Irate email from a reader

to Robert Carroll of the Skeptic's Dictionary

(Irate emailer in italics - my replies in normal font)

*As a long-time follower of the skeptical movement, I had to unsubscribe from your newsletter today because you so thoroughly misrepresented the positions of Sam Harris and Michael Shermer.*

Good start. If Carroll did that, then you had every right to unsubscribe. In fact, that is the same reason I don't subscribe ... to Fox News.

*I don't like this in-fighting among skeptics.*

I agree again. Infighting divides and weakens an organization. So in addition to misrepresentation, we can also add infighting to the charges.

By the way, I know how touchy you are about Nazis, and I hate to be a grammar Nazi, but ... infighting doesn't contain a hyphen.

(helpful hint: it only takes a few seconds to look these things up, and save yourself the embarrassment of looking like an ESL student in front of thousands of internet readers).

Please continue. You seem to be ahead, 2-1.

*It is thoroughly distasteful. I no longer call myself a skeptic due to the action of yourself and some other prominent "skeptics."*

Well, I guess you are free to call yourself anything you want. But do you really want to give this man, Carroll, so much power that he can force you to change your very identity?

Sounds like you allowed him to get ~~under your skin~~ halfway up your colon.

*Political opinion and personal philosophy has [sic]*

Do you know why Carroll had to type [sic] after your phrase?

It's because your English seems to be at roughly the same level as someone who just survived the desert crossing, north of the Rio Grande.

Your verb should match the plural subject ... not a singular subject.

*frequently been inserted into the published commentary of prominent skeptics such as yourself and Michael Shermer. I've argued with Shermer many times via email.*

I thought you were the guy who said "in-fighting" was "thoroughly distasteful?"

Oh I see my mistake: it's okay ... when *you* do it.

*But at least Shermer has shown the ability to change his mind to some extent, and I give him much credit for that*

Translation: "Shermer agreed with me on a minor point, and now I will be his loyal fan boy for life."

*despite my disagreement with him and other libertarians over the libertarian economic ideology.*

Hey, you just scored another point for dissing Libertarianism.

But I have a question about those other 2 points I gave you earlier:

1) When are you going to tell us how Carroll misrepresented their

positions?

2) And what evidence do you offer that Carroll engaged in

infighting ... a word you can't even spell?

*I am a professional scientist who has worked in public health for 20 years.*

We've all pretty much figured out by now, that you aren't ...

an English teacher.

*Science includes the philosophy of science, which is a secular philosophy.*

Your assertion is half right. We'll leave it to you as a homework exercise to figure out ... which half.

*I see nothing more that is needed to come up with what is right and wrong besides biological evolution, the methods of science, secular philosophy, and objectively gathered historical evidence. Historical evidence has a profound effect on cultural norms,*

Perhaps you could provide an example of historical evidence that has had a profound effect on cultural norms?

*and when produced by the methods of science and with an objective view, can be said to be a part of science. The problem here is that some people want to limit the scope of science to their own subjective viewpoint.*

You just gave a perfect description of religion. You're now back up to 2 points.

*Science has evolved over time and will continue to evolve.*

Brilliant. I totally agree.

(But doesn't everyone on the fucking planet ...

already know that?)

*I promote science and secular philosophy. I have no need for the skeptical movement or skeptics.*

Well, Bubbles, from what I can gather from your hysterics, the skeptical movement won't even notice you've left.

Feel free to stop in at a skeptic conference and look for Michael Shermer. I'm sure he'll just light up when he sees you coming.