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Why Evolution is First and Foremost a Religious Belief — Part 3

Evolution and Politics

The ink was barely dry on Darwin's *Origin* when scientists and philosophers were mining it for gold to brand specific groups of people unworthy of life. In his era there were two separate theories of the origin of man – monogenism and polygenism. The former posits that mankind originated from one ancestor, and the latter posited different ancestors. Given the prejudice of some people, the natural tendency was to assume that some races originated later than and are not as fully evolved as others. Whereas a Christian creationist believes that all people are descendents of Adam and Eve and, therefore, all are equally human, evolutionists after Darwin said that the different peoples of this world were in various stages of development into humanity.

At this point evolutionists tried to discover the exact path of animal development. Ernst Haeckel, a German zoologist, postulated that unborn children follow the same developmental history in the womb as animals did through the history of the earth from primitive to complex. For instance, at one point it was suggested that the human fetus had gill slits which were the same as those of an ancestral fish. Many scientists quickly used this idea to rank the races and members of the same race in a way which appears ridiculous by today's standards. Children in superior races are the ancestral stage of adult males, and adult blacks and women of inferior groups are the equivalent of these children. Stanley Hall commented that "Most savages in most respects are children, or, because of sexual maturity, more properly, adolescents of adult size" and even suggested that the high suicide rate of women was a sign of their evolutionary primitiveness.³²

32. Stephen Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton, 1981), 114-117.

This thinking was also used to justify imperialism. Stephen Gould quotes B. Kidd who said that colonial expansion into Africa is acceptable because the natives will not develop those lands because of their primitiveness. The adult natives were, according to evolutionary theory, equivalent to the children of highly-evolved races and not capable of evolving any further. Evolutionism simply provided people with the justification for their innate racism.³³

33. Gould, 118.

Another trend many evolutionist intellectuals took for granted was a decline in Christian ethics, and they struggled to find an ethic to put in its place. They reasoned anything which encouraged further evolution – in essence, encouraged health – was ethically good, while anything which discouraged it was bad. This was the origin of Social Darwinism and eugenics, which sought to apply the Darwinian ladder of progress to the making of better humans. Richard Weikart says:

Eugenicists generally believed that ethics and morality needed to be rewritten in light of evolutionary theory. Evolutionary ethics undergirded – sometimes overtly, sometimes implicitly – the whole enterprise of eugenics as it expanded rapidly in the early twentieth century. Eugenics was, after all, the attempt to find practical measures to improve human heredity. Its adherents often claimed scientific status for the enterprise, but because of their stress on psychological determinism, most of the early leaders also claimed that all the human sciences were subject to the natural sciences. Just like their mentor Haeckel, they tried ethics and morality under the purview of science.³⁴

34. Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 49-50.

Earnest Hooton believed that the races were different enough to be separate species and wrote that the differences between them are marked by what distinguishes species of animals. Sir Arthur Keith, who had a strong influence on Hooton, had, as Milford Wolpoff and Rachel Caspari say, “romantic” views about race and the superiority of certain European races. Keith’s evolutionism could not help him understand how different races could interbreed, so he posited a built-in genetic mechanism which caused races to evolve in such a parallel fashion. Keith, unlike Hooton, did believe that competition was an important reason for each race’s evolution, and anything that drove this competition was good. Keith even described Hitler as “a naked nationalist, racist, and evolutionist.”³⁵

35. Milford Wolpoff and Rachel Caspari, *Race and Human Evolution* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 146.

One can see the operation of these ideas in Adolf Hitler. Wolpoff and Caspari establish a link to Haeckel: “There is a direct link between Haeckel’s interpretation of Darwinism and his version of polygenism and the biopolicy of the Nazi regime” and “There was virtually nothing in the Nazi doctrine that was not put forth by Haeckel and well known and accepted by educated Germans when Hitler was still a housepainter.”³⁶ Hitler argued in *Mein Kampf* that every animal mates with members of its own species, and argued that mating with a different species weakens an animal. Supposing the Aryans to be the founders of human culture, for them to mate with non-Aryans would weaken them and their culture. It is proper, however, for the higher cultures to use the lower ones for the benefit of the higher ones. The struggle between different species is a means to overall improvement. Hitler says: “For the formation of higher cultures the existence of lower human types was one of the most essential preconditions, since they alone were able to compensate for the lack of technical aids without which a higher development is not conceivable.”³⁷ With these words Hitler reflected many tenets of evolutionism as it is applied to humanity: Mankind is not a blend of different peoples who all descended from one pair of ancestors, but is a blend of different peoples who evolved at different times with different

intellectual abilities. Since evolution proceeds forward during struggle where the fittest survive, struggle and even death among people is necessary for this process to be successful.

36. Wolpoff and Caspari, 135-136.

37. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Ralph Manheim, trans. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), 284-383.

Likewise, evolution was used in the secular political religion of communism, as Richard Pipes observes:

The Marxist concept of social evolution arose under the influence of the Darwinian theory formulated in 1859 in *On the Origin of Species*. Darwin's book depicted the emergence of biological species as due to a process of natural selection that enabled them better to survive in a hostile environment. The process was a dynamic one, evolving species from lower to higher stages according to determinable rules. This theory was quickly adapted by students of human behavior, giving rise to a school of "evolutionary sociology" that depicted history as a progression, "by stages," from lower to higher forms. So great was Darwin's influence on Marx that Engels, speaking at his friend's funeral, said, "Just as Darwin had discovered the law of development of organic nature so did Marx discover the law of human history."³⁸

38. Richard Pipes, *Communism: A History* (New York: Random House, 2001), 9.

Although it is no longer politically correct to consider women a primitive stage of white maleness, the urge to denigrate individuals using Darwinian means prevails. Today it survives in abortion or infanticide. In this I find a curious but unsurprising consistency: Their advocates are usually virulent anti-Christians who quite often use evolutionist excuses for their beliefs.

Christian creationists believe that a sufficient reason for a right to life is humanity, and this is true whether a person is unborn or born. Evolutionists do not like classifying living things – whether animal or human – into "kinds" because to evolutionists life is a continuing evolutionary sequence between species with no innate "right" to life for any of them. Hence, the unborn do not have any natural rights but rights that are wholly dependent on adults' whims. Any right to life, then, comes from having a characteristic that the pro-choice believe is meaningful.

Peter Singer says the idea that there was a huge difference between animal and man was unquestioned for most of the history of Western civilization, and claims that "the basis of this assumption has been undermined by Darwin's discovery of our animal origins and the associated decline in the credibility of the story of our Divine Creation, made in the image of God with an immortal soul."³⁹ Singer's "practical ethics" revolve around utilitarianism where we should strive to maximize the wants and needs of each person. Since the unborn do not have a consciousness that allows them to express their wants and needs – even though they may be human – the unborn can be killed.

39. Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 62.

Humans can be brutal to one another just as they often can be kind. It's clear that some people are looking for a reason to brutalize others using a philosophy that degrades their worth. This is what comes from denying Christian ethics.

If I were to construct a theory that humans are in a sinful rebellion against God – just as the Bible teaches – I would find no better validation of my theory than in the writings of some of the authors I have cited here. Secular humanists have been so bold as to announce their rebellion in the first and second humanist manifestos – writings that are more like a Christian creed than anything scientific. They want to practice what Christianity calls sinful – divorce and abortion, for example – and they want to believe that they will never have to answer to any god. New Agers believe in evolution which enables them to become a god someday, or to worship an alien god. Some secular philosophers believe in evolution because it lets them choose who lives and who dies – a choice normally reserved to God. No matter whom I quote, it is plain that some people want to **be** God. That is, in fact, the choice Satan made, and is a choice replicated in the writings I have surveyed. *LSI*

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