



Tower of Babel: The Evidence against the New Creationism

Robert T. Pennock

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Creationism is no longer the simple notion it once was taken to be. Its new advocates have become more sophisticated in how they present their views, speaking of "intelligent design" rather than "creation science" and aiming their arguments against the naturalistic philosophical method that underlies science, proposing to replace it with a "theistic science." The creationism controversy is not just about the status of Darwinian evolution--it is a clash of religious and philosophical worldviews, for a common underlying fear among Creationists is that evolution undermines both the basis of morality as they understand it and the possibility of purpose in life. In *Tower of Babel*, philosopher Robert T. Pennock compares the views of the new creationists with those of the old and reveals the insubstantiality of their arguments. One of Pennock's major innovations is to turn from biological evolution to the less charged subject of linguistic evolution, which has strong theoretical parallels with biological evolution, both in content and in the sort of evidence scientists use to draw conclusions about origins. Of course, an evolutionary view of language does conflict with the Bible, which says that God created the variety of languages at one time as punishment for the Tower of Babel. Several chapters deal with the work of Phillip Johnson, a highly influential leader of the new Creationists. Against his and other views, Pennock explains how science uses naturalism and discusses the relationship between factual and moral issues in the creationism-evolution controversy. The book also includes a discussion of Darwin's own shift from creationist to evolutionist and an extended argument for keeping private religious beliefs separate from public scientific knowledge.

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