
ABOUT THE VIEWPOINT

Welcome to the Discovery Institute *Viewpoint*! This new quarterly newsletter will highlight a 'Feature Article' and select blog posts by Discovery Institute fellows, alert you to new book releases, and provide you with timely announcements about upcoming events. It's our way of better communicating with you, our Discovery Institute members. *After all, without you our work would not be possible!* As a member, you'll also continue to receive the Discovery Institute *Views*—a compendium of articles and other information—twice annually. In the meantime, enjoy this issue of the *Viewpoint* and visit www.discovery.org/viewpoint for additional content. We hope to see you in person at a Discovery Institute event sometime soon!

FEATURE ARTICLE

THE ORIGINAL AMERICAN IDOL

Highlighted in this quarter's Viewpoint is an article by Senior Fellow John R. Miller, published by the Wall Street Journal, February 19, 2011. To read more articles by Ambassador Miller, please visit www.discovery.org.



Amb. John R. Miller

Today we merge Washington's birthday with the birthdays of other presidents and submerge them all in clothing and appliance sales. But it was not always so. Americans in past centuries celebrated

Washington's birthday as a winter version of the Fourth of July.

Americans in Cambridge, Williamsburg, Richmond and Milton, Conn., were already celebrating Washington's birthday even before the end of the Revolutionary War. After his death in 1799, hundreds of cities and towns held birthday events. Such celebrations briefly abated in the early 1800s, as John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were, while admiring of Washington, also envious of the awe in which Americans held him.

By the 100th anniversary of Washington's birth in 1832, however, celebrations were once again held throughout the land. Pealing church bells, sermons, fireworks, marching bands and songs about Washington were all part of a holiday embraced without official sanction. Businesses closed, Washington's picture hung in school houses, and Feb. 22 was a day of national rejoicing.

Throughout the 19th century, activist groups of all stripes used Washington's birthday to further their causes. Antislavery activists claimed Washington since he had freed his slaves. Immigration supporters claimed him as a stalwart of religious, political and economic refugees. Advocates of Indian rights noted that after defeating the Iroquois in Revolutionary

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War battles, Washington restored their land and maintained their reservations. Striking Massachusetts shoemakers invoked his name as that of the first great American rebel. Temperance supporters praised his prudence, but given his fondness for Madeira, the connection there was less clear.

In 1880, Congress and President Chester Arthur proclaimed Washington's birthday as an official national holiday, but the 20th century saw a gradual ebbing of public interest. As our country grew, new heroes emerged.

In 1968, the public-employee unions, seeking a three-day weekend, convinced Congress to move the commemoration of Washington's birthday to the third Monday in February. This eventually led to what we now call Presidents Day, which marks the birthday not only of Washington but of Lincoln and all other presidents. By celebrating every birthday, we effectively celebrate none.

Washington's contemporaries hailed his Revolutionary War victories at Trenton and Yorktown, but they honored him more for risking his fame, fortune and life in taking on military responsibilities for which he wasn't paid—and then giving up command to return to his farm and family. The young American citizenry esteemed him for bringing together and presiding over the Constitutional Convention, but they honored him more for his steadfastness in holding the colonies together and facing down potential insurrectionists who might have seized the government and made him a military dictator. And while they appreciated him returning to public service as president, they honored him more for leaving an office that many expected him to hold for life.

Americans in the 18th and 19th centuries were unaware of, but they would not have been surprised by, what King George III supposedly said upon hearing that Washington, after winning the Revolutionary War, had refused to be king: "If that is true, he must be the greatest man in the world."

Today we expect our leaders to seek and hold power, to take credit for their accomplishments, to demonstrate empathy, and to be facile with their written and spoken words, either their own or those of a speechwriter. Like the great Greek and Roman leaders, however, Washington was ambitious but learned to control it. He was too proud, in a good sense, to take credit.

Washington took advice from privates and generals, citizens and cabinet members, but his reserve kept them from feeling that they were his friends. When pressed to orate—as in his farewell toast to his officers or when he returned his sword to Congress after the Revolutionary War—Washington uttered some fine phrases, but he didn't give a single speech to the Continental Congresses. The delegates chose him anyway as commanding general

and gave him far-reaching powers. He also gave no speech to the Constitutional Convention, yet his presence moved the



delegates to choose a presidential form of government, largely because they knew he would serve as the first chief executive.

Likewise, Washington was an able but not elegant writer. He never composed an essay on religious freedom. But his custom of attending church services of

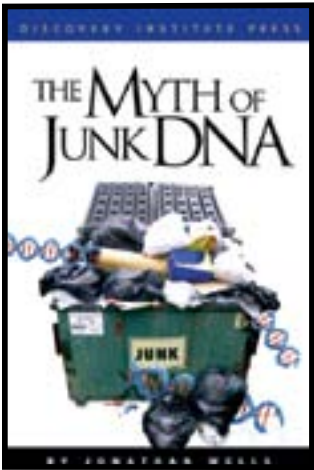
different Christian denominations, and his letter to the Jewish congregation of Newport, R.I., helped bring fractious religious groups together in the new country. He never wrote an essay on the evils of slavery. But by emancipating his slaves after his death and providing for their support and education, he set an example noted repeatedly in succeeding decades.

In the early republic, Americans idolized virtues molded and displayed over the years. Today we seem excited by new persons and talents every month.

Our ancestors expected that America would produce other great leaders. But they celebrated Washington's birthday because, as the Connecticut Courant observed in 1791, "Many a private man might make a great president; but will there ever be a President who will make so great a man as WASHINGTON?"

Mr. Miller, a former U.S. Ambassador at Large and visiting scholar at the University of California at Berkeley's Institute of Governmental Studies, is a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute.

NEW BOOK RELEASE THE MYTH OF JUNK DNA BY DR. JONATHAN WELLS (AVAILABLE APRIL 30)



According to the modern version of Darwin's theory, DNA contains a program for embryo development that is passed down from generation to generation; the program is implemented by proteins encoded by the DNA, and accidental DNA mutations introduce changes in those proteins that natural selection then shapes into new species, organs and body plans. When scientists discovered forty years ago that about 98% of our DNA does not encode proteins, the non-protein-coding portion was labeled "junk" and attributed to molecular accidents that have accumulated in the course of evolution.

Recent books by Richard Dawkins, Francis Collins and others have used this "junk DNA" as evidence for Darwinian evolution and evidence against intelligent design (since an intelligent designer would presumably not have filled our genome with so much garbage). But recent genome evidence shows that much of our non-protein-coding DNA performs essential biological functions.

The Myth of Junk DNA is written for a general audience by biologist Jonathan Wells, author of *Icons of Evolution*. Citing some of the abundant evidence from recent genome projects, the book shows that "junk DNA" is not science, but myth.

Jonathan Wells has received two Ph.D.s, one in Molecular and Cell Biology from the University of California at Berkeley, and one in Religious Studies from Yale University. He has worked as a postdoctoral research biologist at the University of California at Berkeley and the supervisor of a medical laboratory in Fairfield, California. Dr. Wells is also the author of *Charles Hodge's Critique of Darwinism* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1988), *Icons of Evolution: Why much of what we teach about evolution is wrong* (Regnery Publishing, 2000), and *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Darwinism and Intelligent Design* (Regnery, 2006). ***Pre-order your copy today by calling 1-800-685-0632 ext. 105!***

DISCOVERY NEWS BLOG (WWW.DISCOVERYNEWS.ORG) THERE SHOULD BE CONSEQUENCES FOR POLITICAL TRUANCY IN STATE GOVERNMENTS BY BRUCE CHAPMAN



Wisconsin's Democratic state senators apparently have found loopholes in the state ethics laws that permit them to shirk their official responsibilities. If the 14 senators who have fled the state in order to deny Republicans a quorum to conduct business in the legislature are not stopped, disruptions of this sort are going to become widespread. Over time, similar stunts will be pulled, with variations, by both parties in states across the nation.

The truants from Madison would have appalled the leaders who wrote any American state constitution, including Wisconsin's. In days before fast travel by cars and airplanes, the chance of a hookey-playing senator seeking effective sanctuary in another state was not anticipated. Constitution writers considered that the authority to send the state police after such a legislative truant would suffice. Therefore, in Wisconsin and elsewhere state law must now be brought up to date if the aims of the state's founders are to be observed.

The Wisconsin senators' gambit was inspired by Texas Democratic legislators who, a decade ago, took off for Oklahoma to prevent enactment of a Republican redistricting plan. That rebellion failed in the end, but Wisconsin today has lots of media and other commentators chuckling

and clucking approval of the "brave" Democratic senators. If the hookey-players were Republicans, however, the same folk would be demanding punitive action.

Instead, Democrats in Indiana already are joining the fun, fleeing unwelcome votes and seeking legal sanctuary in Illinois. The Land of Lincoln is even more buried in taxes and debt than Wisconsin, so maybe this is an indirect way for its helpful neighbors to stimulate its lagging economy. Their new theme songs are "On Wisconsin, to Chicago!" and "Back Home Again in Indiana--Not."

But back in Wisconsin and Indiana, legislative reform (by popular initiative, if necessary) might well start with a declaration that elected members of a legislative body who fail to appear for service may be deprived of salary, benefits and staff. Exceptions would be made, of course, for valid excused absences, such as for genuine illness. After that, a non-partisan panel could declare that the missing legislators had defaulted on their public obligations. The scofflaws' legislative seats would be considered vacant and subject to a new election at which the nominal incumbents would be ineligible to compete.

DISCOVERY IN THE NEWS

“ISRAEL IS WHERE
IT'S AT IN THE
MIDDLE EAST.
AND THE LEADING
EDGE OF THE U.S.
ECONOMY TODAY
IS IN ISRAEL.”

-EXCERPTED FROM
GEORGE GILDER'S
COMMENTS IN
HIS INTERVIEW
WITH STEVE FORBES

[“I, FOR ONE, WELCOME OUR NEW ROBOT OVERLORDS”](#)

BY: JAY RICHARDS, THE AMERICAN
FEBRUARY 19, 2011

[“GILDER ON TECH INNOVATION”](#)

BY: STEVE FORBES, FORBES
FEBRUARY 14, 2011

[“HOW EVOLUTIONARY THEORY'S OTHER DISCOVERER COULD HEAL THE DARWIN DIVIDE”](#)

BY: DAVID KLINGHOFFER, WASHINGTON POST
FEBRUARY 22, 2011

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WEBSITE, WWW.DISCOVERY.ORG/VIEWPOINT



THE CASCADIA CORNER

RAIL BEAUTY CONTEST: FLORIDA WALKS, OTHERS TALK

BY MIKE WUSSOW

Governor Rick Scott of Florida has turned down \$2.4 billion in federal high-speed rail money. The money, part of President Obama's push for building high-speed passenger rail, was to be used for a line connecting Tampa and Orlando. In his prepared remarks, former business executive Scott said his concerns centered on "capital cost overruns," unrealistic "ridership and revenue projections," and a fear that his "state would have to return the \$2.4 billion" if Florida couldn't afford to keep the project going.

As news of the announcement spread beyond the Sunshine State, others in the high-speed rail funding queue moved faster than the 250 mph Shanghai Maglev passenger train to announce they'd happily take the money Florida isn't using.

Washington's Governor Christine Gregoire, whose state is in the heart of the Cascadia Corridor running from Oregon to Vancouver, B.C., said Washington state could put the money to good use and that the funds would supplement the \$751.5 million already allocated for the corridor. "These rail lines take cars off our roads while moving workers and tourists between Seattle, Portland and Vancouver, B.C.," she said. "These federal funds are an investment in our economy, and support hundreds of construction and operating jobs in our state."

Meanwhile, California's two U.S. senators, Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood urging that Florida's money "be redirected to our (California's) high-speed rail initiative." According to the letter, California is "leading the Nation



(sic) in the development of high-speed rail" and has "over \$5.5 billion in funds allocated for construction that will begin in 2012."

Florida isn't innovating by turning down federal high-speed rail money. Despite strong grassroots and local official support for the Tampa-Orlando project, the state's decision to forego federal funding for high-speed rail projects follows similar decisions made by the governors of Ohio and Wisconsin late last year. High-speed rail support is strong in those states too. But so is concern about the federal budget.

Secretary LaHood, a former Republican congressman, is on point for shepherding the administration's transportation priorities. And he seems serious enough about high-speed rail, telling Florida that it has one week to change its mind or the money will go to other states. Supporters of the Florida project are scrambling to

seek a resolution that would circumvent Scott's decision and keep the rail funding in the state. Further emphasizing that the administration--despite opposition from governors of three states originally in line for funding--isn't backing down from its plans for high-speed rail, LaHood wrote in "The Hill" this morning, "The president's budget keeps us on track toward a national high-speed rail system with its \$8 billion investment in 2012 and \$53 billion investment during the next six years."

Governor Scott's decision reminds us that opinions about where and how to allocate transportation and infrastructure dollars vary dramatically across the country, within states, and even within political parties. High-speed rail, even though it remains the centerpiece of President Obama's transportation plan, is far from immune from the current infrastructure and transportation political tug of war. If anything, it's right in the middle of it.



DISCO-TECH BLOG (WWW.DISCO-TECH.ORG)

FACEBOOK HELPED PROVOKE THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION; BUT CAN IT GOVERN? BY BRUCE CHAPMAN

The revolution in Egypt is another historic product of alternative media, especially Facebook, home to the "April 6 movement" that commemorates the brutal beating death of a young Egyptian blogger who had exposed the 2008 beating of a demonstrator in the industrial city of El-Mahalla El-Jubra. Instead of stopping the communication, the police beatings provoked a huge following. And then a revolution.

Sonia Verma reports in The Globe and Mail (Toronto), "An estimated 3.4 million Egyptians use the (Facebook) social networking site, the vast majority under the age of 25. Egypt is the number 1 user of Facebook in the Arab world, and No. 23 globally." Many have mobilized behind the April 6 movement.

Twitter, meanwhile, keeps cryptic messages pouring out, some from foreigners imposing their own interpretations on Egyptian events (such as a crowd of enthusiasts from Chavez' Venezuela), but most from Egyptians telling fellow protestors where to show up for the next demonstration. YouTube videos provide homemade news coverage that leaves international broadcasters one step behind. The Mubarak government cracked down on cell phones and the internet for a while, but tonight some reportedly are operating again.

How odd it is to hear the Iranian media praising the Egyptian protestors, having assailed the protestors in their own country who opposed their own country's oppressive regime.

Regardless, we are seeing alternative media maturing as a force of change throughout the region, albeit as an unfocused force. This especially describes the predominantly young populations of the Middle East. The mood in Egypt right now is not anti-Western; there are no Iran-style "Death to America" chants. It is a mistake to confuse this revolution so far with the religious zeal of the Iranians 32 years ago.

Robert Fisk, writing in The Independent (UK), says, "Interestingly, there seems no animosity towards foreigners. Many journalists have been protected by the crowds and - despite America's lamentable support for the Middle East's dictators - there has not so far been a single US flag burned. That shows you what's new. Perhaps a people have grown up - only to discover that their ageing government are all children."

The Egyptian protestors, then, are hard to understand, perhaps because the goals of this largely leaderless movement are not codified in any sense.

The Facebook users appear to be decidedly secular, rather than Islamist, but the composition of the revolt could change. The history of popular revolutions is that the broad front of the initial public outburst is followed by extremists forcing their way into control once the old regime is overthrown.

Right now, the unclear leadership of the revolt is why Hosni Mubarak is uncertain what to do. Likewise his army. The US seems surprised and uncertain, too, and



Egyptian Protesters, January 2011

has spoken out of both sides of its mouth--both sides of V.P. Biden's mouth and Secretary Hillary Clinton's mouth, to be specific.

The London Telegraph reports on Wikileaks that supposedly show the US in 2008 and 2009 encouraged the people who led the April 6 movement, knowing they were planning a revolt. That would implicate both the Bush and Obama administrations. But, so what? The job of an American embassy includes talking to all the political groups it can. The US government doesn't even disguise that aim to foreign governments.

Indeed, if the Wikileaks story is right, and if the revolution succeeds, the US may may be glad later that the State Department did, indeed, reach out to at least some of the would-be revolutionaries. We could be dealing with them next.

Conclusion: Facebook not only is an incredible company, but an international force for revolutionary change. Social Network should win an Oscar for that alone.



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CENTER FOR SCIENCE & CULTURE NEWS

DOES WATSON HAVE A MIND? BY MICHAEL EGNOR

There has been much discussion about the recent appearance on Jeopardy of a computer named Watson. Watson has played against human contestants, and has provided uncannily accurate answers to some questions. Can Watson actually think? Does Watson have a mind?

What does it mean ‘to have a mind’? To have a mind, one must have mental states. There are two hallmarks of mental states: qualia and intentionality.

A quale (singular of qualia) is a raw subjective experience, such as the experience of pain, or taste of salt, or seeing blue. A quale does not intrinsically include an opinion or a proposition. It is mere experience, in the raw. If you stub your toe, the pain you feel is a quale. Your opinion that this is the worst pain you have experienced is an opinion about the quale, but not a part of the quale itself. Your viewpoint that ‘if my kid didn’t leave his toy where I could stub my toe on it then I wouldn’t have stubbed my toe’ is a proposition about your quale, but, again, not the quale itself. Qualia don’t have meaning. They are pure experience.

Intentionality is different from qualia. Intentionality is the ‘aboutness’ of a mental state -- the characteristic of a mental state that it refers to something other than itself. Colloquially, intentionality is the meaning of a mental state. When I think about the White House, my mental state is intentional, in the sense that it is directed to an object outside of myself. Most mental states are intentional in one sense or another. Most thoughts are about something, and therefore intentional.

Now substances such as rocks and ink and copper and silicon are not intrinsically intentional. They are not, in themselves, about anything. They merely are. If you were to walk along the seashore and see a collection of rocks that seemed to spell “SOS,” you would immediately recognize that the rocks might or might not exhibit intentionality. If the rock SOS merely arose by the waves and wind, then it would have no meaning. If the rock SOS were put there by a person in need of help, it would have meaning. Its meaning of course wouldn’t in the rocks themselves, but would be imparted to the rocks by a person, who is capable of independent intentionality.

Philosopher John Searle has noted that there are three different kinds of intentionality:

- 1) Primary or intrinsic intentionality, which comes from a person.
- 2) Secondary or derived intentionality, which is inscribed in an object that is incapable of primary intentionality by a person.
- 3) ‘As if’ intentionality, which is the colloquial attribution of intentionality to an object incapable of intentionality (e.g. “the trees moaned in the wind as if they were frightened by the storm...”).

Now back to Watson. Does Watson have a mental state? To refine the question, does Watson have qualia or intentionality?

Watson does not have qualia. Watson has no sensory organs, no pain receptors, no olfactory cells. Whatever Watson does, it (not he) does not have raw sensory experience.



And Watson does not have intentionality. Watson is a device, made of silicon and copper and whatever, that yields a defined output according to the modification of its input by its program. Its program was written by programmers who do have intentionality. Watson is quantitatively much more sophisticated than your pocket calculator, but Watson is not qualitatively different from your calculator. It’s just electrons bumping electrons, in a system designed by people who do have minds. The appearance of intentionality in Watson’s ‘answers’ on Jeopardy is really secondary intentionality, derived from the genuine primary intentionality of the brilliant engineers and programmers who built ‘him.’

So, no, Watson doesn’t have a mind. Watson experiences nothing and ‘means’ nothing. Watson is a computing machine, and computation -- syntax -- is not semantics. Watson’s computation is a series of physical events without intrinsic meaning. The meaning that we perceive in Watson’s output is derived from Watson’s designers and our understanding of Watson’s output. We have minds and do have primary intentionality. Watson doesn’t have a mind, any more than an abacus or a wristwatch have a mind.

Watson would agree, if he could.



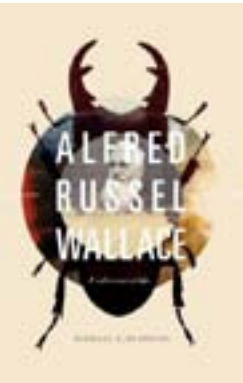
Dr. Stephen Meyer with past Seminar Students

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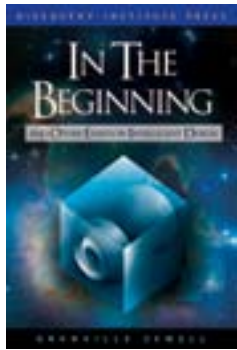
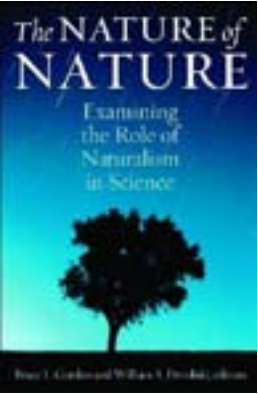


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By Michael A. Flannery, \$15

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In the Beginning and Other Essays on Intelligent Design
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DARWIN VS. DESIGN

WHY IT MATTERS AND WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT

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DISCOVERY INSTITUTE'S CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND CULTURE WILL BE PRESENTING A 2-DAY CONFERENCE "DARWIN VS. DESIGN" AT CROSSINGS COMMUNITY CHURCH, OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA. THE EVENT WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY, MARCH 25, FROM 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. AND SATURDAY, MARCH 26, 8:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

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