

underserved at all but about opening up new racialized niche markets for pharmaceutical companies.<sup>30</sup>

The first step in this strategy would necessarily be to reify the racial groups as genetically bounded and homogeneous entities, which of course they aren't. But with so much potential profit at stake, perhaps it would be in the interests of big pharma to build an alliance with other groups interested in reifying races for other reasons. Thus, when Sally Satel published a *New York Times* op-ed titled "I Am a Racially Profiling Doctor," stumping for racialized pharmacogenomics, her affiliation with Charles Murray's (*The Bell Curve*) neoconservative think tank attracted some attention.<sup>31</sup> After all, redressing social injustices is not high on their agenda; denying those injustices is what they're primarily interested in.

Then, finally, with enough genohype you can even produce a new generation of biologists who actually think that they speak for science, and against political correctness, when they promote vulgarly racialized medicine. Sometimes this comes with an argument that scientific discussion of race is being stifled and that scientists are afraid to discuss it, much less acknowledge its verity, for fear of being censured by the Left. The speaker then becomes a lone objective voice for science and reason, unswayed by the social pressures and ideologies that are distorting everyone else's views.<sup>32</sup> The "suppression by the Left" argument isn't new, either; it was invoked by segregationists like Carleton Putnam, whose 1961 book *Race and Reason* didn't mention the Left but did run on about the conspiracy of communists, Jews, and anthropologists to stifle the obvious truths about race differences. A little quixotic, a little self-inflated, a little paranoid—and a lot anti-intellectual.

And just a bit evil, too.

Today those folks rarely look at themselves in the mirror and see a racist ignoramus, much less a shill for big pharma, staring back.

#### EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY: IS IT EITHER OF THEM?

In the 1970s a newly named science burst onto the academic scene: human sociobiology, the application of evolutionary theory to the under-

standing of human behavior—as if nobody had ever tried that before. In fact it had been tried and had been shown to be facile, if not downright ridiculous, in every generation since Darwin.

The first generation of Darwinians, led by Herbert Spencer, saw the survival of the fittest as a good thing in nature and in society. They used Darwinism as a cudgel to rationalize exploiting and even extirpating nonwhite societies outside of Europe and poor people within their own society. The English paleontologist William J. Sollas put it this way in his 1911 book *Ancient Hunters*:

Justice belongs to the strong, and has been meted out to each race according to its strength; each has received as much justice as it deserved. . . . It is not priority of occupation, but the power to utilize, which establishes a claim to the land. Hence it is a duty which every race owes to itself, and to the human family as well, to cultivate by every possible means its own strength . . . [lest it incur] a penalty which Natural Selection, the stern but beneficent tyrant of the organic world, will assuredly exact, and that speedily, to the full.

The second generation of Darwinians, led by the German Ernst Haeckel, saw not so much the parallel tracks of selection among organisms and among nations as the inexorable emergence of progress and order from chaos. Thus, they saw a single track leading from the lowliest amoeba up to the highest form of life and existence, the Prussian Nordic militarist state. I'm sure I don't have to tell you where that went.

The third generation of Darwinians, led by the American Charles Davenport (see chapter 3), conceptualized social history in terms of the distribution of hypothetical discrete Mendelian alleles, particularly the one for feeble-mindedness.

The fourth generation of Darwinians, informed by the Nazi menace and led by such scholars as Theodosius Dobzhansky, Julian Huxley, and George Gaylord Simpson, coalesced Darwinism into the "Synthetic Theory" and acknowledged the separation of human history from the gene pool—as anthropologists had been arguing for decades.

Even so, in the 1960s a new wave of anti-anthropological Darwinism began to flourish, a view the previous generation had even named in deprecation "nothing-butism." To Julian Huxley, this involved "realizing

that man is descended from a primitive ancestor, [and concluding] that he is only a developed monkey," a version of Darwinism that nevertheless produced science best sellers such as *The Territorial Imperative* and *The Naked Ape*.

Sociobiology emerged in the 1970s as an amalgam of all of these. Sometimes it exhorted readers to imagine a gene for altruism and how it might spread. Sometimes it exhorted readers to imagine the spread of units of culture, divorced from biology but analogous to genes. Sometimes it interpreted the behavior of baboons or chimpanzees as if it were easily confused for that of humans. Sometimes it ventured to explain all of history in terms of greater or lesser success in reproduction. And sometimes it invited readers to see non-Europeans as primitive actors in a Hobbesian "war of all against all" that the readers themselves have successfully transcended.

One way or another, Darwin's name was being dragged through the mud again—for this was presented as a "scientific" alternative to whatever fluffy nonsense the social scientists (and Synthetic Theorists) maintained. By the 1990s, however, human sociobiology had itself speciated. Veering off to the left was "human behavioral ecology," concerned with interpreting all aspects of human behavior in terms of their supposed adaptive functions. And veering off to the right was "evolutionary psychology," which took up the case for naturalizing the status quo, or explaining the way things *are* in terms of the way they *have to be*.

Evolutionary psychology effectively became the version of sociobiology that critics had dreaded from the outset. The central argument is that the gene pool has been shaped by selection; that the structure of the brain, like that of the foot, is a product of the genes; that the mind is a product of the brain's structure; and that ideas and behaviors are products of the mind. Looking for common patterns of thought and deed (and finding them more readily than other, more circumspect, students of human behavior), evolutionary psychologists localized them to mental "modules" that are themselves the hypothetical outcome of hypothetical selective forces upon the gene pool. To challenge any of these tenets—that there is a broad and readily discernible uniformity

of mind that transcends its local variations, that all of its attributes are the direct products of natural selection, that the mind is modular in structure, and that it can be decomposed into individually evolving elements—is to invite the charge of being a creationist.<sup>33</sup>

The problem is that these scientists no more speak for Darwin or Darwinism than the segregationists or the eugenicists did when they tried to tar their own opponents with the brush of creationism.

Which brings us to the continuity between them. What the evolutionary psychologists have managed to do is legitimize an intellectual space in which to rationalize differences of gender under the banner of evolution. And although the theories and methodologies are different, the epistemology and rhetoric are remarkably continuous. Where the evolutionary psychologists talk about women and men, just substitute “blacks and whites” and you’ll see what I mean.

Their bodies are different.

Their brains are different.

They behave differently.

The social differences are ubiquitous.

Sure there are exceptions, but look at the great differences in the averages.

Your common sense, or intuition, or folk knowledge was right after all.

Those liberal social scientists have been lying to you.

This is evolution, this is real science.

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If you apply these sentences to race you produce the normative ideas of wealthy Americans in the 1910s and the shrill cries of frustrated segregationists in the 1960s. Today considerably fewer people think it, and when these ideas come to the surface they are usually either disguised (as in *The Bell Curve*) or recanted, in the knowledge that the position is not really scientifically defensible (as in James Watson’s remarks).

The extraordinary accomplishment of evolutionary psychology, then, is to have opened up that *kind* of reasoning again—and not infrequently at that *level* of reasoning—as a legitimate scientific discourse when discussing men and women. Now, men could be from Mars and women from Venus—metaphorically speaking, for we know that there really is no life on either planet—without any hint of a naturalistic basis for those

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differences. Accountants might be from Saturn and choreographers from Mercury. PC users might be from Jupiter and Mac users from Neptune.

One of the most widely cited works in the area of evolutionary psychology purported to identify significant differences in what people say they are looking for in a mate—men in different parts of the world preferring young babes, and women preferring sugar daddies. A bit more sophisticated thinking showed that the preferences are strongest where women have the least access to resources. Far from being a global hard-wired response, it was much more likely a rational solution to a common problem.

Another widely cited work is almost embarrassing to describe. Shown silhouettes of women's figures, male college students in Texas overwhelmingly "prefer" women shaped like Marilyn Monroe. That is to say, dividing the last two measurements of the 36-24-36 starlet's figure, they settle on a waist-to-hip ratio of 0.67. Male college students in many places express a similar preference. The "evolutionary" explanation is that this reflects an innate drive toward the perfectly evolved woman, deviations from which men accept only with some reluctance, as it were.<sup>34</sup>

The equally evolutionary, but less idiotic, interpretation is that it instead represents the diffusion of contemporary American media tastes and values to the rest of the world—in a word, globalization. There is, obviously, a crucial experiment one can perform: find some very remote people and discern their tastes. Surely enough, the short and stocky Matsigenka men in highland Peru prefer their women short and stocky; and the tall, thin Hadza men in East Africa prefer their women tall and thin.<sup>35</sup>

There is a crucial cautionary tale associated with this research, however. These kinds of critical experiments are becoming more and more difficult to perform, as the economic and social forces entangled in American popular culture reach even the most remote peoples on earth. When everyone has been exposed to the same cultural information and values, it will be impossible to distinguish those broad uniformities that are the result of being human from those regularities that are the result of living in an increasingly homogeneous society.

The crude deduction of innateness from the observation of similar-

ity or difference is what evolutionary psychology regressively provides. In the mid-twentieth century, paralleling the separation of naturalistic "race" from culturalistic "ethnicity" (a separation now seen as a bit too facile, for races have highly constructed aspects, and ethnicities have some naturalistic ones,<sup>36</sup> but which analytically was very valuable for its time), students of human behavior began to separate naturalistic "sex" from culturalistic "gender." Sure, drawn from the same population, women average 25 percent smaller in body mass than men (which parallels sexual dimorphism in the great apes) and have a higher proportion of their body taken up with subcutaneous fat (which actually doesn't parallel the great apes). But those facts of nature ought to be irrelevant to the questions of enfranchisement and employment. Margaret Mead helped to document the diversity of roles women assumed in cultures outside the Western mainstream and forced readers to imagine a society almost exactly like their own but in which women's life options were not quite so constrained.<sup>37</sup>

Perhaps it is just a coincidence that evolutionary psychology began to emerge just as the conservative backlash against the Equal Rights Amendment peaked in the early 1980s. But does it really matter what kinds of brains women have? Nobody really thinks that brain structure is an independent variable in human behavioral development anymore, except in pathological cases, do they? And yet a notorious comment in 2005 by Harvard's then-president Larry Summers—about a larger proportion of men at the high end of the sciences probably being naturally endowed for success in science—made it clear that the issue is very much alive.

Summers, however, was actually only reiterating what he had heard from evolutionary psychology.<sup>38</sup> And the most important thing he heard wasn't about evolution. It was about the low percentage of women being promoted in the sciences at Harvard *not being Harvard's fault*—it was *women's fault*. In other words, like previous versions of hyper-Darwinism, evolutionary psychology was just affording a biological rationalization for the status quo. In this way a perceived problem can be denied rather than assessed—and without even a working knowledge either of evolution or of psychology!

The thoughts about human heredity expressed by the president of Harvard were decidedly premodern and largely independent of the world of Gregor Mendel, Theodosius Dobzhansky, Victor McKusick, or even James Watson.<sup>39</sup> It's not about transcribing, interacting, and reassembling bits of nucleic acid. It's about: Look at 'em! They're different! Everybody has what they deserve! Here's the money you asked for!

The big irony is that Summers was ultimately replaced in his job by a woman.

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#### DARWIN AS CULTURAL ICON

The fact that Darwin can be so easily co-opted for causes like rationalizing inequality should give us pause. What does naturalizing social injustice have to do with the propositions that the patterns in the diversity of life have a genealogical basis or that adaptation is historically produced and not an endowed state? Those are the central issues of *On the Origin of Species*—that is to say, of Darwinism.

Obviously we aren't talking about Darwin's *Descent of Man*, which is a fine book but certainly encodes the premodern social values of Victorian England throughout its text. Nor are we talking about Darwin's *Variation of Plants and Animals under Domestication*, published in 1868. That is the one in which Darwin proposed his famously wrong theory of heredity known as pangenesis, which had the body parts secreting little buds, or gemmules, that traveled through the body's fluids and coalesced in the reproductive organs. Not only was it wrong, but it was old hat. He shared the theory with Thomas Huxley, who told him that Buffon—the French naturalist of the previous century—had been there first. Darwin wrote him back, "I have read Buffon:—whole pages are laughably like mine. It is surprising how candid it makes one to see one's views in another man's words."<sup>40</sup>

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But there is an odd quirk of history associated with that incorrect theory of Darwin's. Around the beginning of the twentieth century, the early Dutch geneticist Hugo de Vries was grappling for a neologism to apply to hypothetical elements of heredity. Darwin's shadow loomed

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so large by that time that de Vries thought of Darwin's pangenesis and named the units of heredity in his honor: *pangenes*. In a 1909 textbook, the Danish geneticist Wilhelm Johannsen honored Darwin by adopting de Vries's term and dropping the initial syllable. Thus does Darwin come to be the father of the *gene*—although by a different route than he came to be the father of evolution. Darwin's work in evolution was paradigm defining, but his work in heredity was forgettable. And yet he is commemorated in both fields.

Darwin is a cultural icon.

There's Darwin in literature. There's Darwin in archaeology. There's Darwin in medicine—ironically, a field he dropped out of as a student. A Darwinian medicine certainly sounds reasonable, on the face of it.<sup>41</sup> But a Darwinian medicine could actually encompass a wide range of ideas, from infanticide, to identifying antibiotic resistance in bacterial pathogens, to the racial pharmacogenomics ushered in by BiDil.

Darwin is benefiting from a spillover effect of being the eponymous leader of a scientific movement. There are a lot of Darwinisms out there, but his name is the one attached to them all. With so much being brandished in Darwin's name, we need to be vigilant about keeping it unsullied, as Clarence Darrow realized at the time of the Scopes trial. At its most basic, *evolution* is a complex homonym, referring to four entirely different things, which occur to different objects, at different rates, and via different modes. First, cosmology, as in "the evolution of the solar system." Second, ontogeny, as in the "evolution" of a fetus into a codger—and although this goal-oriented sense sounds most foreign to us, this was actually the primary use of the word in Darwin's time. Third, the diversification of species and their consequent adaptation through natural selection—the narrowest and most appropriate sense. And finally, the emergence of cultural diversity over the much shallower time frame of social history—as in the "the evolution of baseball."

So, assuming that it is good—that is to say, modern, scientific, wise, biological—to be a Darwinian, then what form would a Darwinian study of human behavior necessarily take? Would it involve racism? Would it involve believing that we are living in the best of all possible worlds, shaped only by the competitive replication of genetic elements? Would



it involve modeling the competition of “memes” instead of genes? Would it involve casting a blind eye to injustice and declaring it to be the law of nature? Would it involve killing babies? Would it involve interpreting the history of the world as if everyone were actually maximizing their breeding? Would it involve trying to explain how everything—including smoking, homosexuality, altruism, and divorce—is adaptive? Would it involve believing that genetics is at the root of all interesting questions? Would it involve believing that the minor differences in thought and deed *within* a group of people, where behavioral genetics may be a contributing factor, can unproblematically be extrapolated to explain the differences in thought and deed *between* groups of people?<sup>42</sup>

Or would a Darwinian anthropology still focus on questions of power, gender, and difference—and continue to interpret them in the context of politics, economics, and meaning—and simply be *compatible* with the proposition that humans evolved from apes, in the same fashion that it is compatible with the sun being the center of the solar system, or with masses attracting one another in proportion to the inverse square of the distance separating them?

If you oppose so-called Darwinian approaches to human behavior, are you a creationist? The advocates of such approaches would like to believe so and have had occasional successes at making that association. On the one hand, Thomas Huxley had unimpeachable Darwinian credentials when he debated Herbert Spencer on the merits of legislatively curbing the ruthlessness of evolutionary “selection” in modern society. On the other hand, at about the same time, the great German biologist Rudolf Virchow was forced to take sides by Ernst Haeckel on the evolutionary superiority of one kind of person and state over all others. Virchow chose to reject all evidence for human evolution on the suspicion that any such evidence might be brandished by the Haeckelians on behalf of their odious political views. (And he was right.)<sup>43</sup> Charles Davenport and Madison Grant would give a similar choice in New York a generation later to Virchow’s former protégé, Franz Boas: to be against us is to be against Darwin.

But let’s back up. What would someone principally interested in history, cultural diversity, human agency, and social justice stand to gain

from Darwinism? Common biological descent and adaptive divergence aren't really the subjects; Darwinism is a red herring here. Its force stems from the recognized power of the scientific revolution Darwin helped to catalyze, but his application to human affairs is only metaphorical. What, for example, might a Copernican anthropology be like—or, more properly, would an *anti*-Copernican anthropology be any different? What about an anti-Newtonian anthropology? It seems to me that the practice of understanding human diversity is not significantly affected by your view of the solar system or of gravity—although if you tried real hard you might be able to connect them.

Actually, the study of human behavioral diversity is in a good position to deflect the question "Why can't you be more Darwinian?" After all, being founded on cultural relativism, there is a case to be made that anthropology is past Darwin; it is already Einsteinian.

The evolutionary geneticist Theodosius Dobzhansky pointed out decades ago that identity and equality reside in different spheres. Only monozygous twins are genetically identical, but the state decides that its citizens are equal under the law, regardless of their biological diversity. The biological fact of difference is unrelated to the social fact of inequality. They can be related in the sense that all societies incorporate different people of various kinds and assign meanings to those differences. But equality is about cultural processes, deciding which differences are important and which are not. Arguing about the brains and genes of different groups of people is thus largely tangential to the formation and maintenance of a just society.

We Darwinians are the ones who have to clean house, to deny the label of credible and authoritative science to the metaphysical and metaphorical biology employed in evolutionary psychology. If the role of science, in this case evolution, is to provide a spurious foundation for anti-democratic discourses in the modern world, then does it not follow that we would be better off without it?

The key lies in conceptualizing humans as simultaneously continuous with and divergent from the "other" apes. Sure, we have short, stiff spinal columns, fused caudal vertebrae, no tail, a posteriorly positioned scapula, and a rotating shoulder, as they do. On the other hand, our

brains are three times the size of theirs, and we're walking and talking and they're not. Those are the twin pillars of Darwinism: descent and divergence. If we focus, as Darwin did, on "the origin of species," then the latter should be the more important of the two. The origin of species is divergence. But the call to Darwinize anthropology is generally a call to focus on descent at the *expense* of divergence, which is in turn the classic reductive agenda of "nothing-butism." In a critical sense, it is a theory of human evolution that begins by assuming we never really became human.

Consider the distal hindlimb of chimpanzee and human—one adapted for grasping, the other for bearing weight. They look rather alike; they are made of pretty much the same parts in pretty much the same relations. But if you are interested in the human foot—how it works, what it means, even where it came from—there is very little that studying a chimp foot can tell you, except by way of contrast, that you cannot learn better from studying *human* feet. A chimp foot can be trained to bear weight to some extent, and a human foot can be trained to grasp to some extent. But what is interesting about the two feet, from the standpoint of evolution, is how they differ.

That is also why, in spite of having corresponding forelimb parts in similar relations to those of a sparrow, you still cannot get off the ground by flapping, while the sparrow can.

Returning to the ape, then, if locomotion is so different between us, and the structures have been reworked so as to alter the basic function, then what about cogitation? Is it possible that the threefold growth in size, extensive cortical convolutions, neurological reorganizations facilitating speech—that all those things make human thought and behavior different from—not bigger than, not more complex than, not a variant of, just *different* from—chimp behavior?<sup>44</sup>

I believe they do. The value of chimp feet for understanding human feet lies in their contrast, not in their sameness. Likewise the value of chimp brains and behaviors lies in their contrast to humans. This is not about piety or humanism; it is about epistemology, methodology, and rhetoric. The feet are adapted to different purposes, and the brains are adapted to different purposes. Labeling things that look different and do

different things as “the same”—because their parts roughly correspond and six or seven million years ago their *ancestors* were the same—is not only weird, it is perverse. It is *anti*-evolutionary—especially if that labeling is used to encode an argument for the natural inequality of large groups of people, in Darwin’s name.

Consequently, I don’t place much stock in this primatologist’s evaluation: “In their emotions, cognition, linguistic ability, homicidal brutality and erotic sexuality, the apes and we are far more alike than we are different.”<sup>45</sup> I’d sure like to know what this likeness in, for example, “erotic sexuality” means, if a chimpanzee male is stimulated by purple estrus swellings and copulates for fifteen seconds. Is it possible that we have produced a generation of hyper-Darwinized primatologists who have come to know more about apes than they do about people?

The origin of species, said Darwin, lies not in theology but in adaptive divergence, and it is exactly that divergence that interests us as post-Darwinian biologists and anthropologists. In other words, it is *evolutionary* to acknowledge the difference of humans, and an evolutionary theory that fails to come to grips with that is not going to be of much use as an analysis of behavior, or as a representation of nature.

For if one person accepts the evolutionary divergence of human and ape, and another denies it, then who is really the creationist?