### • Contents •

A Baseball Primer for British Readers A Modest Proposal	xiii 1
Part One	
How Shall We Read and Spot a Trend?	
1. Huxley's Chessboard	7
2. Darwin Amidst the Spin Doctors	17
Biting the Fourth Freudian Bullet	17
Can We Finally Complete Darwin's Revolution?	21
3. Different Parsings, Different Images of Trends	30
Fallacies in the Reading and Identification of Trends	30
Variation as Universal Reality	38
PART Two	
Death and Horses: Two Cases for the Primacy of Variation	
4. Case One: A Personal Story	45
5. Case Two: Life's Little Joke	57

## PART THREE

#### The Model Batter: Extinction of 0.400 Hitting and the Improvement of Baseball

6.	Stating the Problem	77
7.	Conventional Explanations	80
8.	A Plausibility Argument for General Improvement	89
9.	0.400 Hitting Dies as the Right Tail Shrinks	98
10.	Why the Death of 0.400 Hitting Records Improvement	
	of Play	111
11.	A Philosophical Conclusion	129

# Part Four

#### The Modal Bacter: Why Progress Does Not Rule the History of Life

12.	The Bare Bones of Natural Selection	135
13.	A Preliminary Example at Smallest Scale, with Some	
	Generalities on the Evolution of Body Size	147
14.	The Power of the Modal Bacter, or Why the Tail Can't	
	Wag the Dog	167
	An Epitome of the Argument	167
	The Multifariousness of the Modal Bacter	175
	No Driving to the Right Tail	195
	A Note on the Fatal Weakness of the Last Straw	213
15.	An Epilog on Human Culture	217
	Bibliography	231
	Index	238