

crime, Muslims killing Muslims and blaming the Serbs for propaganda. It is only one example of the horrors of the propaganda war and the gullibility of the Western news media.

At the very beginning of the war, the chief surgeon of the Bosnian army, Dr. Naim Kadic, over my vehement protest, permitted Bosnian army snipers to operate from the hospital roof and from several windows on the upper floors of our hospital while the lower floors were full of war victims: many civilian as well as combatant Muslims. Thus, he transformed a safe haven into a military target. The Western media was quick to report the daily shelling of the hospital by Serb artillery. They either did not know or did not care that Muslims had made it a military target.

In August 1992, I was approached by a British officer of the UNPROFOR (United Nations Protective Forces). He wanted to give me an official protest for the firing on his troops by Muslims from the hospital. Since I did not have the authority to accept such a document, I referred him to Dr. Kadic, who had become the administrative director of the hospital. His comment: "Dr. Kadic will not admit that there are people shooting from the hospital." I knew they were using the windows of my office for sniping.

The media stresses that Serbs occupy 70 percent of the land in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but they fail to mention that Serbs hold clear title to 64 to 70 percent of that land. They also fail to mention that Serbs are the farmers of the region and that Muslims have been the urbanites. Farmers always need more land than factory workers or civil servants.

Serbs lost the propaganda war early on in Croatia, even though they successfully defended the land they have owned there for centuries. Once the West had determined that the Serbs were the villains in Croatia, it was easy to shift the aggressors from Croatia to Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Muslims were happy to help maintain the image. Strange that military forces from Croatia have been invading Bosnia-Herzegovina for months, but there has been no serious talk of sanctions, embargoes, or bombs against Croatia.

The damage done to our spirit, vilified by the world and by our former allies and friends, will take much longer to heal than the bodies of the traumatized victims of this mindless war. I can attest

to that, since my wounds have healed. My spirit may never heal.

Dr. Borisa Starovic is dean of the Medical School at the University of Sarajevo. This story was told to and transmitted by Bruce Ralston, a businessman from Delaware who spent four months on a humanitarian mission to Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia, and Croatia.

Letter From London by Robin Lee

Arguing With Apes



It was all the way back in 1860, when Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, participated in an open debate with T.H. Huxley, Darwin's leading supporter, that at least for England the evolutionary debate was effectively decided once and for all. The bishop was judged to have lost the argument by virtue of his memorably snide query as to whether it was on the mother's or the father's side that his opponent was descended from an ape. With hindsight it would seem that the bishop could have amply justified his position if only he had claimed that Church doctrine relies not on the strength of argument but rather on faith.

According to a book recently published in England, *The Facts of Life: Shattering the Myth of Darwinism* by Richard Milton, scientists have not been playing it straight with us laymen. Our schoolchildren are taught about Mendel's experiments with garden peas and about industrial melanism in moths, and they perform genetic experiments on unsuspecting fruit flies in class. Yet even here, at the secondary-school level of biology, it seems there are still some serious unanswered questions that perplex even those who do not believe in the biblical Creation. Can acquired characteristics be inherited? Do better-adapted species arise spontaneously when the environment changes, or do existing variants merely take over? Is the scope for mutation unlimited? Is it gov-

erned solely by chance?

The natural history museums that we laymen subsidize through taxes "reconstruct" lifelike models of primitive man and display "chronologies" of the earth and its inhabitants without ever letting on that these are based on guesswork. In 1991, Mrs. Joan Ahrens, a resident of Capetown, was astonished to read of an archaeological find in her native South Africa. Rock paintings discovered in the bush had been analyzed by Oxford University's radio carbon accelerator unit as being 1,200 years old and were pronounced by experts to be the earliest attempts at artistic self-expression by the country's bushmen. The enraged housewife stepped forward to explain that the paintings had been produced in her art classes and subsequently removed from her garden by unknown vandals. In short, scientific dating methods can be wildly inaccurate; some scientists confess there is no conclusive fossil evidence to show that life could have evolved, or did evolve, from a common ancestor. Though familiar, reassuring, and almost universally accepted, neo-Darwinist theory does not rely on the kinds of facts and proofs that are generally associated with the scientific method.

Yet many of these scientists, confronted with the headline-grabbing revelations of Mr. Milton's exposé, have argued that the skeptic is out to mislead us laymen. Darwinism may not have a simple answer to everything, they maintain, but there is no alternative theory that is more plausible. The philosophical crux of the debate is weighted on the side of the somewhat circular reasoning of the "cock-up theory" of natural selection—the fittest survive, those who survive are the fittest—seasoned with catastrophism to explain the unexplainable: how life first emerged, why thousands of species have suddenly died or are missing from the fossil record, why huge amounts of helium are "missing" from the atmosphere, and other countless anomalies. On the other side of the argument are those who adhere to a "conspiracy theory," whether it be one of God the Creator, extraterrestrial colonization, some form of Lamarckism, or a governing intelligence inherent to living structures, such as that which is attributed to nuclear particles.

Mr. Milton's chief detractor is the eminent zoologist and author Richard Dawkins, who (could it be a coincidence?) is also at Oxford. According to

Dr. Dawkins, Mr. Milton's skeptical thesis is akin to the letters he routinely receives "from flat-earthers and other harmless fruitcakes." Writing in *New Statesman & Society*, he accused Mr. Milton of having an undisclosed Creationist motive—without, however, himself disclosing that the book contains a lengthy critique of his book *The Blind Watchmaker*. But what should most arouse the suspicions of the uncommitted layman is Dawkins' lengthy rail at the irresponsibility of the London publishers Fourth Est. for publishing Milton's book at all. At great length, he marvels that it was not blocked by an editor or referee with the kind of credentials that, presumably, would insure his agreement with Dr. Dawkins.

Of course it is not only professionals who might find it unlikely that the very foundations of scientific learning could be challenged by an amateur enthusiast, an outsider without formal training or impressive credentials working on the basis of little more than common sense and observation. Respect for expertise and accreditation, so widespread in our society, is difficult to reconcile in practice with the rather more idealistic belief that true progress and scientific discovery are more often than not the products of individualism and iconoclasm. And the current dispute over Darwinism may well prove impossible for the nonscientist to adjudicate. Perhaps the inconsistencies, vested interests, and circular reasoning are not as all-pervasive as Mr. Milton's account of recent findings makes them out to be. The main defense employed by the many who are rubbishing the book without reading it is that only the

scientists themselves can decide. However, this time it is not I, the layman, who is encroaching on the scientists' territory, but the scientists who are encroaching on mine. Dr. Dawkins writes in a layman's magazine, not a specialized journal, that there should be a foolproof bureaucratic mechanism to prevent a layman's ideas from being circulated among the general readership. He argues that although Mr. Milton conceals it behind a seemingly rational argument based on respected scientific research, and may not even realize it himself, he is no more than a Creationist apologist.

Actually, Mr. Milton accuses Darwinists of intellectual authoritarianism in their approach to science. If anything, Dr. Dawkins justifies this accusation with his arguments directed at the general reader. According to Dr. Dawkins, it is an attack on rationalism for this book to be available. Perhaps, having been challenged in the past only by Creationists, whose argument is not based on reason and so cannot be defeated by reason, Darwinists like Dr. Dawkins have lost their rational edge through lack of a credible adversary. Moreover, we are told, it is not just because our most eminent scientists think this book is rubbish that we should also think it is rubbish. We are asked to consult our own common sense. How could Darwin's theory of evolution not be true? If evolution did not happen, what did?

But if neo-Darwinist theory does indeed rely on such appeals to common sense, maybe it is not so strange for Mr. Milton to be attacking it on that basis. If Dr. Dawkins himself is inviting us to put the theory to the test of common sense,

then perhaps the layman is not so out of place as a judge. After all, mathematicians do not appeal to our common sense when they tell us that parallel lines do meet, and I have heard enough of recent research into chaos theory and fractile geometry to know that it is best to stay out of it. Darwinism, however, basks in the glory of being comprehensible and somehow obvious. (Charles Darwin himself, after all, was not a professional scientist but was trained as a priest.) Compared to him, Mr. Milton, who is an amateur geologist, an engineer by training, and for 20 years a science journalist, is brimming with credentials. Darwin's ideas, which gained acceptance because to rational thinkers they seemed reasonable, were published despite entrenched opposition and the centuries of received wisdom they contradicted. To say that it is the Darwinists of today who have inherited the characteristic bigotry, close-mindedness, and quasi-religious zeal of their erstwhile opponents does not begin to do justice to the full scale of the irony. When an Oxford debating society tried to organize a replay of the famous Wilberforce-Huxley confrontation of 130 years ago, Dr. Dawkins withdrew after he heard Mr. Milton was to take part.

What makes Darwinism so contentious a doctrine is that it is not confined to science. It underlies the fundamental political, economic, moral, and religious assumptions of everyone. Would it not seem in post-Thatcherite Britain, after years of science funding cuts and dwindling research resources, that scientists would be among the first to question the *reductio ad absurdum* of "the survival of the fittest"? Do they believe that if subsidies are cut, the "best" science will survive by natural selection? It is, after all, professional scientists like Dr. Dawkins the Darwinist, not renegade journalists like Mr. Milton the anti-Darwinist, whom the system protects from the ravages of market forces.

As for us ordinary, tax-paying ignoramuses, why should our questions and doubts, even when they are in book form, not be tolerated with courtesy and patience? John Stuart Mill, Darwin's great contemporary, believed that no orthodoxy is ever right. Only a doctrine which can defend itself against that radical claim is fit to survive.

Robin Lee is an editorial writer with the Daily Telegraph in London.

LIBERAL ARTS

AMERICAN 'INTELLIGENCE'

"... CIA officers are not all that brilliant. ... They make up for it by working hard and being thorough. ... I thought it amazing that a minor power like Britain should not trust a major one like America. But when I got to America, I found that Americans didn't necessarily trust the CIA either. One FBI agent said to me, "The CIA? They spy for the other side. We're here to catch them doing it."

—from Oleg Gordievsky's "Aldrich Ames, My Would-Be Killer,"
in the March 5, 1994, issue of the Spectator.

COMMONWEAL



Anna Mueck-Wodecki

Hillary Clinton and My Grandmother's Toenails

by Ron Courtney

My grandmother was a frugal lady. She was a warm, friendly, and loving person, but she could squeeze a dollar until George Washington's eyes crossed. When she frosted a cake she used only half of each ingredient in the recipe, so the frosting was paper-thin and tended to disappear after a day or two, but she always had a slice for us kids when we wanted it.

Grandmother's legendary parsimony extended to all areas of her life. For example, no one in the family can remember her going to see a doctor during her first 85 years. I'm sure she had her share of colds and flu, but she would never have been willing to pay for a doctor's advice or treatment unless it was absolutely necessary. Most people of her generation felt the same way about doctors, which is one of the primary reasons why medical care was far less expensive in Grandmother's day.

Being a practical person, Grandmother decided around age 86 to sell her house and rent an apartment in a "senior citizens' home," where she would have the security of other people around her and a professional staff to call on if needed. The high rent seemed to be justified

by the amenities offered. One of these amenities was free medical care.

Of course, the medical care was not free at all. It was paid for by Medicare and by the tenants themselves as part of their rent, but since none of the seniors ever had to write a check to pay for a doctor's visit, the medical care appeared to be free. This was when the great change in my grandmother's attitude toward doctors occurred.

One day when I was visiting Grandmother she told me she had just gotten back from the doctor. I was surprised to hear this because I knew of her long noninvolvement with the medical profession and because she appeared to be in excellent health. When I asked her what was the matter, she smiled and said, "Well, nothing. I just had my toenails clipped."

Her toenails clipped! I was stunned! Could this be my grandmother, the one who saved her used Christmas wrapping paper to reuse the following year, going to a doctor to have her toenails cut? Seeing my disbelief, she said, "It doesn't cost me a thing! All my doctor visits here are free."

Then I understood why my grandmother would reverse her lifelong attitude toward doctors, and why, as I later learned, she was a frequent visitor at the doctor's office although she had no real health problems other than the normal ones of aging. As long as there was a direct connection between her pocketbook and the doctor's office, Grandmother avoided doctors whenever possible. As soon as her medical care appeared to be free (or prepaid through her rent), going to the doctor became part of her regular routine. Of course, the same thing occurred to all the other residents of Grandmother's senior complex and the demand for medical care hit the stratosphere. The next year, and every year after that, the rent went up dramatically to pay for all this "free" health care. It is now so exorbitant that my grandmother would never have considered moving into the complex had she been asked to pay at today's rate. The senior complex is reputed to have serious financial difficulties.

My grandmother died of natural causes several years ago at age 94. Now along comes Hillary Clinton, who wants

to establish the same kind of health care for the entire country through a system of nationally socialized medicine. Thanks to Mrs. Clinton, we'll all be able to get our toenails clipped for "free." However, since the law of supply and demand works relentlessly on both small and large economic systems, the results of Mrs. Clinton's plan will be the same as those at Grandmother's apartment complex: an explosion of demand for medical attention followed by an enormous increase in medical costs.

Ah, but Mrs. Clinton also has a plan to solve the higher medical costs caused by her first plan: she will institute price controls on doctor's fees, hospital fees, prescription drugs, and anything else connected with the health of the American people. In other words, it will become a crime for doctors or nurses or hospital administrators to raise their prices to cover their increased costs. This kind of government "solution" to social problems was tried in the Soviet Union, and it eventually destroyed the economy and the whole fabric of society there; people like Mrs. Clinton are now so discredited that they can't even get a job clipping toenails in a Moscow beauty parlor. My grandmother lived long enough to see all this: it's too bad for all of us that Mrs. Clinton doesn't see it, too.

Ron Courtney writes from Locust Hill, Virginia.

The Death of Natural Causes

by Robert Weissberg

Let us begin with the obvious: Sooner or later, everyone dies. Even Bill and Hillary say they know that. No amount of money will head off the inevitable. We cannot "cure" death like we might rebuild our inner cities or clean up the air.

At best, we can use modern medicine to cheat death for a few years. Instead of dying at 50, a person may die at 70. Obviously, however, there are biological limits to this cheating. More important-