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Abusing Science: The Case against Creationism — Philip Kitcher. This book was written by a philosopher of science for concerned citizens whether their background in science is minimal or they are professional scientists. According to the preface, the author has tried to explain what the creationists say and why they are wrong in such a way that anyone who is interested may find out. By examining the "scientific pretensions" of the creationists he has tried to convey a sense of the nature and methods of science. MIT Pr, 1982, 213 p., $15.

Biology of Spiders — Rainer F. Foelix. Intended for anyone interested in biology, especially those who find spiders particularly intriguing creatures. The original version of this book appeared in German *(Biologie der Spinnen,* Stuttgart, G.T. Verlag, 1979). The preface indicates that this book is a fairly close translation of that edition although some new findings, paragraphs and pictures have been added. Harvard U Pr, 1982, 306 p., illus., $30.

Camouflage and Mimicry — Denis Owen. Shows how, by using a combination of color and shape, many animals provide themselves with elaborate and highly effective disguises. The photographs and drawings enhance the text. U of Chicago Pr, Survival in the Wild, 1982, 158 p., color and b&w illus., paper, $10.95.

Feeding Strategy — Jennifer Owen. The aim of this new series, Survival in the Wild, is to describe and explain the diversity of strategies displayed by the living world. Each book covers a biological activity vital to survival and describes the array of physical and behavioral adaptations which have evolved as a result of fierce competition. This book discusses different sources of food and shows how a variety of animal groups have evolved different strategies for exploiting the different food sources. U of Chicago Pr, 1982, 160 p., color and b&w illus., paper, $10.95.

Prehospital Emergency Care & Crisis Intervention — Brent Q. Hafen and Keith J. Karren. A text for use in training emergency medical technicians. Morton Pub (Scribner), 1982, 639 p., color and b&w illus., paper, $19.95.

Sexual Strategy — Tim Halliday. In no other aspect of their lives do animals show so much variety as they do in their sexual activities. This book describes examples of sexual behavior in many different kinds of animals and shows that, beneath this immense variety, there is a set of basic rules that has determined the course of evolution of sexual behavior. U of Chicago Pr, Survival in the Wild, 1982, 158 p., color and b&w illus., paper, $10.95.

21 Astounding Science Quizzes — Grace Marmor Spruch and Larry Spruch. A collection of fun, informative quizzes for anyone interested in science. The answers are included together with bits of information about correct and incorrect answers; "sometimes the incorrect answers are more interesting than the correct ones." Most of the quizzes originally appeared in *The Sciences,* a publication of the New York Academy of Sciences. Har-Row, 1982, 149 p., cartoons by Nurit, paper, $4.95.

...Letters

Oversimplified viewpoints

Some of the viewpoints expressed in "Was Lucy a Climber? ..." (SN: 8/21/82, p. 116) seem oversimplified. Pardon me if I put my well-arched foot in my inexpert mouth, but not even modern man is 100 percent terrestrial. I frequently see Lucy-sized *Homo sapiens* climbing in trees, on jungle gyms, and up ropes. I once saw a small pinon pine tree swarming with eight or ten of the creatures. They also brachiate across monkey bars.

With regard to early hominid locomotion and lifestyle, perhaps there were age differences, sex differences, and even cultural differences between different groups of hominids. I would not expect our close relatives to be simple.

Leslie Dendy
Los Alamos, N.M.

Whose fault?

I enjoyed the article "Can You Count on Your Computer?" (SN: 7/31/82, p. 72), but I was more amused than informed. The assertion that such numerical errors are essentially a fault in computing engines is extremely misleading. The problem comes because we use computers as arithmetic engines, rather than as algebraic engines. The lowering cost of the mechanics of computation should make the use of computers to perform algebra more common, but in the interim the programmer needs to keep control of it while he does his automatic arithmetic.

The only real test of a physical model of high numeric complexity is physical reasonableness, and I do not see much point in blaming the computer for doing as it is told, after all, garbage in, garbage out.

James W. Telford
Reno, Nev.

Please use your cortex

In Evolution of the Cortex (SN: 7/31/82, p. 76) it is concluded from Dr. James Hill's research that early, small-brained mammals became extinct because their environments became more complex. Hill showed that rats treated with MAM in the womb had abnormally small cortexes as adults, and were unable to deal with the complexities and stress of an experimental environment.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to generalize this result to extinct mammals. First, a rat treated with MAM is not a good experimental substitute for an extinct mammal; one cannot recreate extinct mammals by incapacitating modern rodents or any other living animals, as evolution is not a simple process of addition. Second, the MAM treatment may have damaged other parts of the brain in addition to stunting cortex growth. Third, it is by no means clear that extinction of early mammals was precipitated by a significant increase in the complexity of their environments. Fourth, environmental complexity is difficult to measure, but it is most likely that natural environments are more complex and varied than any laboratory environment.

While Dr. Hill's work is interesting, it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions about anything but laboratory rats from his results.

Alexander Hiam
Berkeley, Calif.

Correction: The chart on principal volcanic eruptions since A.D. 1880 (SN: 8/21/82, p. 122) indicates that each of three major eruptions in 1902 induced global cooling of 0.3°C. In fact, the cumulative effect was 0.3°C.