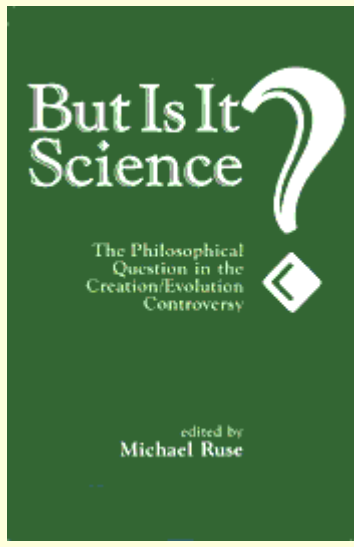


But is it Science?

The Philosophical Question in the Creation/Evolution Controversy

review by Gert Korthof
21 Jan 1998 (updated: 21 Oct 2009)



[Books by Michael Ruse.](#)

See also Updated Paperback edition:
Robert T. Pennock (Editor), Michael Ruse (Editor) (2008) **'But Is It Science? The Philosophical Question in the Creation/Evolution Controversy.**

■ About the author:

Michael Ruse was an expert witness in a creation science test case in Arkansas in 1981, wherein a federal judge ruled unconstitutional a state law mandating the reading of creationism alongside evolution in state schools. Michael Ruse is professor of history and philosophy at the University of Guelph, Ontario and the author of eight books, including a trilogy on Darwinism: *The Darwinian Revolution* (1978), *Darwinism Defended* (1982), and *Taking Darwin Seriously* (1986).

Although I include this anthology in the category 'Anti-Creationism', there are articles of creationists (William Paley, Adam Sedgwick and Duane Gish); critics of Darwinism (Karl Popper) and critics of neo-Darwinian gradualism (S.J. Gould). Even critics of Ruse himself are included (Larry Laudan). Further contributors: John Maynard Smith, Richard Dawkins, Larry Laudan (see: contents).

Professor Ruse is now at Florida State University.

An updated edition of *But Is It Science?* was published in January 2009 by [Prometheus Books](#). A review was published in [Skeptic](#).

An important chapter is: 8. 'Is there a limit to our knowledge of evolution?' which contains the useful distinction:

- (1) the **fact** of evolution (organisms did evolve on earth from common ancestors): either evolution occurred, or it did not.
- (2) the **path** taken (phylogenies) there is a limit of our knowledge of the path, but progress is possible.
- (3) the **mechanism** (the causes behind the process). Ruse is pessimistic about the possibility of our ever knowing fully the causes of evolutionary change.

"But is it Science?"
The philosophical question in the creation/evolution controversy.
edited by Michael Ruse.
Prometheus Books.
1988
hardback, 406 pages.

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1. Genesis
2. William Paley: Natural theology
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8. Michael Ruse: Is there a limit to our knowledge of evolution?
9. Francisco J. Ayala: The mechanisms of evolution
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11. Michael Ruse: Karl Popper's Philosophy of Biology
12. Stephen Jay Gould: Is a new and general theory of evolution emerging?
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17. Duane T. Gish: Creation, Evolution and the historical evidence
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19. Michael Ruse: Witness Testimony Sheet
20. Judge William R. Overton: United States District Court Opinion
21. Larry Laudan: The demise of the demarcation problem
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24. Larry Laudan: More on Creationism
25. Philip L. Quinn: The philosopher of science as expert witness
26. Michael Ruse: The academic as expert witness
27. Philip L. Quinn: Creationism, methodology and politics
28. Glossary
29. Further Reading

Books by Michael Ruse

- Michael Ruse (1989) **The Darwinian Paradigm. essays on its History, Philosophy and Religious Implications** Routledge - Taylor & Francis
- Michael Ruse (1999) **Biology and The Foundation of Ethics.** Cambridge University Press,
- Michael Ruse (1999) **The Darwinian Revolution: Science Red in Tooth and Claw.** 2nd Edition. University of Chicago Press.
See also: Michael Ruse (2009) [The Darwinian revolution: Rethinking its meaning and significance](#), PNAS June 16, 2009 (free access)
- Michael Ruse (1999) **Mystery of Mysteries: Is Evolution a Social Construction?** Harvard University Press.
- Michael Ruse **The Evolution Wars: A Guide to the debates.** A B C-CLIO. June 2000.
Chapter 9 "Challenges to orthodoxy: Alternatives to Darwinism" is an anti-Gould chapter (punctuated equilibria).
- Michael Ruse **Darwin & God.** Dr.J. Tans lecture, Studium Generale, Maastricht, November 2000.
- Michael Ruse **Can a Darwinian Be a Christian? The Relationship between Science and Religion.** Cambridge University Press. 2001
 - My first impression is that this book is better than I expected, better than for example *Mystery of Mysteries*. It is not academic, but about questions that matter a lot for many people. There is an approving review of this book by Charles Harper in *Nature* **411**, 239-240 (2001).
- Michael Ruse (2003) **Darwin and Design: Does evolution have a purpose?** Harvard University Press, 2003.
 - A positive review by Mark Ridley in *Nature*, 2003, **423**, 686-687. "There is no central argument to unify the book, but Ruse holds a consistently Darwinian position against all its critics. Adaption exists, it matters, it is not explained by God; it is explained, and with exemplary scientific propriety, by natural selection, and is a legitimate topic for scientific research." See also [here](#).
- Michael Ruse (2005) **The Evolution-Creation Struggle.** Harvard University Press.
 - A history of the evolution-creation controversy with emphasis on elements leading up to this uniquely American controversy.
- Michael Ruse (Editor) (2008) **"The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Biology"**, Oxford University Press, hb 656 pages.
- Michael Ruse (2008) **Charles Darwin**, Blackwell Great Minds, Volume 5. [Review](#).
- Michael Ruse (2008) 'A Challenge Standing on Shaky Clay', *Science* 3 October 2008, Vol. 322. no. 5898, pp. 47 - 48.
 - This is a review of: Steve Fuller (2008) *Dissent over Descent. Intelligent Design's Challenge to Darwinism*: "The important thing is that all of this is completely wrong and is backed by no sound scholarship whatsoever. ... It is ludicrous to claim that modern evolutionary biology is not integrated with molecular biology."
- Michael Ruse (2008) **'Evolution and Religion: A Dialogue'**, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Also ebook.
 - A fictional dialogue among characters with sharply contrasting positions
- Robert T. Pennock (Editor), Michael Ruse (Editor) (2008) **'But Is It Science? The Philosophical Question in the Creation/Evolution Controversy**, Updated Edition Paperback.
- Michael Ruse and Joseph Travis (2009) **Evolution. The First Four Billion Years**, Harvard University Press, hardback 979 pp
- Michael Ruse (2009) **Monad to Man: The Concept of Progress in Evolutionary Biology.** Release Date: March 15, 2009
- Michael Ruse (2009) **Defining Darwin: Essays on the History and Philosophy of Evolutionary Biology**, Prometheus Books, Hardcover 271 pages. Review: [NCSE](#)
- Michael Ruse (2010) **Science and Spirituality. Making Room for Faith in the Age of Science**, Cambridge University Press, Hardcover: 264 pages. [Info](#).
- Michael Ruse (2011) **Alvin Plantinga and Intelligent Design**, The Chronicle of Higher Education, December 14, 2011, 10:22 am
- Michael Ruse (2012) **The Philosophy of Human Evolution**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Hardcover, [Paperback](#), eBook.
 - Michael Ruse's *The Philosophy of Human Evolution* covers a broad range of topics: evolutionary theory (Chapters 1-3), the concept of "progress" (Chapter 4), knowledge (Chapter 5), morality (Chapter 6), sex and race (Chapter 7), and evolutionary medicine (Chapter 8). Reviewed in *Evolution* 2013.
- Michael Ruse (2013) **The Gaia Hypothesis: Science on a Pagan Planet**, University of Chicago Press, 288 pages.
 - See: [youtube](#) lecture about this book: The Gaia Hypothesis is bound to fail because it invokes final causes, ignores natural selection, and incorporates group thinking. Furthermore, cries of "crank science" or "pseudo science" become common when scientists are tense among themselves. And what was very much the case for evolutionary biology around 1980.
- Michael Ruse and Karl E. Peters (2015) **Why I am an accommodationist and proud of it**, *Zygon*, 10 MAY 2015.
 - "In the case of modern science, four questions go unasked and hence unanswered: Why is there something rather than nothing? What is the foundation of morality? What is mind and its relationship to matter? What is the meaning of it all? You can remain a nonreligious skeptic on these questions, but it is open for the Christian to offer his or her answers, so long as they are not scientific answers. Here then is a way that science and religion can coexist."
- Michael Ruse (2015) **Atheism. What Everyone Needs to Know.** OUP.
- Michael Ruse (2016) **Darwinism as Religion. What Literature Tells Us about Evolution.** [OUP](#).
 - Argues that the theory of evolution given by Charles Darwin in the nineteenth century has always functioned as much as a secular form of religion as anything purely scientific
 - Through the words of novelists and poets, Michael Ruse argues that Darwin took us from the secure world of Christian faith into a darker, less friendly world of chance and lack of meaning.
- Michael Ruse (2019) **On Purpose.** Princeton.
 - An accessible history of the idea of purpose in Western thought, from ancient Greece to the present See [Princeton Scholarship Online](#) with chapter abstracts.

My reviews of two other books of Ruse

- [The Evolution-Creation Struggle](#)
- [Darwinism defended. A Guide to the Evolution Controversies](#)

korthof.blogspot	home: Towards the Third Evolutionary Synthesis	https://wasdarwinwrong.com/korthof9.htm
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