Response to the Commentary: Pro Judice
Michael Ruse

Overview

In our third installment, Michael Ruse responds to Laudan's commentary. He begins with the statement that "Laudan is hopelessly wide of the mark" in his criticisms. He then gives a few brief remarks about the specific circumstances of the case and the specific inadequacy of Laudan's approach to the challenge of creation-science.

The heart of his response, however, is his attempt to salvage his original argument, namely that creation-science is not science because it fails to meet the criteria he outlined in the original article. To Ruse the matter is relatively straightforward, and he addresses it by responding to three questions:

1. Using his five criteria, can science be effectively distinguished from non-science?
2. If so, does creation-science fail as genuine science according to these criteria?
3. And if so, does the opinion by Judge Overton make the case successfully?

Obviously, Ruse intends to show that the answer to all three questions is a clear "yes." He addresses the three questions in order, using a variety of examples and passages to illustrate his points.

Reading Questions

The following questions are meant to guide and assist you in reading Ruse's article. They will draw your attention to key passages and challenge you to think about what Ruse is really trying to say. Although no page numbers are given, the questions come roughly in the order that you will find their answers in the text.

1. How does Ruse's second remark, that saying "not science" is not the same as saying "religion," fit into the overall story? Why is the difference between a negative argument (creation-science is not science) and a positive argument (creation-science is religion) important here?
2. Why does Ruse think that Laudan's strategy is inadequate? (remark three)
3. What are the three questions that Ruse feels must be addressed? (Hint: Did you read my overview? These questions are listed there!)
4. Ruse clearly believes that not all endeavors can be clearly separated into science and non-science based on his five stated criteria. (He gives psychoanalysis as a problematic case.) How does he make the case that there are, though, some times when his criteria suffice? How successful is his argument?
5. Ruse tries to show, using various passages from the Bible and from creationist writings, that creation-science clearly fails based on his five criteria. Does he succeed in making his case?
6. What point does Ruse make with regard to "kinds" as used in creation-science?
7. Does Ruse ever really address his third question in this writing? (Answer: Not really, at least not directly.)

Challenge Questions

1. Has Ruse addressed Laudan's criticisms in an effective manner?
2. Is creation-science one of the clear-cut cases Ruse has in mind as distinguishable from science by his five criteria? Or is it a problematic case?
3. Should creation-science be taught in the science classroom in public schools?