



## Bully for Brontosaurus: Reflections in Natural History

By Stephen Jay Gould

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Stephen Jay Gould has a wide range of interests, and for many years he has shared his enthusiasms in the pages of *Natural History* and the *New York Review of Books*, among other journals. His passions include baseball, the puzzles of evolutionary theory, and the game of scholarly detection as it applies to questions such as, "What became of dinosaurs, anyway?". He answers entertainingly, but never talks down to his readers. Gould is one of modern natural science's great popularizers, but he shuns the temptation to make the giant reptiles of prehistory the Smurfs of the 1990s, in the manner of a certain purple dinosaur. The 35 pieces gathered here make for fine browsing, full of sideways glances and digressions that eventually make sense.

#### From Publishers Weekly

Successor to *The Panda's Thumb*, *The Flamingo's Smile* and other books, this collection of essays from *Natural History* magazine may be Gould's finest to date. Focusing on evolution, oddities of nature, remote connections between historical figures and the battle against creationism, the author is severely critical of science education in the U.S. and, in "The Case of the Creeping Fox Terrier," textbook publishers who fail to adequately update their revisions. He introduces the (French) Royal Commission of 1784 and its investigation of Mesmerism as an example of logic; discourses on the real origin of baseball; attempts to reconstruct the human family tree. In "Justice Scalia's Misunderstanding," Gould chides Antonin Scalia for his dissent in the 1987 Supreme Court creationism case; the justice, he argues, equated creation and evolution. Whether his topic is typewriter design, the technical triumph of Voyager or Joe DiMaggio's hitting streak, Gould holds our attention. His essays are illuminating, instructive and fun to read. Photos. BOMC selection; History Book Club featured alternate.

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#### From Library Journal

Gould is a masterful essayist whose previous collections, such as *The Flamingo's Smile* (LJ 9/15/85), as well as other titles, notably *Wonderful Life* (LJ 9/1/89), have been well received. Most of the essays here, some with added postscripts and notes, were selected from his column in *Natural History* magazine (1985-90). Like those in his previous collections, these pithy essays focus on evolution and the workings of science. Gould's fans, serious readers many of whom eagerly await his essays to appear in book form, will find these works fascinating, literate, and often challenging--vintage Gould. Highly recommended for academic and public libraries. Previewed in *Prepub Alert*, LJ 12/90.

- *Joseph Hannibal, Cleveland Museum of Natural History*

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