



Elaine Morgan's first career consisted of writing plays, documentaries, and biographies for BBC television. Her contributions in this field brought her a dozen awards, including three BAFTA's, a Prix Italia, and the Royal Television Society's Writer of the Year award.

She began writing about evolution in 1972, when her first book *The Descent of Woman* became an international best seller. More recent titles include *The Scars of Evolution* (1990), *The Descent of the Child* (1994) and *The Aquatic Ape Hypothesis* (1997).

In scientific circles, she is best known in connection with Professor Alister Hardy's ideas about a possible aquatic influence on early human evolution. The theory is still widely regarded as beyond the pale, but her support of it has rescued it from total oblivion.

Jacket design: Peter Batchelor

The interface between Darwinism and politics was the theme of Steven Pinker's book *The Blank Slate*. He claimed that hard scientific evidence validates the "Tragic Vision" of human nature and the political attitudes that flow from it. He also warned against left-wing fanatics who were, he believed, conspiring to suppress that simple fact.

This book reviews the same evidence and reaches different conclusions. The early chapters revisit turbulent debates on Darwinism in the past, which were marked by demonstrations of outrage – first from the right, and later from the left. These disputes intensified research by participants on both sides.

Today, dissenting voices from within the scientific community are rare. There is a sense that the old disputes have all been resolved. The possibility of bias is discounted, since new techniques have made the study of human nature commensurable, and you can't argue with mathematics. The new approach is particularly welcome to those economists who enthusiastically share its basic assumptions.

Pinker's List injects a note of scepticism. It reminds us of some loose ends that were never tied up, and it attempts to trace exactly when – and why – Darwinian thinking began to be diverted along its present stultifying path.

ISBN 09525620 22

EILDON

# Pinker's List

Elaine Morgan

# Pinker's List

Elaine Morgan

Science books for the general reader have concentrated on explaining to laymen, in terms they can understand, the way a scientist's mind works. It is a laudable aim and has some brilliant achievements to its credit, especially in the case of the biological sciences.

This book has a slightly different aim. To clear up misunderstandings it is necessary to understand how they arise. It needs to be a two-way process. This book tries among other things to explain to scientists, in terms that they can understand, how a layman's mind works.

