



[HOME](#)
[BOOKSTORE](#)
[ESSAYS](#)
[VIDEOS](#)
[PHOTOS](#)
[BLOG](#)

[GODTUBE](#)
[YOUTUBE](#)
[PANORAMIO](#)
[FAQ](#)
[LINKS](#)
[GENESIS WEEK](#)

Darwin BK: Response to Sara Joan Miles February 16, 2014 CL MAS GB

My Response to Sara Joan Miles' Review of my Book *The Dark Side of Darwin.*

By Dr. Jerry Bergman, AS, BA, MA, MEd, MSOH, MSBS, MPH, PhD, PhD, LPCC.

The first published negative review of my book *The Dark Side of Darwin*, out of 34 total reviews, was published by *The American Scientific Affiliation* (ASA) in their journal *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* by a professor at, ironically, a Baptist College. I joined the ASA on January 30, 1970, and since then have published around 30 articles in *Perspectives*. I was elected a fellow of ASA in April of 1983.

In short, it is my judgment that this so-called review is an irresponsible dishonest hatchet job that I will respond to below. I read about one book a week, mostly secular academic books, and from my reading it is clear that all of the major claims in my Darwin book are very well supported. Furthermore, as a professor for 43 years, one requirement is to determine if students actually read the book they completed a book report on, and it is clear that Miles did not even read my book or, at the least, at best, skimmed it. Furthermore, it is doubtful that she has read any scholarly book about Darwin the man, such as Janet Browne's two-volume set.

I briefly responded to her review earlier and sent a copy to the current Editor of *Perspectives*, James Peterson, who declined to publish my response. Furthermore, the previous editor, Arie Leegwater turned down everything I sent him for what I concluded

are frivolous reasons, and the last few manuscripts that I sent he never even bothered to reject them, or even correspond with me about why. I hope I am wrong, but I view this as one of many examples of ASA's growing hostility against those who, in researching Darwinism, find major problems with the theory and write about those problems.

Sara Joan Miles earned her PhD in 1988 under Doctors Richards, Debus, and Wimsatt for the thesis "Evolution and Natural Law in the Synthetic Science of Clemence Royer." She is currently emeritus professor of biology and history at a Baptist college named Eastern University and also posts on BioLogos, which has the following to say about her

Dr. Sara Joan Miles is an historian of science and Founding Dean Emerita of Esperanza College, Eastern University, St. Davids, PA. Before her retirement from Eastern in 2005, Dr. Miles taught in the History and Biology departments there, and previously taught biology, history and served as Health Professions Counselor at Wheaton College. She holds an M.R.E. from Texas Christian University, an M.S. in Biology from the University of Illinois, and Ph.D. in History of Science from the University of Chicago. Miles did additional graduate work in anthropology at Hartford Seminary, and served as a missionary-teacher for three years in Zaire (BioLogos, 2012, p. 1).

The faith statement of Eastern University where she teaches espouses a literal view of at least the creation of the first man and women:

We believe that the Bible, composed of Old and New Testaments, is inspired by God and serves as the rule of faith and practice, being the authoritative witness to the truth of God embodied in Jesus Christ. . . . We believe in God the Creator, author of all life and our salvation. We believe that God created human beings, male and female, in the image of God as an expression of God's eternal love. (http://www.eastern.edu/welcome/doctrinal_statement.html).

In light of Miles behavior, I find it difficult to believe that this statement has any meaning for her, or that she honestly subscribes to it.

Background to the Dark side of Darwin

The Dark Side of Darwin was the result of 30 years research and reading over 60

biographies on Darwin. My book has close to 1,000 footnotes. Before it was published, it was peer reviewed by several doctoral level historians who specialize in Darwin. My response to Sara Joan Miles' review of my book *The Dark Side of Charles Darwin* is that she uses the same technique to denigrate my book that she accuses me of using, namely *ad hominem*.

For example, to demean my research she calls me an "amateur historian." The fact is, I had a minor in history in college, have published numerous articles in peer reviewed history journals, have a chapter on history in a scholarly book published by Columbia University Press, and have published two peer reviewed books on historical matters, and am in the process of publishing two others. My many other publications in the area of history include the following:

1. "Demography Research of Ancient Civilizations." *CEN Tech Journal*, Vol. 7(2), 1993, pp. 140-150.
2. "A Brief History of the Theory of Spontaneous Generation." *CEN Tech. Journal*, 7(1):73-81 1993. (Reprinted in *The Investigator*, July, 1994, Vol. 37, pp. 8-27.
3. "A History of Evolutions Teaching of Women's Inferiority" *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*. 48(3):164-178 Sept 1996.
4. "The Modern Religious Objection to Mandatory Flag Salute in America; A History and Evaluation." *Journal of Church and State*. 39(2):215-236 Spring 1997.
5. "A History of the Piltdown Hoax." *Rivista di Biologia/ Biology Forum*. 96(3):457-484. Jan-Feb. 2003.
6. "The History of Hesperopithecus: The Human-Ape Link that Turned Out to be a Pig." *Rivista di Biologia/ Biology Forum*. 99(2):205-224. 2006. May-August.
7. "The American Scientific Affiliation Booklet Controversy" *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*. 58(4):303-309. December, 2006.
8. "Inherit the Wind: A Lesson in Distorting History." *Answers Research Journal* 3:61-69. 2010.
9. "For the Love of freedom". *Michigan History*. September/October 2011. 95(5):31-36.
10. "Toledo Dentist Charles Betts and the Health Crusade Against Aluminum." *Ohio History*. 118:91-111. 2011.
11. "History of the International Society of Bible Collectors" (with Carl Johnson and William Paul). 5 pp. <http://www.biblecollectors.org/History.htm>.

12. *A History and Evaluation of Noninvasive Medical Diagnostic Treatment and Research Techniques.* Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1992, 498 pp.
13. *Blood Transfusions: A History and Evaluation of the Religious Biblical and Medical Objections.* Introduction by Dr. Robert Finney. Clayton, CA: Witness Inc., 1994, 208 pp. Cover by David Merrick.
14. "A Brief History of the Failure of American Corrections." *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*, 37(1):27-37, March 1986.
15. "The Jehovah's Witnesses' Experience in the Nazi Concentration Camps; A History of Their Conflicts with the Nazi State" *Journal of Church and State*. Winter 1996 38 (1): 87-113
16. "The Jehovah's Witness Upbringing of President Eisenhower." *Kansas History : A Journal of the Central Plains*. 21 (3): 148-167, Autumn 1998.
17. "A History of the Modern Creation Movement and the Continuing Modern Cultural Wars." *Journal of American Culture*. 26(2):243-262. June, 2003.

I was unable to locate a single book that she wrote in a Google and Amazon search or the other sources that I checked. Nor could I locate *any* published works by her except two articles in *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* in 1991 and 1993 and one article titled *A supplement to the American Journal of Botany* published in June of 1993. I also checked her résumé submitted to ASA which listed one other article. It appears that she has almost no publication record as is required to be a serious historian. Her only qualification of "historian" seems to be her Ph. D. degree.

Her ASA resume states she was "ordained by the Disciples of Christ." Many churches of that denomination celebrate Darwin Day by giving sermons very laudatory of Darwin. It is ironic that they do not celebrate the Apostle Paul's day or even honor a prominent church father, such as St Augustine. Many Disciples of Christ churches celebrate Jesus' and Darwin's birthdays, which says something about Darwin's status.

She opined that my book was the result of what I found in the literature to "bolster what he apparently believed before he began his research." Actually, the exact opposite is

true. In the past I had even published articles laudatory of Darwin and, as I researched him further, my conclusions about Darwin changed drastically. The fact is, my book is primarily based upon an extensive review of the literature, and all of my conclusions came straight from the peer-reviewed literature or directly from Darwin's own published writings.

She inferred that my thesis was that "the academic/scholarly community has engaged in a conspiracy to suppress the 'real' story of Charles Darwin" when, in fact, all of my conclusions and the evidence that I cited were a *result* of an extensive review of the mainline well-documented scholarly literature on Darwin, plus my study of Darwin's own writings.

Her "review" illustrates one of the arguments made in my book, namely that critics of Darwinism will be attacked, largely with *ad hominem* arguments, not evidence. The fact is, Darwin is the symbol for a worldview:

One can articulate the correlation between Darwin and his sympathizers in the following way: whereas Darwin had introduced the theory of "natural selection" in the *Origin*, turning it into the "Bible" for evolutionary thought ever since, he wrote as just another "Darwinist" in the *Descent*, where he applied evolutionary insights to human nature (Johnson, 2010, p. 6).

Miles first tries to claim that Darwin did not plagiarize the major views that he is given credit for today, such as natural selection. Then she tries to justify Darwin's plagiarizing by claiming that "Science does not give priority to the individual who first proposes a theory or publicizes an idea," noting the well-known case of Leibniz and Newton that, ironically, was precisely over "who first proposes a theory or publicizes an idea." As scientist Dr. Brooks wrote "being first to a solid result is everything to the scientist" (2011, p. 229).

Some of the evidence for the plagiarism claims that I reviewed may have been incorrect, but it is well documented that Darwin's main contribution was to widely publicize the theory of evolution by natural selection, not originate the theory. This is so obvious that, as Hollingdale wrote, "It is unnecessary to stress that Darwin did not invent that theory but it is necessary to stress that ... after Darwin it appeared to be the proved theory" (1999, p. 72). Professor Eugene Koonin stated bluntly that "Of course, Darwin did not discover evolution and did not offer the first coherent description of evolution" (2009, p. 1011).

Who was first is critical in science, and the plagiarism issue is critical partly because, as I documented, evolution by natural selection is widely considered the greatest idea ever promoted in the history of science, and Darwin's 1859 book the most important book ever written, even though Darwin largely reneged on several of his major ideas in his 1895 revision.

Furthermore, as Dr. Morton Myers, documented in his book *Prize Fight, The Race and the Rivalry to be the first in Science* (New York: Macmillan, 2012) who is first is of *central importance* now in science, and has been for at least the past two centuries.

In a book titled "Who Did it First" Professor Breverton wrote "the *Origin of the Species* theory was discovered in 1858 by Alfred Russel Wallace of Wales," adding that

Wallace was the first to propose a theory of evolution due to natural selection, which prompted Charles Darwin to publish *On the Origin of the Species* in 1859. In 1858 Wallace was a young scientist working in the Pacific, and he sent an academic paper to Charles Darwin (1809-1882) on the tendency of varieties of species to depart from the original type. Darwin quickly used its context to present it as a joint paper while Wallace was still abroad, thereby ... [linking] Darwin's name with the Greatest single discovery in the life sciences... Darwin immediately used Wallace's theory as the framework for his own research of the previous 30 years. Wallace is now almost forgotten, while Darwin and the *Origin of the Species* are known around the world... During the period 1848-70 Wallace

was researching and collecting overseas for all but eight years, with little opportunity of competing with Darwin's prestige amongst the scientific community at home. Darwin only spent five years overseas, ... between 1831 and 1836, as a self-funded 'gentleman naturalist', whereas Wallace was living rough in jungles and swamps [for many years] (2011, p. 226).

Actually, the theory of evolution by natural selection also predates Wallace, and a new book titled *Darwin's Ghosts* supports my conclusion. The book's cover announcement stated that the book

tells the story of the collective discovery of evolution, from Aristotle, ... to Al-Jahiz, an Arab writer in the first century, from Leonardo da Vinci, searching for fossils in the mine shafts of the Tuscan hills, to Denis Diderot in Paris, exploring the origins of species while under the surveillance of the secret police, and the brilliant naturalists of the Jardin de Plantes, finding evidence for evolutionary change in the natural history collections stolen during the Napoleonic wars.

The review added that

Evolution was not discovered single-handedly, ... contrary to what has become standard lore, but is an idea that emerged over many centuries, advanced by daring individuals across the globe who had the imagination to speculate on nature's extraordinary ways, and who had the courage to articulate such speculations at a time when to do so was often considered heresy (emphasis added).

The fact is, Darwin knew full well what he did was improper. The promotional review of *Darwin's Ghosts* adds that, on Christmas of 1859, only

one month after the publication of *On the Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin received an unsettling letter. He had expected criticism; in fact, letters were arriving daily. But this letter was different. It accused him of *failing to acknowledge his predecessors, of taking credit for a theory that had already been discovered by others. Darwin realized that he had made an error in omitting from Origin of Species any mention of his intellectual forebears.* Yet when he tried to trace all of the natural philosophers who had laid the groundwork for his theory, he found that history had already forgotten many of them (publishers review for *Darwin's Ghost* on Amazon.com, 2012).

One example where Darwin himself acknowledged the priority of someone else was documented by Science Historian Dr. Rampino (2011). Professor Rampino wrote

that in 1831

the Scottish horticulturalist Patrick Matthew (1790-1874) published a remarkable pre-Darwinian formulation of the law of natural selection (he used the term ‘natural process of selection’) in ... his book *Naval Timber and Arboriculture*. In his brief exposition of natural selection, Matthew wrote,

There is a natural law universal in nature, tending to render every reproductive being the best possibly suited to its condition ... As the field of existence is limited and preoccupied, it is only the hardier, more robust, better suited to circumstance individuals, who are able to struggle forward to maturity, these inhabiting only the situations to which they have superior adaptation and greater power of occupancy than any other kind; the weaker, less circumstance suited, being prematurely destroyed. This principle is in constant action, it regulates the colour, the figure, the capacities, and instincts; those individuals whose colour or covering are best suited to concealment or protection from enemies, or defense from vicissitude and in clemencies of climate, whose figure is best accommodated to health, strength, defense, and support; whose capacities and instincts can best regulate the physical energies to self-advantage according to the circumstances—in such immense waste of primary and youthful life, *those* only come forward to maturity from the strict ordeal by which Nature tests their adaptation to her standard perfection and fitness to continue their kind by reproduction

Rampino added that shortly after the publication of Darwin’s

Origin of Species in 1859, he [Matthew] wrote a letter to the journal *The Gardeners’ Chronicle* to point out his priority In answer to his letter, Darwin (1860) acknowledged that Matthew had ‘anticipated by many years the explanation which I have offered of the origin of species, under the name of natural selection.’ And he states that ‘Mr. Patrick Matthew ... gives precisely the same view on the origin of species as that ...[was] propounded by Mr. Wallace and myself ... He clearly saw the full force of the principle of natural selection.’ Darwin communicated this development to Wallace on 18 May 1860, writing ... a Mr. Pat Matthew, a Scotchman, published in 1830 a work ... [in which] he gives most clearly but very briefly in half-dozen paragraphs our view of natural selection. It is most complete case of anticipation (Darwin 1888) ... Wallace (1905) observed, ‘To my mind ... Patrick Matthew ... anticipated the main ideas in *The Origin of Species*’ Furthermore, for Matthew (1860b) ‘... the conception of this law of Nature came intuitively as a self-evident fact, almost without effort of concentrated thought ... it was by a general glance at the scheme of Nature that I estimated the production of species as an *a priori* recognizable fact’ (2011, pp. 227-228).

Ironically, Dr. Miles appears to deny what Darwin himself admitted.

Dr. Miles also claimed that I attacked Darwin because “he enjoyed hunting” when, as far as I could determine, he killed animals *solely* for the enjoyment of killing, not hunting. In Darwin’s own words, he once “beat a puppy ... simply from enjoying the sense of power.” there is a big difference between hunting and taking sadistic enjoyment in killing puppies.

She mentioned the fact that racism existed before and after Darwin, ignoring the fact that, as Stephen Jay Gould determined from his extensive study on this question, “Biological arguments for racism may have been common before 1859, but they increased by orders of magnitude following the acceptance of [Darwin’s] evolutionary theory” (Gould, 1977, 127–128).

She stated that Darwin “possibly had psychological issues.” The fact is, not possibly, but he *clearly did have* major “psychological issues” and at least four books and hundreds of articles detail his severe mental problems based largely on Darwin’s own extensive writings about his major problems in this area. Dr. George Pickering, in an extensive study of Darwin’s illness, concluded that Darwin became an “invalid recluse,” after around age 30. The phrase “possibly had psychological issues” hardly begins to describe Darwin’s mental health condition.

I then cite the evidence that his theory was, in Darwin’s own words, “like committing a murder” because it destroyed the major reason people then, and now, give for believing in God, namely the evidence for design in the natural world (Romans 1:3). I then reviewed the arguments that support the thesis that his guilt over this goal was a major cause of his psychological illness.

She then attempts to excuse Darwin’s sins, writing “What if Darwin made

mistakes? What if he held ideas which [sic] we now know to be wrong?" If Darwin made mistakes, then what is wrong with noting these mistakes as I did? Obviously, Dr. Miles does not like scholars writing about Darwin's many mistakes, but evidently would prefer to see his mistakes suppressed. She writes:

What if he did criticize his colleagues, enjoyed hunting (including killing) animals, had unorthodox (or maybe even no) religious views, possibly had psychological issues, or had doubts about his theory? If we rejected every scientist who exhibited these traits, along with his (or her) theory, we would be back in the Stone Age. Newton would be out, since he was heterodox in theology, was viewed as less than congenial by some of his colleagues and has been described as a "solitary scholar," performed alchemical experiments, and was involved in a priority dispute for many years with Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz over who invented the calculus. James Watson and Francis Crick, the "discoverers" of the double helical structure of DNA, unethically "appropriated" Rosalind Franklin's research and were sexists, and Crick, at least, was a philosophical materialist and a eugenicist (2012, p. 134).

In essence, Miles says it is appropriate to condone wrong behavior because other scientists have committed the same sins. In Brooks' words

scientists take drugs, they follow crazy dreams, they experiment on themselves and on one another, and occasionally they die in the process. They fight 'sometimes physically, but mostly in intellectual battles. They try to entrap one another, standing in their colleagues' way to block progress and maintain the lead. They break all the rules of polite society, trampling on the sacred, showing a total disregard for authority (Brooks, 2012, p. 6).

Furthermore, they even

commit fraud or deceive or manipulate others... conjure up seemingly ridiculous ideas, then fight tooth and nail to show that the ideas are not only far from ridiculous, but exactly how things really are... Science is peppered with successes that defy rational explanation and failures that seem even more illogical... This is not the 'wacky' science, the crazy things that happen on the fringes of research. This is the mainstream. These anarchies are behind many of the Nobel Prizes of the last few decades... It really does seem that, in science, anything goes. And this is no modern phenomenon. Science has always been this way (Brooks, 2012, p. 6).

The problem is:

Science is a fight to the intellectual death, but not between equal adversaries. It takes place in a gladiatorial arena where the challenger has to overcome not only the established champion, but also his or (more rarely) her supporters. And, whether in attack or defense, the fight is rarely clean (Brooks, 2012, p. 214).

Does Miles condone all of this behavior? If one wrote a book about the faults of Liebniz, Watson, or Crick, would Miles write the following about books on these scientists?

Ad hominem arguments, which are the essence of this book, provide irrelevant and insufficient grounds for evaluating scientific theories. [in this book I did not evaluate a scientific theory and if she read the book she would know this.] Just as scientific hagiographies distort the scientist and his or her work by portraying an idealized person, books such as Bergman's distort the individual and his or her accomplishments [she gives no evidence that I distorted Darwin, none] by demonizing the person [I did not demonize Darwin, just reported the facts]. Neither is good scholarship and both should be eschewed (Miles, 2011, p. 134).

So far several hundred students, many of them bright medical students, have read my book and did a review, all very laudatory for what they concluded was a very balanced approach to examining Darwin.

Books have been written about the dark side of the scientists she mentions above, and most all were very favorably reviewed. Only a book such as *The Dark Side of Darwin* could produce such an attack as Miles displayed because Darwin is openly held up to be a god by many. Professor Meyer's book covers "the Dark Side of Science" (2012, pp. 47-67) and all of the reviews that I have seen on the book are favorable. This and other comments indicate to me that she did not even read my book. Several chapters of my book on Darwin show that the core of Darwin's theory, gemmules and natural selection as a creative force, were wrong.

I agree that “Ad hominem arguments that distort... by demonizing the person” are inappropriate but this tactic is “the essence of” Miles’ review, and thus her review is not “good scholarship and ... should be eschewed.” Why does Miles not apply this good advice to herself? Clearly, Miles does not want my book read by others, and she uses blatant ad hominem arguments and distortions as well as lifting my ideas out of their context to achieve her censorship goal. This was by far the worst review of the over 200 reviews of the 30 books that I have published.

A friend related to me that there are primarily two people that you can get into big trouble for criticizing, Mohammad and Darwin. How true. To refute my book she needs to extensively review the literature on Darwin’s mental health and show that he was hardly sick a day in his life, or at least had good mental and physical health. Furthermore she, at the least, needs to prove that

1. Darwin hunted only for food, and not for the pure pleasure of killing living things.
2. Darwin was the first person to propose evolution by natural selection.
3. The theory of pangenesis and gemmules has been verified by scientific research.
4. Darwin’s goal was not “like committing Murder” of God by demolishing the main reason people give for believing in God, namely the cosmological argument.

Dr. Miles did not even begin to address any of these issues. If a University of Chicago Ph.D. cannot do better than this, I am even more confident that I am clearly on the right track. She claims my book is “replete with... errors” and “numerous inconsistencies in the argumentation and many evidences of poor editing” but does not mention even one example (p. 133). A few typo errors did slip by, but I would guess no more than average. I always send my papers to reviewers to point out flaws or mistakes in my work, if any,

so I can improve my scholarship and writing. Unfortunately, Professor Miles said nothing that could help me to improve, or even revise, my book. Nothing.

References

Breverton, Terry. 2012. *Breverton's Encyclopedia of Inventions*. Quercus, London.

Brooks, Michael. 2011. *Free Radicals: The Secret Anarchy of Science*. New York: The Outlook Press.

Gould, Steven J. 1977. *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, Belknap-Harvard Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Hollingdale, Richard J. 1999. *Nietzsche: the Man and his Philosophy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Johnson, Dirk. 2010. *Nietzsche's Anti-Darwinism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Koonin, Eugene. 2009. Darwinian Evolution in the Light of Genomics. *Nucleic Acids Research*. 37(4):1011-1034.

Miles, Sara Joan. 2012. Review of *The Dark Side of Charles Darwin*. *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*. 64(2):133-135. June.

Meyers, Morton. 2012. *Prize Fight: The Race and the Rivalry to be the First in Science*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Rampino, Michael R. 2011. "Darwin's Error? Patrick Mathew and the Catastrophic Nature of the Geological Record. *Historical Biology*. 23(2-3)227-230. June September.

Stott, Rebecca. 2012. *Darwin's Ghosts: In Search of the First Evolutionists*. UK: Bloomsbury.

It became known as Darwin's moth, a symbol both of our changing landscape and of our understanding of its effect on the natural world. Sightings of the species have declined by 60 per cent over the last 40 years, but if the dark form has suffered more it is likely to be seized on by supporters of Darwin to support his theory. 'It's an iconic moth, the one that everyone learns about at school because it is such an amazing example of natural selection,' said Mr Fox. But a new book, *The Durrells Of Corfu*, by family friend Michael Haag, reveals for the first time the secret of why the Durrells really went to Corfu. By drawing on the family's letters and an unpublished memoir by Gerald, it shows a darker tale than *My Family* – one cloaked in tragedy and driven by alcohol abuse and a nervous breakdown. The Indian dream turns into a nightmare. The hilarious opening pages of *My Family And Other Animals* have the family selling up simply because Larry tells them, "What we all need is sunshine." All this was avoiding the truth. As Gerald's autobiographical fragments reveal, the real reason was that their mother was falling back into heavy drinking, and Larry decided that decisive action must be taken. *My Response to Sara Joan Miles' Review of the Dark Side of Darwin*. Dr. Jerry Bergman. *Anti-Evolution, History*. 2012-11-19. *Hitler and the Nazi Darwinian Worldview*. Karl C. Priest. *Books, History*. Steve Mirsky Denies the Influence of Darwin on Eugenics and Racism. Dr. Jerry Bergman. *Anthropology, Social Issues*. 2008-05-27. *Slaughter of the Dissidents: The Case of Iowa State University Professor Guillermo Gonzalez Ph.D.* Dr. Jerry Bergman. *Credibility of Creationists, Intelligent Design*.