Kutschera, “Dogma, not faith, is the barrier to scientific enquiry,” *Nature*, 443:26, Sept. 7, 2006.)

“[T]he debate about evolution continues to assume the quality of an abstract and philosophical ‘dialogue of the deaf’ between Creationists and Darwinists.” (James Shapiro, “A Third Way,” *Boston Review*, 1997.)

“In the ongoing controversy between Darwinists and Creationists, Darwinians usually maintain that their theory obeys the following principle...” (Elliott Sober, “Why Methodological Naturalism?,” 2009.)

“The origin of complex biological systems is a classical topic in evolutionary biology and, probably, the principal object of attacks of anti-darwinists of all ilk...” (Yuri I Wolf and Eugene V Koonin, “On the origin of the translation system and the genetic code in the RNA world by means of natural selection, exaptation, and subfunctionalization,” *Biology Direct*, Vol. 2:14, 2007.)

“I am afraid that, if our goal as evolutionary biologists is to avoid providing any grist for the ID mill, we should simply claim that Darwin, ‘in principle’, solved all the problems of the origin of biological complexity in his eye story, and only minor details remain to be filled in. Actually, I think the position of some ultra-darwinists is pretty close to that.” (Eugene V Koonin, “The Biological Big Bang model for the major transitions in evolution,” *Biology Direct*, Vol. 2:21, 2007.)

“Comparative illustrations of vertebrate embryos by the leading nineteenth-century Darwinist Ernst Haeckel have been both highly contested and canonical. ... Haeckel, seeking to make comparative embryology central to a Darwinist worldview...” (Nick Hopwood, “Pictures of Evolution and Charges of Fraud,” *Isis*, 97:260–301, 2006.)

“[E]ven his Darwinist comrade-in-arms, Carl Gegenbaur, began asserting the rights of comparative anatomy.” (Nick Hopwood, “A history of normal plates, tables and stages in vertebrate embryology,” *International Journal of Developmental Biology*, 51(1): 1–26, 2007.)

“The Italian anthropologist, psychologist and evolutionist Giuseppe Sergi (1841-1936) may be regarded in some respects today as an ‘atypical’ Darwinist, but, almost paradoxically, he was considered a ‘champion’ of Darwinism by colleagues and commentators of his own time.” (Volpone A., “Giuseppe Sergi, ‘champion’ of Darwinism?,” *Journal of Anthropological Sciences*, 89:59-69, October 2010.)