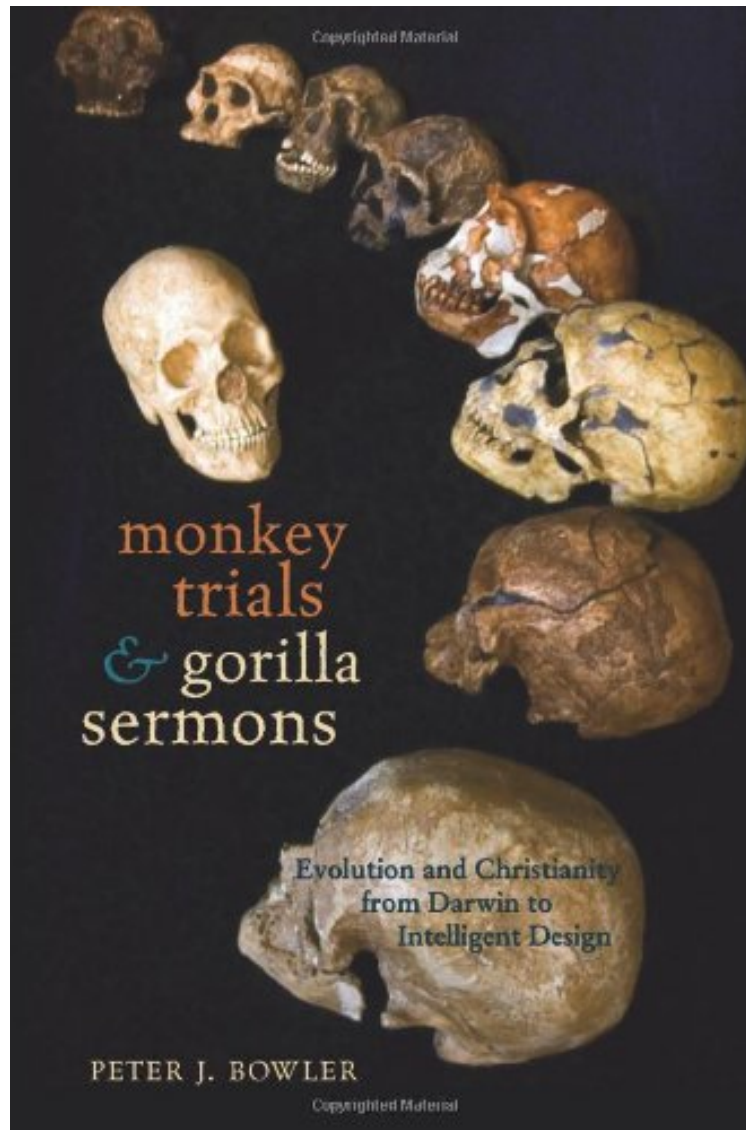


(Download) *Monkey Trials and Gorilla Sermons: Evolution and Christianity from Darwin to Intelligent Design* (New Histories of Science, Technology, and Medicine)

Monkey Trials and Gorilla Sermons: Evolution and Christianity from Darwin to Intelligent Design (New Histories of Science, Technology, and Medicine)

Peter J. Bowler

**Download PDF | ePub | DOC | audiobook | ebooks*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#2342959 in Books 2009-04-20Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.25 x .68 x 5.50l, .60 #File Name: 0674032209272 pages | File size: 35.Mb

Peter J. Bowler : Monkey Trials and Gorilla Sermons: Evolution and Christianity from Darwin to Intelligent Design (New Histories of Science, Technology, and Medicine) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Monkey Trials and Gorilla Sermons: Evolution and Christianity from*

Darwin to Intelligent Design (New Histories of Science, Technology, and Medicine):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Impressive survey of debates between Darwinists and religious fundamentalists. I always knew about the controversy, but had no idea of the depth, breadth, and variety of positions taken along the entire spectrum. 26 of 27 people found the following review helpful. A must read on Evolution and Religion by Piers J. Hale. Peter Bowler is one of the authorities on the history of evolution. Professor of the History of Science at Queens University, Belfast, he has written extensively on the history of the science of the "Darwinian Revolution" as well as on the moral and political responses it has provoked. *Monkey Trials* is a short and easy read that is almost deceptively packed with a vast survey of scholarship, while at the same time providing real insight into the history of the present relationship between evolution and religion in America. Bowler justifies this work as his own contribution to the American phenomenon of the apparent "debate" between the science of Darwinian evolution and the Creationist "Intelligent Design" movement that has made such headway among the religious right, and which continues to threaten science standards in schools in many southern states despite recent rulings against teaching religion as science by the courts. Bowler is open about his own religious skepticism, but much like Michael Ruse, does not think it productive to go down the path of strident atheist advocacy pursued by Daniel Dennett and the Richard Dawkins. As a European, Bowler claims to offer an outsider's perspective, but it is Bowler's perspective as an historian that really allows him to see the wood as well as the trees. Bowler's book sheds much needed light. The opening chapters of *Monkey Trials* give a brief but comprehensive overview of the history of the development of Darwin's thought, of earlier evolutionary ideas, and the range of Victorian moral reactions to the idea that humanity might share a common ancestor with apes. Bowler shows that despite the efforts of many to portray this as a "God or Darwin" black or white choice, history shows that this is at best a caricature of the much more complex and multiple responses to contemporary developments in biology. Bowler provides a deftly written history of those developments, that lead through the "eclipse of Darwinism" - the preference of many biologists for alternative mechanisms of evolution to Darwin's "natural selection", to the evolutionary synthesis of the 1930s and 40s. The main thrust of Bowler's story, however, is to recount the many efforts by liberal "Modernist" theologians to accommodate evolution into their religious understanding, a move that was met by many scientists in the early 1900s, (amongst them even Julian Huxley, one of the key authors of the synthesis), who accepted that the apparent purpose they saw in evolution might also provide a ready compromise. This oft uncomfortable middle ground was not shared by religious conservatives, however, and similarly became increasingly untenable to scientists in light of the advances in genetics that laid the groundwork of the synthesis of Darwinian selection with Mendelian genetics. Indeed, the synthesis increasingly undermined any basis for seeing purpose or direction in nature at all. If God was the divine architect at work, (as the geneticist R.A. Fischer continued to believe), He was very much an unmoved mover - a view that was - and remains - an unsatisfactory conception of God for a great many believers. Nevertheless, Bowler does show that, despite the apparent polarization of science and religion that gets the headlines, there remains a number of significant liberal theologians, such as John Polkinghorne and John F. Haught, who are willing to do the hard work of seriously thinking through a modern synthesis of their own: that of bringing together the apparently non-directed and purposeless character of modern evolutionary biology with a belief in a compassionate and caring Creator. In short, Bowler's work is an important synthetic work in the history of religious responses to the changing nature of Darwinism from the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859 to the present, but it is also more than this. Hopefully, *Monkey Trials* will underline the fact that the debate need not be as polarized as the present American episode in debating the moral implications of evolutionary biology suggests.

From the beginning, Darwin's dangerous idea has been a snake in the garden, denounced from pulpits then and now as incompatible with the central tenets of Christian faith. Recovered here is the less well-known but equally long history of thoughtful engagement and compromise on the part of liberal theologians. Peter J. Bowler doesn't minimize the hostility of many of the faithful toward evolution, but he reveals the existence of a long tradition within the churches that sought to reconcile Christian beliefs with evolution by finding reflections of the divine in scientific explanations for the origin of life. By tracing the historical forerunners of these rival Christian responses, Bowler provides a valuable alternative to accounts that stress only the escalating confrontation. Our polarized society, Bowler says, has all too often projected its rivalries onto the past, concealing the efforts by both scientists and theologians to find common ground. Our perception of past confrontations has been shaped by an oversimplified model of a war between science and religion. By uncovering the complexity of the debates sparked by Darwin's theory, we might discover ways to depolarize our own debates about where we came from and why we are here.

From Publishers Weekly Bowler, a professor of the history of science at Queen's University in Belfast, aims to show that the renewed state of war between fundamentalists and atheistic Darwinists is not the only game in town, because there have always been religious thinkers looking for a middle way to integrate Christian and evolutionary ideas. While not himself an advocate of any middle way Bowler is a religious skeptic who believes this stream of thought

deserves more attention. Alongside outbreaks of controversy such as the Huxley-Wilberforce debates, the Scopes trial or contemporary battles over science education, Bowler portrays a broad movement, spearheaded by liberal Christians and religiously inclined evolutionists, to interpret evolution as God's plan. Integrating cultural and political factors into the historical description, Bowler sees a great deal at stake. Political and social beliefs about competition, cooperation, and human improbability also come into play, as well as classic theological questions of suffering, freedom, and moral responsibility or more recently, the value of animals and the environment. Although breadth sometimes comes at the expense of depth Bowler treats some topics superficially and admits to finding some academic theology totally incomprehensible overall this is a well-balanced survey that does justice to the complexity of the encounter and the variety of possible responses. (Sept.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Bowler's exemplary review of debate over Charles Darwin's ideas about evolution indicates that they have been beleaguered since before they were published, more by other scientists than by churchmen. A great many other scientists were and are religious and, like most other religious people, feel uneasy about the challenges to divine omniscience and omnipotence that Darwin's concepts raised. Lamarck's pre-Darwinian notions about change through quasi-intentional mutation rather than random natural selection ministered powerfully to such unease, leading even Darwin's great, ostensibly atheist champion, Thomas Henry Huxley, to differ with the master (Lamarckism wasn't laid to rest until well into the twentieth century). A real eye-opener for many arrives with Bowler's demonstration that the anti-Darwinian creationism and intelligent design movements are newcomers to the conflict that represent a much more intransigent strain of dogmatic Christianity than pre-1950s Darwinians faced. A nonbeliever himself, Bowler yet concludes that physicist and Anglican priest John Polkinghorne's heady theological arguments are preferable to the rampant atheism of Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion*, 2006) for defending Darwin's indispensable theories. An invaluable resource. Olson, Ray This rich appraisal of the field, written by a scholar at the height of his powers, is full of insights and interesting material, all delivered in prose that is balanced, crisp, and effective. A real gem. (Janet Browne, Harvard University author of *Darwin*) Bowler, a professor of the history of science at Queen's University in Belfast, aims to show that "the renewed state of war between fundamentalists and atheistic Darwinists is not the only game in town," because "there have always been religious thinkers looking for a middle way" to integrate Christian and evolutionary ideas. While not himself an advocate of any "middle way," Bowler is a religious skeptic. He believes this stream of thought deserves more attention. Alongside outbreaks of controversy such as the Huxley-Wilberforce debates, the Scopes trial or contemporary battles over science education, Bowler portrays a broad movement, spearheaded by liberal Christians and religiously inclined evolutionists, to interpret evolution as God's plan. Integrating cultural and political factors into the historical description, Bowler sees a great deal at stake. Political and social beliefs about competition, cooperation, and human improbability also come into play, as well as classic theological questions of suffering, freedom, and moral responsibility or more recently, the value of animals and the environment... This is a well-balanced survey that does justice to the complexity of the encounter and the variety of possible responses. (Publishers Weekly 2007-07-09) In his fascinating, thorough, and authoritative book *Monkey Trials and Gorilla Sermons: Evolution and Christianity from Darwin to Intelligent Design*, Peter J. Bowler pays particular attention to theologians and scientists who have found a degree of harmony between evolution and Christianity. (Thomas Dixon *Times Literary Supplement* 2007-11-16) Peter Bowler, past president of the British Society for the History of Science, has spent most of his career demystifying Darwin's significance without also debunking the idea of biological evolution. This gives him just the right critical distance to do a history of the various evolution-creation controversies in the English-speaking world. This book, which includes a brief discussion of the recent U.S. dispute over intelligent design theory, achieves its stated goal well. (Steve Fuller *Times Higher Education Supplement* 2007-12-14) *Monkey Trials and Gorilla Sermons* is a notable achievement. The book's structure is admirably clear and efficient... exceptionally well-crafted for its intended general audience. Indeed, reading Bowler's book is a bit like watching a major league baseball player take batting practice. Even when routine, it is satisfying to watch a professional make something difficult look easy. (Matthew Day Church *History* 2008-06-01) Peter J. Bowler points out that extreme biblical literalism--of the sort that insists that creation took place as Genesis depicts it--may be more widespread now even than in 1859, when *The Origin of Species* was published. (Charles McGrath *New York Times* 2008-12-24)