

accept the whole common descent hypothesis, they differ from the standard theistic evolutionist in that they do not see this happening by the unassisted processes prevalent in nature. Most would probably lean towards some type of 'progressive creation'. They do, however, form an important front of opposition to evolutionary naturalism, and in one sense a significant set of allies for Genesis creationists, if their

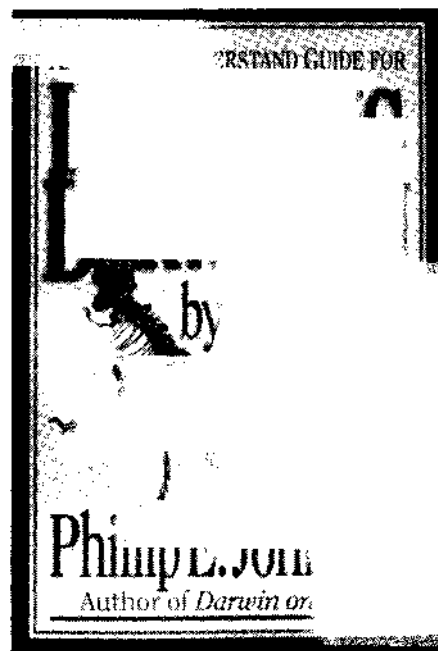
- work is kept in the appropriate perspective by these.
2. Naturally, I will be more motivated to track down the details of attacks on my work (and that of my immediate colleagues) than for every single critique by Ratzsch of creationists, but whenever I did do that, it did not inspire confidence in the 'honest broker' facade.
  3. Circular arguments (tautologies) are gener-

ally weak, because they provide no independent evidence for the proposition. For example, 'The sky is blue. Why? Because blue is the colour of the sky.' This is blatantly circular, because the second part assumes the very point its trying to explain. But circular arguments are formally valid. The fact that circular reasoning is involved doesn't change the fact that the sky really is blue.

## Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds

by Phillip E. Johnson  
InterVarsity Press,  
Downers Grove, Illinois

Reviewed by Michael J. Oard



Both laymen and scientists are often confused over the creation/evolution issue. Scientists

*... may know a lot of details, but they don't understand the basics' of evolutionary theory, (p. 11)*

This has been Phillip Johnson's experience ever since he entered the debate in 1991 with his first book, **Darwin on Trial**, which dealt with the scientific data disputing evolution. His second book, **Reason in the Balance**, discusses the philosophical, moral, and educational consequences of naturalism. His latest book is intended to prepare laymen to think critically on the origins issue.

Dr Johnson's first four chapters demonstrate that evolution survives in the intellectual world not so much because of scientific evidence but by propaganda and censorship. Johnson believes that the movie **Inherit the Wind** is an example of the unfair depiction that creationists receive in the hands of the media and the public school system. William Jennings Bryan and other Christians were cast as ignorant, bigoted 'fundamentalists'. The movie was largely responsible for

a closing of the public mind toward creation.

The mindset that the movie carefully developed continues to be promoted by what Johnson calls 'Microphone Man'. The news media and Hollywood carefully filter information so it always reinforces evolutionary ideology and omits any reference to creation as having any scientific validity. Few people seem to realise that the cast of characters in the movie have reversed roles in modern society. The evolutionist is now the one who is shutting other views out of the debate. As a result of this propaganda, many Christians have unknowingly accepted agnostic arguments and ways of thinking, as typified in a letter from a college student named Emilio (the subject of chapter 1).

In defence, Johnson states that we need to tune up our 'baloney detectors' to help discern when an evolutionist is using propaganda to avoid confronting the scientific weaknesses of evolution. Some of the baloney we should keep on the look out for are:

- (1) selective use of evidence,

- (2) appeals to authority,
- (3) *ad hominem* arguments,
- (4) straw men arguments,
- (5) begging the question,
- (6) lack of testability, and
- (7) vague terms and shifting definitions (equivocation).

I was recently made aware of this last rhetorical device in Jack Horner's latest book on dinosaurs and evolution:

*'Consider again what we mean by evolution — change through time. It's that simple!'*

With this simple definition, creationists would all be evolutionists. However, throughout the book, he speaks of dinosaurs within the framework of macroevolution. This is a typical example of 'bait and switch' that our baloney detectors should blast away.

Johnson's first four chapters focus on opening the mind, his last four give

insight on how to defeat Darwinism. He believes the best approach in the public square is to focus on intelligent design, especially in the biochemical realm as so marvellously presented in Michael Behe's book, **Darwin's Black Box**. In this way we create a wedge, widening the crack in the Darwinian log. Once the wedge is driven, his hope is that the debate will begin. One of Johnson's hopes for success rests upon his observing that intellectuals are not as confident as they were in the 1960s that a totally secular society works. We have

*'...an intellectual community that is itself confused and divided over the unanticipated consequences of modernism . . . Western Society will soon be ready to listen to a better idea', (p. 107)*

Dedicated Christians will have a chance to speak and witness to the world at large, Johnson believes. He then wonders whether we will have a better idea to offer. No matter how hard naturalistic scientists such as Richard Dawkins try, the evidence for design is an irrefutable argument for God's existence and power (Romans

1:20). This is where Johnson and Behe are at their best. Although Johnson does not seem to favour straightforward Genesis creation, I believe we must stretch forward gathering and upholding the evidence for a global Flood and a young Earth, as clearly taught in Scripture; this is the 'much better idea' we can offer.

## REFERENCE

1. Horner, J. R. and Dobb, E., 1997. **Dinosaur Lives — Unearthing an Evolutionary Saga**, Harper Collins, New York, p. 171.

# Climbing Mount Improbable

*by Richard Dawkins  
Penguin Books Ltd,  
Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England*

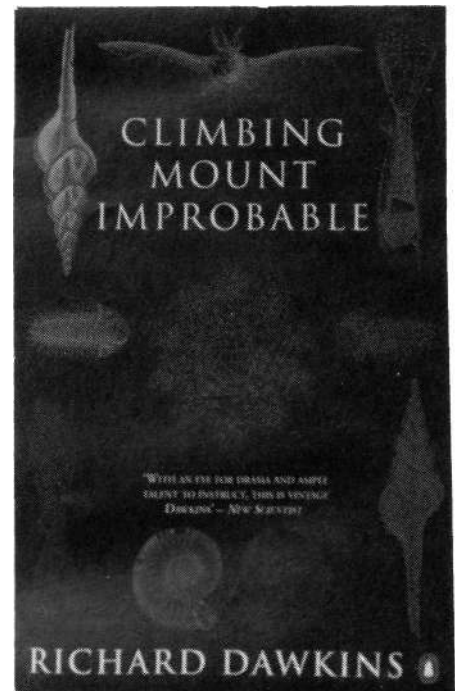
**Reviewed by Jonathan Sarfati**

This is the latest in a series of books by Richard Dawkins designed to show that it's possible to be an 'intellectually fulfilled atheist'.<sup>1</sup> Computer mogul Charles Simonyi recently endowed Dawkins with a post as 'Chair of Public Understanding of Science' at Oxford University, but the British author Paul Johnson called it 'Oxford's first Chair of Atheism'.<sup>2</sup> But true science involves repeatable, observable experimentation in the **present**, which includes physics, chemistry, experimental biology and geology, etc. Dawkins has made no notable contributions to any of these, or even to the history or philosophy of science. His main claim to fame is his ingenious story-telling about what **might** have happened in the unobservable **past**. For Dawkins sees the design argument as the strongest for theism (*cf.* Romans 1:22ff.), and he has led a long crusade trying to

show that mutations and natural selection can adequately explain all the complex structures in the living world. He is therefore a worthy successor to T. H. Huxley to the title of 'Darwin's Bulldog'. His tenacity of purpose in trying to show that there is no purpose is astounding.

But despite Dawkins' hero-worship of Darwin, Solomon had written, 'there is nothing new under the sun' (Ecclesiastes 1:9). The philosopher and priest G. H. Duggan, in reviewing a Dawkins book, pointed out that a form of Darwinism had been proposed by the ancient Greek philosopher Empedocles.<sup>3</sup> The underlying philosophy of evolution is that man can determine truth apart from God, and this philosophy started in Eden.

Creationists cannot afford to ignore Dawkins. Thus a recent book responding to anti-creationists,<sup>4</sup> while



excellent overall in my opinion, was justly criticised for overlooking Dawkins and making a small mistake as a result.<sup>5</sup> Dawkins has a widespread influence well out of proportion to the actual scientific merit of his books. This is partly due to man's rejection of God, and Dawkins tickles their ears the way they want. However, his message is anything but inspiring — we are robots programmed by DNA to replicate more copies of that DNA.

Dawkins writes in a lucid style, with never a dull moment — he throws