

DARWIN'S RACISM

The Definitive Case, Along With a Close Look at Some
of the Forgotten, Genuine Humanitarians of That Time



LEON ZITZER

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Preface and Acknowledgments

I came into this world unwanted and it looks like I'm going out the same way. In between, I had to do something. Maybe a few somethings. This book is one of them.

My talents could have taken me in a lot of directions. I could have been a dancer, a boxer, an actor. The gifts were there, but health and other circumstances were not. So I had to pour whatever love and talent I had in me into research and writing. It was the only thing I could do with my limited energy. I hope this book has turned out to be the kind of book that a good actor or director would love to have written. A long time ago, I had an acting teacher, Jane Dentinger, who told me that a good actor is a good detective. I hope I have remained true to that.

As with any acting role, some parts of myself have found their way into the final performance. When people meet actors whom they have seen in roles they admire, they tend to assume they know this actor, they know all about him or her, they have seen their most intimate soul. People do this with singers too and all sorts of performers. But any artist will tell you that there is only a piece of me in this performance, and if I have done my job well, you won't know which piece or where in the performance it can be found. The same goes for authoring a book. Undoubtedly, I am in this book, but equally undoubtedly, there is no telling where I can be found inside these pages. Also, there is whole lot more to me that never found its way into this product I worked on for so long. You cannot read this book and know me. I, the whole of me, am not here, but some things that are important to me are definitely here. Just don't assume too much. We're all destined to disappear, leaving only bits and pieces behind.

The whole of Charles Darwin is not in this book either. I only wish to restore to common knowledge an important part of him that is too often suppressed. I see all the work I have ever done on any subject as a major *corrective* to what has gone before, but not as the complete story of what I am dealing with. Completeness won't be possible until we make the needed corrections to the standard story. It will be several generations before that happens.

This particular book has to be painful for anyone who adores Darwin as a

champion of scientific truth. In his anthropology, he was not as objective as we would like a scientist to be. The pain that comes in realizing this is the main difficulty in confronting this history. The facts are otherwise very clear. Darwin was not shy about expressing his prejudices. He didn't believe they were prejudices. They were objective facts to him. Scholars have avoided or misrepresented the evidence from his writings which clearly tell us what he believed about other races. Each person will have to answer one question for him- or herself: Which is more important, telling the truth about this evidence or letting emotions cover it up?

I used to have a lot of respect for people who think so highly of Darwin as a scientist. But this study has disabused me of that. If great science is the goal, then why haven't we remembered those who achieved an even better, more objective anthropology than Darwin did? There were others in his time who were purer scientists of the human species than he was and yet academic tradition has seen fit to erase their accomplishments from history. If people really loved Darwin because they love science, then they would remember these others also. Robert Chambers followed pure scientific method and cared not who he might offend. He stood up for objective examination of nature, when all the established scientists vilified him. When you meet Georg Gerland, you will see that he was a far more accurate anthropologist than Darwin. These are just two examples of great scientists who have been dumped on the side of the road, while a questionable science has been celebrated to no end.

There were many things about writing this book that have been frightening to me (but then, I suppose, it is helpful to know that I'm frightened of my own shadow). Not least is the length of it. Honestly, I want to throw up when I think of how long this book has become. There was no one to advise me. I write alone, in the dark almost. I kept discovering facts that have mostly been erased from history by the powers that be. The details are so fascinating, they glitter before me like golden nuggets. I can't help myself. I kept collecting them and reporting them, not quite every piece I came upon, but a lot of them. This book is a compendium of wonderful nuggets. When I started this, I had no idea of all that I would find. Looking back on it now, I think it is possible that all along I was unconsciously aiming for a magnificent panorama of evidence. Was I wrong to do this? I may never live to find out.

I have been lucky to have some people in my life who have helped me survive and lucky to have stumbled on resources that were incredibly useful in doing the research for this book. In the past, I found that people can sometimes be embarrassed by what I have said about them in the Acknowledgments, so bearing that in mind, I will be succinct this time. As

usual, I owe my sister Ruth Mann and my friend Susan Rowley all the thanks in the world for keeping me on my feet and in my apartment. Or have I said too much already? Never mind, they deserve to be thanked for their generosity. My friends Mark Felber, Sean Moran, and Susan have kept up conversation with me, and many thanks to Mark for help in translating Georg Gerland and to Ruth for purchasing two books for me, especially that very rare one by J. Langfield Ward. My neighbor across the hall for many years, Bruce Rutherford, read a previous version of the first chapter. Thank you for your feedback. I changed a couple of sentences because of your comments.

I would never have started this book were it not for one author and two letter writers to *The New York Times Sunday Book Review* (for all three, see the Bibliography). It was Sven Lindqvist who planted the first seeds of doubt in me about Charles Darwin. Lindqvist is also one of those writers who make it their business to spot overlooked people in history. If not for him, I don't think I ever would have discovered Georg Gerland, J. Langfield Ward, and Helen Hunt. Then there were Peter Quinn and Daniel Newsome whose letters to the *Times* put my doubts about Darwin into action. I read *The Descent of Man* because of their remarks and was blown away by the obvious racism. What I got from all three was the best gift you can get from a writer: The stimulus to take a more careful look at the evidence.

I am grateful to all the sites I discuss in "Online Resources", following this section. Most of the research for this book would have been impossible without the existence of these sources. In addition, the Columbia University libraries and their staff have been of great assistance. Everyone was willing to help with whatever questions I had. The facilities of the NYPL with all its branches are a godsend and, in particular, without their wifi at my local branch, I would have been up a creek.

It's been a glorious ride discovering all the humanitarians presented herein. They sacrificed more comfortable lives so that they could tell the truth to their society. If anyone paid attention (a very big if), it earned them only ostracism. They were not prophets. They could feel more than they could see that the western world was tottering, not inevitably advancing, towards extraordinary organized violence and a more intense racism. Very few in their time were willing to listen. How many of us can hear them now?

In a previous manuscript for a book I have never published, called *Disappearing Jews from History*, I recorded my memory of a favorite line from a movie I saw. At the end of the film *A Thousand Acres*, one of the sisters is dying in the hospital. She complains to her sibling that she accomplished nothing in her life, she created nothing and has nothing to leave behind. There is only one thing she says she achieved: "I saw and I did not

flinch from telling." Surely that is one of the best epitaphs any scientist or artist could wish for.

The film of course is based on Jane Smiley's novel of the same title. It is about these three sisters who try to establish some independence for themselves as they confront the fact that their father abused them, sexually and with beatings, when they were growing up. They make their family history public in a community that regards their father as a model citizen, even a saint. I recently looked up this scene in the book (355-56). The sister is Rose. She says, "I have no accomplishments." She didn't teach long enough, or work the farm successfully, or have a good marriage, or shepherd her daughters into adulthood, and a lot of other failures. "I was as much of a nothing as Mommy or Grandma Edith." I know the feeling. How that nothing stings in my ears. She winds up with this statement, much longer than the brief comment I remember from the movie: "So all I have is the knowledge that I saw! That I saw without being afraid and without turning away, and that I didn't forgive the unforgiveable. Forgiveness is a reflex when you can't stand what you know. I resisted that reflex. That's my sole, solitary, lonely accomplishment." She saw and did not flinch from telling, as the movie has it (if I remember that correctly).

Probably a majority of academics would like to forgive Darwin and all the mainstream scientists in the 19th century who went down a wrong path. And their way of forgiving is simply not to tell what went wrong. Let us turn away and forget. That is not a true forgiveness. Among other things that are wrong with this, if we are going to forget all the bias in their work, and Darwin's in particular, we also have to erase all those humanitarians who fought against such bias and stood for something better. We have to erase them because allowing them to speak will be a reminder that Darwin cannot be counted among them. So forgetting the bad also means forgetting many of the good people who valiantly struggled for a voice in their culture and who put to shame everyone, like Darwin, who did not join them. I am not against forgiving and even occasional forgetting. But to forgive and to tell the whole truth without flinching---now that would be an accomplishment.

My job in this book has been to tell the story, fairly, accurately, and clearly. If I did that, then I did what I set out to do, and the story lives.

And with that, I am done.

Online Resources

Information on websites, including web addresses, is subject to change. Many websites are often updated. All the sites listed below, except for the last category, offer e-books or digitized books for free, usually downloadable and usually, but not always, in pdf format. With only a computer and no degree necessary, research in university libraries is now at your fingertips. Happy hunting.

HathiTrust Digital Library---<http://www.hathitrust.org>

Far and away the best site for finding readable, searchable, original editions of old books (with the original pagination). American, British, and some foreign language titles (like Lamarck's *Philosophie Zoologique*) can be found here. I am may be prejudiced, since this has become my go-to site for any old book, but I have become so accustomed to finding even the most obscure books here, that I am now heartbroken when, on rare occasions, I cannot find what I am looking for. Plain and simple, I have been spoiled by HathiTrust. It is possible that if I used another site as my first choice, I would generally have just as good luck, but I doubt it. Almost anything published before 1920 can be found on HathiTrust; between 1920 and roughly 1950, it is hit and miss. (Anything more recent is obviously subject to copyright restrictions.) Just scan along the left-hand side of the Bibliography in this book, and you will see how often an **H** appears; and many of the books not so designated can also be found on this site, it just so happened that I used a paperback reprint.

Some examples of the incredible things you can find on HathiTrust: There were many books published on Governor Eyre and the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica (1865) in the years immediately following the controversy. They are now forgotten, but quite a few of them can be found here. Or, would you perhaps be interested in the 1837 *Report* issued by the House of Commons Select Committee on Aborigines? HathiTrust has it. Looking for the odd paper by a 19th century scientist? If it was included in a book collection of that scientist's papers, chances are HathiTrust has it. HathiTrust even has many of

the old scientific journals and quarterlies, though it may not have every issue.

The Hathitrust project is being carried out in conjunction with Google, but I don't think Google Books alerts searchers to every book that can be located at HathiTrust. I could be wrong about that as I have not checked carefully in every case. As good as this site is, there are some lapses. I could not find the 1859 first British edition of *The Origin of Species* or the first edition of Robert Chambers's *Vestiges* (1844) or the equally important tenth edition (see Bibliography for more information on the online availability of these editions). For everything else, I could usually find the first edition of a book, but in some cases, only a later edition and that will be indicated in the Bibliography.

As for more recent books, these are usually not available at HathiTrust (the most recent I could find was published in 1948). However, even in such cases, HathiTrust has a useful feature. For some later books, while HathiTrust does not have a digital version of the book, it will allow word searches and will provide a list of pages for your search. Knowing the pages in advance enables one to cut down on research time, when you find the book in a library or bookstore.

Everyone should breathe a collective sigh of thanks to all those responsible for creating and maintaining this site, especially the interns who scan every precious page of every precious book into their system. Because of Hathitrust, every member of the public now has access to university libraries, and that's a great thing. No tuition required.

Biodiversity Heritage Library---<http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>

As the name suggests, this site is limited to books related to biological and environmental sciences. But there are two glorious finds here I could not obtain anywhere else: One is a searchable 1859 first edition of Darwin's *Origin* (the key word being searchable). The other is Darwin's own copy of Georg Gerland's book with a running translation in the margins made by Darwin's helper (see "Explanations" in next section under Gerland for more information).

This site has one other useful feature for the purposes of this study. It has a link to Darwin's library---that is, to all the books that Darwin owned. I do not believe they have quite finished this project, but they do have several hundred books he read scanned into their system. This feature is a little confusing to use, but spend a little time on it, and it can be figured out. There is an

alphabetical listing by title or by author. If you click on "View Book", it takes you to a page for that book and on the right hand side is information about the markings and annotations Darwin made. This information is credited to *Charles Darwin's Reading Notes* by DiGregorio and Gill.

The downside is that many, if not most, of these scanned books are not the copies that Darwin himself owned, but clean copies of the same edition from another library, usually a university library (I believe this site calls them surrogate copies). Hence, the necessity of having that information section on the right side which gives, for example, the pages and lines which Darwin scored and other annotations he made.

Darwin-Online---<http://www.darwin-online.org.uk>

I believe this site has a pdf version of every book Darwin wrote. If you are in love with certain oddities, like a French or Yiddish edition of some of his books, you might find them here. The great drawback, at least as of this writing, is that they have not been digitized so that you cannot do word searches. That reduces the usefulness of this site quite a bit. But it does have some of the lesser known pieces that I could not locate anywhere else. For example, the pamphlet co-authored with Emma Darwin on the cruelty of animal traps, entitled "An Appeal", and Darwin's first published piece, co-authored with the *Beagle's* Captain Robert FitzRoy: *A Letter, Containing Remarks on the Moral State of Tahiti, New Zealand, & c.* This site even has Darwin's *Beagle Diary*, edited by Richard Darwin Keynes, though this is readily available in paperback.

Google Books---<http://books.google.com>

I don't know why but this has become my site of last resort. It often delivers when I cannot find a book anywhere else. If you make this your site of first choice, it might turn out to be as useful as I find HathiTrust. Every site has something that cannot be found anywhere else. Google Books is no exception. If you are looking for a pdf version of Paul Edmund de Strzelecki's *Physical Description of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land* (1845), this is the place. This is also the only site for the 1844 first edition of Robert Chambers's *Vestiges*, which did not concern me for a long time as one can easily buy a paperback facsimile reprint. A digital version of Charles Napier's *Colonization* is also here. These digitized pdf versions are so useful for word searches.

New York Public Library Website---<http://www.nypl.org>

This will be helpful to anyone in the New York area, but many libraries around the country offer similar services. Library websites are always worth checking out. You will be surprised what you can find. If your local library does not have any services comparable to what NYPL has, ask them if they can link you to another, larger library website.

NYPL provides access to many scholarly journals, allowing articles to be downloaded. Sometimes this is doable from home, if you first log into the website with your library card number. Other journals can be accessed onsite from any local branch of the library, either using one of their computers or using your own laptop or tablet if you first log in to the Internet with the library's wifi.

For any book that is available as an e-book (usually in a pdf format), the NYPL website redirects you to another site that has the book which you can then download. They sometimes use HathiTrust, which of course can be accessed directly. NYPL also uses another site, galegroup.com. I found this site difficult to use when I went there on my own, but maybe I did not spend enough time to figure it out. No matter. As long as you get there through the NYPL website, you can download the book (but you may have to do it at one of the branches, using the library's wifi).

As with any website, one of the values of NYPL is that you can find some things that are not found at any other site. This is true of the many anti- and pro-slavery pamphlets that were produced in the 18th century. I could not find Granville Sharp's 1769 anti-slavery pamphlet as a downloadable e-book until I went to NYPL; his pamphlet has also been reprinted in paperback.

Charles Smith Website of Alfred Wallace materials---
<http://people.wku.edu/charles.smith>

This is the home page for Charles Smith's website; you then have to scroll down to get to the Alfred Wallace portion. Or, after smith in the above, you can type this: /wallace/writings.htm, and it will take you to a chronological listing of selected Wallace writings with links to each one. Or instead, after smith, type: /bib1.htm, and this provides a numerical listing of his essays by S# with links to each. See the Bibliography for more information on the web address that takes you directly to each essay.

The amount of work in putting together this website is jaw-dropping. I believe every essay Wallace ever wrote is here and Smith provides the pagination of the original publications. The essays I refer to are in the Bibliography. Smith

deserves everyone's deepest gratitude for making Wallace's lifework and wisdom so easily available. If you have ever complained, as I have, that there is more heat than light on the Internet, it is sites like Smith's, HathiTrust, and BHL that will remind you there is occasional relief from the usual nonsense.

Booksellers

Do not forget online book vendors. There are several publishing companies today that reprint facsimile copies of classic books, even obscure ones that are not quite so classic. If a free, downloadable, digitized book cannot be found online, there is a good chance that a paperback reprint is available for purchase from one or more of these booksellers. Some of these are also available for purchase as an e-book, but it has been my experience that commercial e-books rarely, if ever, have pagination that matches the original book, making them useless for citations.

Abbreviations and Explanations

Abbreviations:

(Abbreviations and abbreviated titles for all of Charles Darwin's books are listed in the Bibliography under his name; a few of the more frequently used of these abbreviations are repeated below.)

APS -- Aborigines' Protection Society

ARW -- *Alfred Russel Wallace: Letters and Reminiscences*, ed. by James Marchant

BAAS -- British Association for the Advancement of Science

BHL -- Biodiversity Heritage Library website

CCD -- *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin* edited by Frederick Burkhardt *et al*

D & M -- Desmond, Adrian, and Moore, James (authors of *Darwin's Sacred Cause*)

Diary -- Darwin's original *Beagle Diary* before any changes were made for publication

ESL -- *Evolution: Selected Letters of Charles Darwin, 1860-1870*, ed. by Frederick Burkhardt

H -- Hathitrust Digital Library

LL -- *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, edited by Francis Darwin

ML -- *More Letters of Charles Darwin*, edited by Francis Darwin

MP -- Member of Parliament

NPR -- National Public Radio

NYPL -- New York Public Library

OED -- Oxford English Dictionary

P, F -- *Friendly Mission*, N.J.B. Plomley, ed. (the earlier journals of George Robinson, 1829-34)

P, W -- *Weep in Silence*, N.J.B. Plomley, ed. (Robinson's later journals, 1835-39)

pdf -- Portable Document Format (widely used for presenting and viewing documents)

Report -- 1837 *Report of the House of Commons Select Committee on Aborigines*

Explanations:

Italics and all caps -- Most of the time, I indicate whether an italicized portion of a quote, or anything printed in all caps, was original to the source or whether it is my added emphasis. Whenever I fail to do so, you can assume it was in the original quote.

multi-volume works -- In referencing multi-volume works, I use volume and page number. Thus, 2.245 means volume 2, page 245.

savages -- This term was common in the literature of the day in 19th century Europe and America. My writing reflects that. But I mix it up quite a bit with indigenes, indigenous peoples, natives, and Aborigines, all of which were also used back then. I don't judge anyone by whether they used 'savage' more often than 'native' or 'Aborigine', though admittedly 'savage' always had pejorative connotations. Even the expression 'noble savage' was meant to sound contradictory. The nastiness inherent in the word 'savages' colored their thinking, but in general, it is *what specifically* was being said about savages or natives that concerns me, not the terminology itself. And we should not forget that some humanitarians were capable of seeing savagery in Europeans and Americans.

sic -- I very rarely use this to note incorrect spellings in quotations from old books. It would be presumptuous because spellings in an earlier time varied so much. This applies as well to grammar and punctuation. What looks incorrect today may well have been acceptable then. I have proofread all quotations more than once and can only offer this as reassurance that each one corresponds word for word and punctuation for punctuation to the original. I apologize for any errors that may have crept in.

spellings modernized -- I am not entirely consistent in this. In my transcriptions from older texts (generally prior to 1800), I do retain some older spellings in order to preserve the sense of a different time period. My main, almost exclusive, effort is to replace the old, elongated s (which resembled an f) with our usual s (they used both types of s).

CONCERNING VARIOUS AUTHORS:

Bonwick, James -- References to Bonwick are always to *The Last of the Tasmanians*, unless his other book is indicated (which I believe I did only one time).

Chambers, Robert -- References to *Vestiges* are to the first edition (1844) unless otherwise noted. For *Explanations*, I am using only the second edition.

Darwin, Charles -- *The Origin of Species* -- All citations are to the first edition (see below for the particular publication used in this book), unless a later edition is referenced. As for editions two through five, citations are always to the first British printing. For the sixth, I am using the Modern Library edition. All are listed in the Bibliography.

That first edition has been published many times over since 1859 and with varying pagination. It is readily available today from many different publishers. They usually include the "Historical Sketch" which was actually not added until the third edition of *Origin*.

The first edition I am using is listed in the Bibliography (this is the one with supplementary materials by Charlotte Kelchner). It just happened to be the first one I bought, the one I read thoroughly with all my underlinings and notes. It was very late in the day that I finally found the original British first edition online in a searchable format at BHL. Since most people have a different publication, it would not matter which edition I am citing from. It is unlikely my page citations will match up with anyone else's, unless you have the same publication I am using. For anyone who wishes to check the quotations I offer, I am listing below the page range for each chapter of *Origin* in the copy I have (the one edited by Kelchner). Thus, if a quote I present is about a third of the way into Chapter III, you can expect to find it in roughly the same place in whatever publication of the first edition you have.

Here are the page ranges in my copy of the first edition: "Historical Sketch", 5-18; Introduction [Darwin's], 19-25; *Ch. I*, 27-66; *Ch. II*, 67-83; *Ch. III*, 84-104; *Ch. IV*, 105-160; *Ch. V*, 161-202; *Ch. VI*, 203-240; *Ch. VII*, 241-279; *Ch. VIII*, 280-314; *Ch. IX*, 315-348; *Ch. X*, 349-384; *Ch. XI*, 385-423; *Ch. XII*, 424-453; *Ch. XIII*, 454-503; *Ch. XIV*, 504-536.

One last, very important point about the first British 1859 edition of *Origin*. It is the first publication and should be honored for that reason alone. But there

is another factor which I did not discover until very, very late. Quite by accident, I found two slight errors in the edition I am using by comparing sentences to the British edition. I was shocked to say the least. Fortunately, neither one affected the meaning. But it is worth bearing in mind that modern reproductions of Darwin's original book may contain typos or other errors. It would have been too much work for me to check every quotation I used against the original. I did spot check some and all were accurate, except for the two I happened on by chance. For a very few quotes, I will give citations both to the edition I used and the original British one. But to all I say: Be careful. If you are quoting from the first edition of *Origin* to make an important point, make sure you check it against the original, and that is now easily done, if you have access to the Internet, by going to BHL.

The Descent of Man -- There were two editions, 1871 and 1874. I am using the second edition, but not the one originally published in 1874, rather the one edited by Adrian Desmond and James Moore, mainly because, as a Penguin Classics, it is readily available to the public.

1842 and 1844 essays -- These are Darwin's early essays on the origin of species, unpublished in his lifetime. Both are in the same volume, *The Foundation of the Origin of Species*, edited by his son, Francis Darwin. Each essay is paginated separately.

Darwin's *Diary* -- As for the journal Darwin kept while on board the *Beagle*, there are four editions of this. All are listed with their *full titles in the Bibliography*. Chronologically, the first would be the original *Diary* or *Beagle Diary* which was not published until after his death. The one I am using is edited by Richard Darwin Keynes. The first published version of the diary or journal was as Volume 3 of *Narrative* (1839); my references to *Narrative* are always to this volume unless otherwise noted. (Volume 1 was by Captain King, recounting an earlier voyage of the *Beagle*, and Volume 2 was Captain FitzRoy's account of the same voyage Darwin was on.) The publisher liked Darwin's contribution so much that it was reprinted as a volume on its own at the end of that year under a new title, *Journal*. No one ever cites this, as it is just the same as *Narrative*, Vol. 3. A new edition, with some changes in the text, was published in 1845 under the same title, *Journal*. My citations to *Journal* are always to this 1845 second edition. The last edition was under the title *The Voyage of the Beagle*; I am using a paperback reprint by Barnes & Noble with an introduction by Catherine A. Henze.

Gerland, Georg -- Both the original German edition of his book and the

French translation are listed in the Bibliography. All page references are to the German edition. As far as I know, Gerland's book has never been translated into English. Though I have never studied German, I had to make my own translations, relying first of all on the French. When I came across any interesting passage I wished to quote, I then checked the corresponding German and looked up every German word in a dictionary, and finally consulted my friend Mark Felber who has spoken German since he was a child. I take all responsibility for any errors. My verb tenses in particular may be off. I use square brackets to provide alternative translations of a word. For those who do know German and in order to facilitate spotting anything I got wrong, I have provided the original German following each of my translations. If I made any mistakes, I would like to know.

I downloaded a digitized pdf format of Darwin's copy of Gerland's book from BHL as well as Darwin's Supplemental Notes on the book (this is on separate sheets of paper, about six in all). Having these downloads, I proceeded to work with them and did not realize until very late, when I revisited BHL, that in the information provided on Darwin's markings in Gerland, it is noted that the annotations (the translations and close paraphrases written in the margins) were not made by Darwin. Is it possible that someone in Darwin's family (possibly his daughter Henrietta) worked with him on reading this book? Did this person translate out loud and then Darwin picked out the particular bits he wanted translated in the margins? Or did this person make their own decisions about what to translate? I don't know the answers to any of these questions. Darwin once indicated "the German language is a sore grief & trouble to me" (CCD 19.698; Nov. 23, 1871), so it is likely he would have had help (also see CCD 20.578, where he says of a certain author's book, "the German is too difficult for me so I hope it may be translated").

I originally worked under the assumption that these were Darwin's own annotations, but my discussions of them remain valid, even though this assumption was incorrect. Whether Darwin made these translations on his own or someone else made them for him, these were the parts of Gerland's book he would have paid most attention to. That is all I wanted to show---that he was very aware of what Gerland was saying---and this stands regardless of who made the translations in the margins. His Supplemental Notes (some of which are in his handwriting, I believe) also indicate that he or someone he relied on was reading the book very carefully.

Lewy, Guenter -- References to Lewy are to his article on genocide, unless otherwise noted.

Malthus -- All references to his *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (abbreviated as *Essay*) are to the first edition, unless the sixth (1826) edition is indicated. Since the sixth is in two volumes, whenever I refer to a volume and page number for Malthus, this is obviously the sixth edition that is being referred to (the original 1826 publication can be found online at HathiTrust); this is the one Darwin read. For the first edition, I am using the Penguin Classics, edited by Antony Flew, for the reason that anyone can easily purchase it. In addition to modernizing the spelling, Flew also incorporated Malthus's footnoted material into the main body of the text.

Always try to see life around you as if you've just come out of a tunnel.

---Jimmy Stewart in Frank Capra's
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington
(screenplay by Sidney Buchman)

It ain't a bad way to study history either.

---Leon Zitzer

1

EVOLUTIONARY THEORY IS SAFE, OR, A HERO IS NOT A GOD, HE IS NOT EVEN A HERO

Woody Guthrie was my last idol
he was the last idol
because he was the first idol
I'd ever met
that taught me
fact t face
that men are men
shatterin even himself
as an idol ...

the unseen idols create the fear
an trample hopes when busted
Woody never made me fear
and he didn't trample any hopes
for he just carried a book of Man
an gave it t me t read awhile
an from it I learned my greatest lesson

you ask "how does it feel t be an idol?"
it'd be silly of me t answer, wouldn't it.

---Bob Dylan, "11 Outlined Epitaphs"
from *The Times They Are A-Changin'*
(insert, 1st page, 3rd column)

This is a story about evidence---about how some pieces of evidence are preserved and maybe celebrated, while other pieces are neglected, even buried out of sight. Simply telling the truth about evidence in any field is not as easy as one would think. It doesn't help that the professionals, who are supposed to guard the evidence and tell it with care, often mess it up just because that serves somebody's agenda. What is any piece of evidence but a voice? Somebody wanted us to know something, somebody left us a message. Listen to this. Pay attention. Could we honor those voices? Can we be faithful to what was left for us? It's hard. We fail at it more often than we would like to admit.

Too many people have been erased from history just because they didn't suit some ideology held dear by academics. Humanitarians have suffered this fate more than anyone else because, in their concern for justice, they are always seen as halting or slowing down material progress. Who needs justice when we have so many things to invent that will enhance all our lives? The other side of suppressing unwanted voices, and one means of carrying out this suppression, is the creation of myths to charm ourselves. Creating icons is an exercise in power, not in truth-telling. We use them to celebrate power and the endless acquisition of more stuff.

When myths and silence become the established order and one of the sources of our happiness, we worry that truth-telling will upset everything we love. The search for evidence---for those lost voices that had another story to tell---is feared. Controversial questions, such as the one about Darwin's racism, will be decided on the basis of ideological inclinations instead of on the evidence. And so it is that every accurate study of history is forced to begin with assurances that not all will be undone. We will gain more than we will lose. We will rediscover possibilities. This history of Darwin and the time he lived in is no different.

The history of science needs to be told with precision. Pulling the wool over our eyes and hiding under the covers won't help us understand how science really develops. It won't help us see that science is sometimes close to being objective and sometimes it is guided by cultural or ideological biases. Instead, we are given a history of science told with extreme bias---a version of science as always pure. We don't get to hear all the voices that objected to being railroaded into one way of seeing things and that pointed out there are roads not taken that might do us some good.

Every voice in history left us messages. Even those who became the greatest icons---and who did not know that this would be their fate---left us many messages about what they really thought. And those who did not become icons, who sunk into history as obscure humanitarians, left us

messages galore. No historian has the right to preemptively decide which ones are worth preserving. They all deserve to live even if we hear nothing special, even if we see no reason why this voice should be remembered---because you never know when some future generation will hear what we could not or would not. The good, the bad, and the ugly, and the downright painful---they all may come to live a beautiful and useful life one day.

The biggest worry that people seem to have about Darwin's racism and his devotion to colonialism is that if established as thoroughly true, then this will undermine the theory of evolution. It won't. No matter what Darwin's prejudices were, no matter even if he misused the theory of evolution, the science of evolution is safe. That is because there is so much evidence that the general theory explains better than any other approach and because there is more than one way to be an evolutionist. Even when it comes to natural selection, Darwin's version of evolution, there is more than one way to pursue it.

People forget a basic fact of history: Darwin does not own the idea of evolution. He was not the first to propose it or even the first to prove that it is more probable than special or independent creation (the belief that God created each species separately). Nor was he the one responsible for its popularity. Evolutionary theory has a history that goes back well before Charles Darwin entered the picture. By the time Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* appeared in 1859, probably a majority, or at least something close to a majority, of the general population in England believed that the birth of new species, in descent from older species, made sense. It was an attractive idea and its popularity was due in large part to Robert Chambers, who put together enough evidence in 1844 to demonstrate that it made more sense than the prevailing theory of independent creation.

The majority of professional scientists were still stuck in the older idea. They hated Chambers's book *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*. This was one case where the common people were ahead of the scientists who did all they could to discredit the new way of thinking, what Chambers called the new view of nature, the development hypothesis. It was the reason why Chambers had such a hard time of it and had to publish anonymously. His book caught the people's fancy, but scientists gave him quite a knocking. Almost half a century earlier, Darwin's grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, enthusiastically promoted evolution, called generation in his time, and while he may not have proved it, he presented enough evidence to make it a reasonable theory to pursue. A common argument made by many was that the generation of new species was very much like the generation, or birth, of new individuals; as Chambers put it, the birth of a new species was as normal as

the birth of a baby. In the summer of 1844, just a few months before Chambers's book went on sale, Emma Martin, one of the most passionate and energetic feminists who ever lived, was handing out a pamphlet in the street, comparing the two types of generation.

But the intellectual atmosphere was still too hostile. In France, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck had made the theory more reasonable still than Erasmus Darwin had. In the very year that Charles Darwin was born (1809), Lamarck was arguing that human beings were descended from apes, but his name became a term of abuse among English scientists. It was no compliment to be called a Lamarckian. In America, in 1836, Constantine Rafinesque wrote a long poem, which is really more of an essay, called *The World, or, Instability*, arguing that we should welcome constant change as a law of life. It was a nice follow-up to Erasmus Darwin's statement that everything is in transformation. Another American, the botanist Asa Gray, who would later become one of Darwin's supporters, was repulsed by Rafinesque's ideas on species change. Rafinesque was also one of the first scientists to argue that racism against other human beings was irrational.

In letters to his friends and colleagues, Charles Darwin was always careful to distinguish himself from people like Lamarck and Chambers, and sometimes joined in the general mocking of them. The transmutation of species was still a disreputable idea for most mainstream scientists and Darwin did not want them to know how much he agreed with the outcasts that the development of species was a distinct possibility. The name kept changing---generation, development, transmutation, even regular gradation---and soon enough it would be called evolution, the term fastened on by Herbert Spencer, but the idea was always the same: A theory about how species are biologically descended from previous species. Darwin called it the theory of common descent. He and the other visionaries of evolution saw different implications in the malleability of nature, but they agreed that nature's forms were not fixed. That was an absolute no-no for anyone who wanted to make it as a professional scientist.

To point out that Darwin was not the lone, towering genius he is often made out to be is in no way to deprecate him. It is not a dishonor to stand with others for a great idea and in pursuit of the evidence to prove it. It does Darwin no favors or honor to falsify the historical record. But it will be an honor and the simple truth to restore the reputation of all those who made evolutionary thinking possible.

The other evolutionists were much more holistic than Charles Darwin. They saw each part of nature, including the various races, as serving the whole in some way. Darwin changed that. He saw nature as a hierarchy of

groups, with dominant groups becoming ever more dominant and wiping out the weaker groups. You can already see the seeds of disaster in that point of view. But whatever prejudices and preconceptions Darwin dragged into this, his way was not the only way to espouse evolution and his way was not the original way to be an evolutionist. For some evolutionists, having a common ancestor would engender a feeling of brotherhood among all peoples and all organic beings. Darwin unfortunately did not see it that way. For him, the common ancestor evolved into varying descendants, descendants that were so different from each other that some could be said to be higher than others.

It is important to distinguish between a theory and the ways it can be misused. If it turns out that Charles Darwin made a contribution to both, that does not invalidate the former. If we remember how many people made evolutionary theory a reasonable theory (before and after Darwin), then it should not be upsetting to learn that Darwin did not always advocate the theory in the purest, most objective way. His failings are independent of the theory. If we don't pay careful attention to this history, we will miss a much needed lesson in humility.

Having said all this, there is no denying that, for many, one of the saddest discoveries will be that *The Origin of Species* was not a pure work of science. It really should not be that much of a surprise. The anthropomorphisms that permeate *Origin* have always been well-known. What is less well-known is how much of this made nature a colonialist enterprise and how much contained strong hints of racism. Darwin brings us the racism full-blown in Part I of *The Descent of Man* (1871 and 1874), but it is already being nudged along in the earlier work. Confirmation of exactly what Darwin was thinking when he wrote *Origin* comes in a letter to his friend and mentor, Charles Lyell, the noted geologist who more firmly established James Hutton's original insight that the earth was older than anyone could imagine and that geological changes crept along in almost unnoticeably small steps. Darwin is very clear in this letter about what he thinks of non-European races. Since this book is about evidence, I might as well present this piece now.

The letter was written just a few weeks before *On the Origin of Species* was published (CCD 7.343-48). Darwin is responding to comments Lyell made after he had read an advance copy of *Origin*. Lyell was highly opposed to any kind of development theory such as propounded by Robert Chambers, anonymous author of *Vestiges*, particularly because of what it implied about man's lowly origins. He would be the last of Darwin's associates to come around to his point of view (not until 1868 and never quite wholeheartedly; even as late as 1872, Darwin could write to Lyell, "I do not agree with all your criticisms on natural selection ... I differ most about your difficulty ... on

higher grades of organisation being evolved out of lower ones;" CCD 20.189). It was remarkable of Lyell that he could encourage Darwin as much as he did, while strongly disagreeing with his theory. That is a rare gift.

Darwin extensively goes over some of the points and evidence again, and asked Lyell to throw away *Origin* and just think about the evidence on your own and see if that won't take you there ("... raising your own difficulties & solving them---as far more important than reading my Book;" CCD 7.347). Since Darwin knew that the implications for man and his development (including his intelligence) from lower life forms were the main sticking point ("you doubt the possibility of gradations of intellectual powers;" CCD 7.345), he tried to convince him again that natural selection acts on the mental faculties as well as on physical abilities:

I suppose that you do not doubt that the intellectual powers are as important for the welfare of each being, as corporeal structure: if so, I can see no difficulty [one of his favorite expressions in *Origin*, comparable to 'we can imagine'] in the most intellectual individuals of a species being continually selected; & the intellect of the new species thus improved, aided probably by effects of inherited mental exercise. *I look at this process as now going on with the races of man; the less intellectual races being exterminated.* [CCD 7.345; Oct. 11, 1859; emphasis added]

This is biological racism. For Darwin, a biological theory, natural selection, explains how a human race becomes so mentally inferior that it is doomed to disappear. This will be a fixed point in Darwin's thinking. He never varies from it and will give it public expression in *Descent*. He also expressed it in other letters, as we will see. Not once in Darwin's writings does justice and injustice enter into it. Genocide is strictly a natural phenomenon.

Darwin admitted that savages were far above animals in intellectual power ("with one rather wide gap ... between say a Hottentot and an Ourang;" CCD 7.345), but they were quite beneath the advanced races. I think it fair to say that Darwin was telling Lyell that his theory confirms European superiority and our conviction that we will inherit the earth. It was not the last time they would communicate about this.

There is so much that lies buried in Darwin's belief about intellectually inferior races: his prejudices about other peoples, his waving away the very different opinion of contemporary humanitarians (not even considering their views), his dedication to western imperialism and the obsessive desire to take everything away from supposedly inferior peoples, his refusal to see that human interactions cannot always be reduced to the stronger versus the

weaker, but involve concepts of justice and injustice, sovereignty, compromise, negotiations, and whether greed for more than you need to survive is justified. This will all come out in future chapters.

What Darwin said in the letter to Lyell, as bad as it is, was not even the worst thing he said. But understanding Darwin's racism is more than a matter of collecting all the bits and pieces of his racist remarks. It is about seeing how pervasive it was in his endlessly repeated ideas about hierarchy, the necessity of dominant and weak groups, the survival of the fittest and what constitutes fitness, his casual attitude towards the inevitability of extermination, his strong sense of the inferiority of savages, and his rock steady belief that none of this could be controverted. Racism became a part of his system of thought. He did all this in obvious and subtle ways. Dark clouds are gathering in the study of this history. But that doesn't mean there won't be bright moments. A happy lemon tree to be found here and there. The lemon tree I am referring to is from a Greek song called *Ypomoni*, "Patience", written by Stavros Xarhakos and Alekos Sakellarios for a film. Part of it was translated by Ali Smith (at the end of her book *Artful*, 202-03):

Neighborhood, your streets are narrow
Frost and gray skies
Life is dark, day and night
For company, cloudy skies

Patience.

Have patience and the sky will become more
blue
Have patience: a lemon tree will bloom in the
neighborhood.

I know that the racist and colonialist convictions of Darwin will make him seem more narrow and darker. Are we meeting a smaller man? Not really. It only seems that way up against the exaggerated, fictional Darwin that academia has created. The past is richer than we imagine. Whatever dark pain parts of our history hold for us, there are also undiscovered riches. I won't deny that things are going to get darker. Have patience. It's a long road. No one knows what lies at the end of it. No one knows what we might find in the dark.

There were plenty of humanitarians in Darwin's day---a minority in the culture as a whole, but still quite a few---who opposed the kind of racist thinking represented by Darwin. These were people who believed that the humane goal did not end with the abolition of slavery and who did not think the extermination of native peoples was inevitable or welcome. There was still much work to be done to end the oppression of free colored people, as some would have put it. These included Charles Napier, a well-regarded British military hero; Saxe Bannister, Attorney General for New South Wales in the mid-1820s and later one of the founders of the Aborigines' Protection Society; Georg Gerland, a German scientist; and Richard Hill, a free, activist, black Jamaican of many talents. And that is just scratching the surface. Their anti-racist call was as clear and as bright as could be. It is inspiring to run across them, even though they fought a mostly losing battle in their time (that's another sad part of this story).

Then there is Darwin who left us a humanitarian lesson or two. Despite his racist leanings and his disgust with savage peoples, he was able to reason his way to the conclusion that we are all related. He did not draw the additional lesson that all should be treated equally---he rather seemed to favor the idea that these related descendants of a common ancestor were quite unequal and might legitimately suffer unequal consequences---but at least he did not dehumanize others into another category of being. He could to some degree see a common humanity in all. I would call this his greatest achievement because he was able to think a thought that his prejudices wanted to drown out. He had to fight against a very deep part of himself. It goes unheralded because no one sees the trap he laid for himself when he adopted a hierarchical view of life and, therefore, they miss how he avoided falling completely into the trap. At least in one small way, in his very limited humanitarianism, he was able to escape the dilemma and see a common ancestry. But there would be other traps in *Origin*.

There should be no surprise that great works of science, which *The Origin of Species* certainly is, are not always the pure, objective works they are proclaimed to be. The profession of science does not always live up to what science should be. It has always had difficulties being perfectly rational. Scientists and scholars often---so very, very often---create more ruts than they break out of. They are affected by cultural values and preconceptions which introduce bias into their work. Whatever categories Darwin thought he was getting free of, he was continuing some old ones and digging new ones. His legacy for many is that we must celebrate him no matter what, but in proclaiming this, they also make our remaining stuck part of the legacy.

Anthropologist Margaret Hodgen, writing in 1964, saw something in

Darwin that almost no one else has paid attention to: In some important ways, Darwin remained a medieval thinker. She pointed out that hierarchy has long been prevalent in western thinking, for Darwin no less than for anyone else. "Indeed, the hierarchical order *per se* remains for most minds today a truism" (*Early Anthropology*, 435). She traced its roots at least as far back as the Middle Ages. At one time, it was a theological idea, but modern science never changed or challenged it. Once it was thought that the hierarchy was static, then along came modern scholars who temporalized it. Any intellectual revolution lay only in that and not in overthrowing hierarchical thinking. "The intellectual unsettlement took the form of a conversion of the purely architectonic, static, and spatial order of categories into a temporal one" (435).

It is exceedingly important to understand that ordering and ranking all forms of life has never changed in western thinking. Changing from a static order to one that alters slightly through time is not much of a change. The obsession with honoring some form of hierarchy is still there.

Hodgen observes: "It was Charles Darwin ... who made the first clear statement implying the temporalization of the biological hierarchy ..." (470). This "organizing principle [of grades of perfection], already accepted by the theologians, was ratified in modern biological inquiry by Charles Darwin" (397). Hodgen then quotes the first sentence of Chapter XIII of *Origin* (to which I will add the second): "From the first dawn of life, all organic beings are found to resemble each other in descending degrees, so that they can be classed in groups under groups. This classification is evidently not arbitrary like the grouping of the stars in constellations." It is a deep principle of life, Darwin was saying, and not arbitrary that nature will subordinate each form of life under others. Later in the same chapter (*Origin*, 477), Darwin adds that "natural selection ... explains that great and universal feature in the affinities of all organic beings, namely, their subordination in group under group." Subordination or hierarchy is true throughout all time ("from the first dawn of life") and throughout the universe, which he had also said in the last sentence of Chapter II: "And thus, the forms of life throughout the universe become divided into groups subordinate to groups."

Darwin was not so much a free, revolutionary thinker as a biological theologian. The sheer arrogance of this kind of thinking is mindboggling. No theologian could have done it better. Darwin projects subordination all the way back to the beginning of time and everywhere throughout the universe, which he could hardly have visited. Hierarchy ("groups subordinate to groups", which he uses over and over again in *Origin*) has always been and always will be with us wherever we may travel. For better or worse, Darwin was a secular theologian. He was continuing the work of the medieval Church

on another level. Europeans have always wanted to take over time and the universe. Nothing will stop them. Is Darwin doing science or practicing conquest? It is a question that has to be asked.

We are plagued in our scientific studies as well as in our study of history by categories that were established by previous legions of academics. Darwin suffered from it, Darwinists have suffered under it, we all do. It is hard to shake this off and see the evidence with fresh eyes. Agnes Arber (who was first brought to my attention by Hodgen), a British botanist and, in her later years, a philosopher of biology, spoke about this in *The Mind and the Eye*. What she called the "tyranny of the *Zeitgeist*" she explained more fully this way:

the general intellectual atmosphere of any given moment has an effect ... which is compulsive to a humiliating degree ... even workers of some independence of mind are found to have shrunk from them [certain ideas and beliefs considered distasteful] as if they were tabooed ... the man, who had glimpsed it [a fresh viewpoint], too often proceeded to turn his back upon it, reverting to the familiar beaten paths ... we are always too much bedazzled by contemporaneity ... [7-8]

It is not only the answers that are forced on us, as she pointed out, but the framing of the problems is also imposed. The humiliation stems from the fact that the compulsiveness of the intellectual atmosphere has forced us to censor ourselves. Without putting a gun to anyone's head, academia gets scholars to adopt self-censorship. No fresh look can ever happen in such an atmosphere. When it comes to anthropology, hardly anyone is ever out to revolutionize the categories of humankind.

This is true not only of Darwin and all the writers who refuse to see the problems in the way Darwin investigated evolution, but it tells us a lot about the way the history of science is usually studied. We created these myths about how science actually operates and we stick by them no matter what the historical evidence says. We obliterate the history of how often ideology rules in science and how preconceptions intrude into the way evidence is noticed and *not noticed*, selected and presented to support a preformed conclusion. There is often a huge gap between the profession of science and science in the ideal. Sometimes they may even be at odds with each other. If we had any sense at all, we would admit that this happens and that it is humiliating.

Nobody is pure, not Darwin or anyone else, and no science, no working science, is perfect. The study of history reveals a past studded with imperfections. Everybody has ulterior motives and it tells in the ways they put

their science to use. Darwin used his science to denigrate so-called uncivilized cultures and proclaim their inferiority and the inevitability of their demise, which he had no hesitation in referring to as extermination. There is no doubt about any of this. There is also no doubt that the theory of evolution does not need this and will do much better without it. There is not one word in this book which will do an iota of harm to evolution. It will only get better, truer, deeper.

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"What we need is to forget, and history is the opposite of forgetting" (Siegel, 771). So said Gaston Clémendot, a French primary school teacher after the Great War, in his attempt to get rid of the study of history. In 1923, at a union meeting, he tried to convince his fellow teachers that the teaching of history should be abolished in the school system. His motivations were good. He did not like what he was seeing in the textbooks about what must be learned from the recent war. As Mona Siegel summarizes it, some of his fears were that these lessons "inspired hatred of foreigners, glorified the experience of battle, and laid the moral groundwork for future wars" (Siegel, 770). According to Siegel, the other teachers admired his courage, even though they did not vote for his proposal. He did, however, influence changes in the textbooks to promote the values of peace and brotherhood among all peoples.

Clémendot was right about one thing. The study of history is often a battle. As he expressed it in 1924: "When people cease to fight by cannon fire, they continue the fight with history textbooks. And battle by text paves the way for battle by cannon. *History is a constant state of war between nations*" (794; emphasis in original). Not only between nations. The battle is between academic ideologies as well. He was right that the study of history is often a continuation of the battles we are fighting in our society and that we have to watch out for this. Truth is sacrificed for the sake of winning a battle. Clémendot took it a little further when he argued that history was "inevitably bellicose, that history cannot help but support the spirit of war" (796). Does it have to be that way? A colleague of his, a teacher named Péron, who disagreed with him, said "... I am convinced that it is not possible to suppress the teaching of history without suppressing at the same time the best means of teaching peace" (797). History can teach many things. We hope.

Maybe it can teach humanitarianism. But not if we lie about who the real humanitarians were.

At least Clémendot had a good cause he was fighting for. But for the many writers who advocate in effect that "we need to forget" Darwin's racism and his colonialist perspective---like Stephen Gould, Richard Dawkins, and Adam

Gopnik---what is their excuse? What noble cause does their misuse of history achieve? If I had to guess, I suppose their thinking might be this: Confer great status on Darwin and then this heroic, humane Darwin (albeit a fiction) can be used in an ideological battle against reactionary, religious forces that would stifle science. They are not out to abolish the study of history, the way Clémendot was, but they are out to subvert it to what they believe is a noble cause.

There is only one answer to this: Telling lies about history ultimately does not serve the cause of science. There is no ideological battle that is as trustworthy as the search for truth. The creation of icons is just another way to smother science. The worshippers of Darwin are substituting one folly for another. If you believe in truth-telling, then follow it all the way. I am sympathetic to those who would like to forget. If real forgetting were at all possible, if the total erasure of historical memories were conceivable, then that might be the best way. I am almost ready to agree that the way to achieve peace and healing is to forget everything, erase it all, bury it and move on. But that will never happen. It may be true that nothing gets in the way of progress like the study of history. But it is not humanly possible to forget the whole damn thing. Someone is always thrusting some memories at us. Forgetting isn't really possible, except selectively, and selection is always dangerous.

People will remember well or they will remember badly, they will inject some honesty into their memories or they will repress them, but they will never *not remember*. Even repression is a way of remembering. We don't repress everything, only certain things, and we will color what remains so that the gaps won't be noticeable. We never *not remember*. That is not an option, not for anyone. Even if removing the study of history from the educational curriculum were feasible, we would still remember with our memorials, statues, museums, holiday observances, parades, speeches, and the like. We would celebrate past heroics and deride past betrayals in movies and novels. There will be documentary films that never get it right. History will always be alive, and maybe not well, but always made present again. People who advocate forgetting the past mean selected bits of history, never the whole past.

Everyone remembers. Whether well or badly, honestly or repressively, is the question. Historical study will go on even if it is abolished and if we did that, that would almost ensure that history will end up in the hands of liars.

So what is the study of history? In practice, some voices are always crushed, while others are given free rein. I think it was this that drove Clémendot to the despair of insisting that it should be removed from the schools. He was upset that the voices supporting peace and the brotherhood of

all human beings were not being given their due. The people who record history don't always get it right. In the words of Peggy Patrick, an Australian Aborigine, speaking in 2003, "The read and write mob the one bin doing all the killing. They never write down what they did. We don't read and write but we hear about what bin happen before from our mother and father and we still got it in our mind" (in Manne, 215; she adds that if they have not talked about "this cruel thing" before, it is "because people bin still frightened" and did not want to get killed). If "the read and write mob" cannot get it right, as Clémendot feared, then let's shut it down, otherwise lies more than anything else will come out of it.

What history should be is preserving voices---however much it upsets our beliefs. "We bin bring out hard story what bin happen to blackfella. We talk about bad story so black and white can be friend when we look at true thing together," says Peggy Patrick (217). That is the best reason for studying history fully and accurately. Looking honestly at the facts together will bring us reconciliation. If we do it well and completely, history will give us truth and peace. It's too sad for words that in practice historical study often turns out to be the silencing of voices. We seek comfort in history, an affirmation of what we already believe. That means certain people and events cannot be tolerated. They have to go. We cannot bury them deep enough. The bottom of the sea would not be deep enough.

In practice, historical study is greedy. Only a few voices are allowed and everyone else has to go. Too many scholars think that the eraser and the gag are the best tools of historical investigation. There are ideologies (like the ones about Darwin and the history of evolutionary science) that have to dominate and control *everything*. No voices to the contrary are allowed. In the ideal, the true historical task is as if a court had appointed us to handle these voices carefully so that they speak from the context of their time and place. No one can listen to every voice. We all have our limitations. But drowning voices would be an absolute violation of a sacred duty. And yet it happens more often than one would like to admit.

Staying faithful to historical evidence is psychologically more difficult than would appear. We bring our own interests to the study of history. In practice, studying history is more of a struggle for power. Who controls the past, or its interpretation, controls the future. It's a battle. Clémendot had a point. We pit one ideology, the one we would like to see rule, against those we don't like and we ignore the historical voices that do not confirm our preconceptions. Objectivity is the exception, not the rule. The worshippers of Darwin forget that if we misrepresent how much of a humanitarian he was, this means that we will also erase all those voices that were so much more

genuinely humanitarian than he was. We have to keep them out of hearing, so the contrast to Darwin won't be too obvious.

None of this means objectivity is impossible. It means the way to get there is to openly confront the emotions and psychological problems that make it difficult. And how many people, especially academics, want to admit they have psychological problems in the search for truth? What we should be doing is to get ourselves to expose the subjective, the hidden emotions that control our research, and to challenge ideological preconceptions. Don't hide them and pretend they aren't there. They are at the bottom of all misuse of science and history. Pretending they are not is no excuse for our failure to investigate them.

Memory is selective, no doubt, but why is so much memory of what Darwin said and what colonialism was about slanted to make these subjects look more noble than they actually were? A British Colonial Secretary is remembered for having said that if we allow extermination of native peoples to occur, it will leave "an indelible stain upon the character of the British government." It is a very famous comment and is often used to show that the intentions of the British government were good. But never reported is that the same Secretary said that he had a duty to support the interests, prejudices, and even errors of colonial settlers. (All this is for Ch. 10, §3, and Ch. 11, §3.) This is in the historical record. Why do so many researchers miss it? Darwin is fondly remembered by many writers for having scribbled in the margins of a book a reminder to himself that he should avoid the expressions higher and lower and speak only of more complicated, thus expressing a high idealism of how natural history should be studied. We forget that he did not merely scribble but thoughtfully wrote to his friend and colleague Joseph Hooker that he would like to avoid referring to higher, but he must add that he usually means higher in a competitive sense and that when this competitive highness is carried on long enough, it will lead to "*higher* in every sense of the word" (see Ch. 6, §2). One of the points I want to explore in this book is how selective historians have been in studying a subject like Darwin and the larger subject of colonialism. But these are vast subjects, I will be told (didn't Darwin write thousands of letters in addition to his published works?). One has to be selective. Yes, but why is so much of this selection biased in one direction only, making the subject look so much nobler than it was?

Memory is a tricky thing---how often do we hear this---and it plays tricks. But tricks can be unmasked, and so too can a selectivity that is too narrow. Memory can be improved to where it both takes in more and acknowledges its limitations. Where the material is there to explore some things more fully, why not make use of it? Why brush it away and then fall back on "memory is

tricky"? Memory does not have to be deceptive. And if we *choose* to make it so, then let's honestly admit that the tricks come from us and *not* from a so-called faulty memory or an inadequate historical record. Don't blame it on memory when we can choose to remember better. Who were the real noble ones in history? Who stood up for science properly practiced, unguided by self-serving prejudices? Who stood up for human rights and really believed that an attack on humanity anywhere is an attack on humanity everywhere? We can answer that.

We so severely limit our memories. Every scholar in this field loves to recount the famous debate in 1860 between Thomas Huxley, defending Darwin's book, and Bishop Samuel Wilberforce. One represented righteous science, the other the reactionary forces of religion. Huxley was not alone. Darwin had more supporters. Joseph Hooker was there too. "[T]he event was to etch itself into the collective memory as a defining moment in Victorian history" (Browne, *Power of Place*, 115). Collective memory, as it turns out, is a capricious thing. Ironically, the real kicker to this celebrated event came about a dozen years earlier, which almost no one now remembers. In 1847, the very same Wilberforce, newly appointed Bishop at Oxford, attacked Robert Chambers for pretty much the same reason he would later attack Darwin---for his presumptuousness in defying mainstream science and its adherence to the fixity of species. He let Chambers have it (though avoided naming him), with Chambers and assembled scientists sitting in the pews before him. The scientists silently cheered Wilberforce on. Chambers bravely withstood the attack. No one came to his aid. They left him there miserable and abandoned. Today, no one considers Chambers worth remembering. Only Darwin and Huxley are afforded this honor. Why is that? Memorable (to me) was the reaction of Chambers to this abuse: "Once more the drag." There is more to history than meets the academic eye, as we will see (more on this event in Ch. 9, §1; and more on Chambers later on in this chapter.)

"Perhaps remembering is like catching our breath," suggests anthropologist Johannes Fabian (*Memory*, 140). But to catch our breath, we have to stop the breakneck speed at which ideology pushes past the evidence.

The history of memories---what we *choose* to make iconic (events do not etch themselves into memory, somebody has to do the etching)---is often a history of power---what certain powerful groups have decided must be celebrated. Chambers's experiences are dismissed or trivialized because he and his vision of evolution did not support the interests of the powerful as much as Darwin's vision did.

We can solve problems in history. It's not that hard. The most perplexing and painful questions can be answered. Was Charles Darwin a racist? Did any

of the racism of the culture and science of his times enter his work? To what degree, if any, does science behave like religion? Even harder questions can be answered. How did the historical, Jewish Jesus end up on a Roman cross? What kind of a Jew was Jesus? What was ancient Judaism really like? Even personal questions. Did your husband or wife cheat on you? These questions are all easily answered.

The fundamental question, the difficult part, is always: Do you *want* to know, do you really, really want to know? If you cannot get over that hump, the rest of the investigation will be pure garbage. We have so many ways to blind ourselves to the obvious and we seem to have found every single one and used them well. Scholars are no exception to this. They are rather exemplary models of this. The more obvious a potential discovery is, the harder it will be to see. Fear is incredibly inventive at throwing up every kind of roadblock to whatever is right under our noses. It has to be, when an undiscovered truth is so near.

Ultimately, we all want to know---or, rather, we say we want to know, or assume we want to know---what the evidence tells us. As if it were easy to get to that state where love for the facts and the details is everything. As if objectivity about the evidence was a given. It's not. In one of his letters, Darwin wrote, "I firmly believe that accuracy is the most difficult quality to acquire" (April 30, 1881; reproduced in full in Gould, *Hedgehog*, xii). He probably would not have been too surprised to learn that scholars have a hard time being accurate about him. In certain instances, accuracy about Darwin's writings, including many of his letters and even his books, has proven to be notoriously difficult for scholars. They keep making him say things he never said or meant. And they leave out much of what he did say.

I don't think loving the evidence is in our blood. How many scholars promote looking at half the evidence, no more? How many scholars adopt a worldview and preconceptions, never question them, and then use them to suppress important pieces of evidence? Loving evidence is something you have to make an effort to go after, no matter how wide the contingent of opposition against you, no matter if it be wide as the world itself. You have to believe that standing up for the evidence is a good thing and ideology a bad thing---and be prepared for all the hostility from academics who would switch that around.

Did Darwin frequently express racist views? Did he bend his science to support racism and colonialism? Did he look favorably on the extermination of native populations? Were there people in Darwin's time who identified racist thinking as such and opposed it, at the same time taking an equally strong stand against the genocidal policies of European nations? Was Darwin

aware of these humanitarian voices and did he ever acknowledge they had something to contribute? Did Darwin use euphemisms to cover up some of the abuses of colonialism and did he turn a blind eye to *de facto* slavery? What does Darwin's own voice tell us about these things? There is a superabundance of evidence to give clear-cut answers to all these questions. Only one thing is necessary to find the truth: The desire to see and to know. Without that desire, it is difficult for anyone to see all the evidence, no matter how obvious.

We take the question "Do you want to know?" and an affirmative answer to it for granted in the so-called hard sciences which give us great inventions. We don't have to consciously ask and answer this question because we have already done it unconsciously. There, we are very sure that science is useful. We enjoy the benefits of technology. We want to know the properties of water and how electricity works and innumerable other things because we know we are going to get some beneficial results out of our knowledge. We know damn well that if we don't pursue scientific method accurately in technological fields, bridges and buildings will collapse, cellphones will drop calls, computers will freeze up, refrigerators will stop cooling. But who is harmed when historical study is done badly? Usually, only minority groups. "Who benefits from the study of history?" may not have an answer the majority will like. It is the riskiest of all sciences. We are not so sure we want to know all that can be known in historical studies.

We are good at science when we perceive that it has immediate benefits for ourselves. We are not so good at science when its benefits appear doubtful, as they almost always do in the study of history. If a cellphone frequently drops calls, of what use is it? But dropping facts from history is relished by many. We call them academic scholars. The good historian's job is to rescue dropped voices. I have made it my business to hint at some of these lost voices in this first chapter. And I won't leave this chapter without providing a few more.

In short: Science in the service of wealth and power, yes, it's a good thing, we are sure. Science in the service of pure truth, not so much. Although this may not always be obvious, historical study, of all the sciences, is the one that engages us in the deepest emotional conflicts. That is bound to affect the results of our inquiry, especially if we don't acknowledge it. More than any other field, historical study tests whether we are really devoted to truth-telling or whether truth is just a gimmick to assert our self-interests.

The question "Do you want to know?" has a far reach. This is not just about whether there was racism in the work of Charles Darwin or not. It is also: If there was, do you want to know that many scientists and scholars covered this up? Do you want to know how they did it? Does academic

freedom to debate these questions really exist? Do idolizers and critics of Darwin want to look at this true thing together? This is a battle between the real historical Darwin and a fictional Darwin created by so many writers. I have a hunch that the real Darwin might like to be the one to win out. He would call the iconic Darwin a monstrous exaggeration.

Won't all this take the shine off Darwin? Not really. It will detract only from the fictional Darwin and from the writers who created him. The real, historical Darwin will neither lose nor gain. We will end up with a book of man, a man who was of his time and place, who did well on some things but who, truthfully, did not resist racism as well as some others of his time did. These others should be better remembered, and if they haven't been, that's not Darwin's fault. The real Darwin will just be, and in allowing him to speak on his own, he might deliver his biggest lesson yet. If racism can get to someone like Charles Darwin, as good a family man and friend as he was, and infiltrate his work, it can get to anyone. Watch out. You never know when racism might be sneaking up on you.

~ 4 ~

The rest of this book will go into more detail on all these issues. Much of the evidence will be presented more than once. It is helpful, I think, to see the same evidence in different contexts. I will never judge Darwin by later standards of racism and anti-racism, justice and injustice, and so on. Every concept used in this book was thinkable in Darwin's time. They were expressed by a few or sometimes by many of his contemporaries. Occasionally, Darwin's own professed standards will come into play. Hindsight and anachronistic values are not employed to explain any of this.

The terms 'humanitarian' and 'humanitarianism' were not yet coined in Darwin's day, though they were in use by the last decade of his century. 'Humane' and 'inhumane', however, certainly come up again and again in his time, and there were also equivalents for the first two terms I mentioned: 'philanthropist' and 'philanthropy'. We will see them used often in contemporary quotations in the same way we use the concept of humanitarian. My references to 'superior' and 'inferior' are likewise valid, though their preferred vocabulary for this was 'higher' and 'lower'. Keep in mind a couple of other examples of terminology specific to Darwin's time period: 'philosophical' often meant 'scientific' (and 'philosophy' included 'science'), and 'wonderful' had the sense of amazing; it did not mean good as we often mean it. Erasmus Darwin's poems all come *with Philosophical Notes*, meaning scientific notes. When Thomas Huxley wrote that "it is wonderful" how the Jamaican affair (the reaction to the suppression of the Morant Bay

Rebellion, to be discussed in Ch. 4) was driving people apart (see Semmel, 127), he meant it was amazing, not that it was good (though he may have believed this too).

'Melancholy' is another term to watch out for. While they often meant by it just what we mean, they also used it in the sense of tragedy. Where we might call something a tragic fact, they would call it a melancholy fact. Most importantly, they had their own vocabulary for racism and racists. Complexional distinctions is one expression that comes to mind. Racial arrogance is another and color-phobia yet another. And the most wonderful term of all for a racist: complexional misanthrope.

I point these things out so that the reader can remind him- or herself to remain alert to their slightly different way of speaking. None of this means they lived in a totally different conceptual world. On the contrary, it was very much the same world as ours, even if their vocabulary varied. Humanitarianism was a significant issue for them, though they had a different word for it (i.e., philanthropy). In the same way, they knew what racism was. That they had not coined that word yet is of no consequence. They had other words for it. They recognized that contempt, hatred, and arrogance towards people of color were creating problems such as inequality and social unrest. None of this should be surprising. As I hope will become obvious, we have never left the 19th century. We are just an extension of that time, the century that just won't quit.

The two main defenses made for Darwin will be considered and defeated at length (given all the evidence that proves my points). 'Everyone was a racist back then, so whatever Darwin said is excusable' is one popular defense and the other is 'Darwin's theory was never about groups or races, but only individuals, so by definition, racism could never have been part of his worldview.' The plain, historical fact is that everyone was surely not a racist; many identified racism and opposed it (evidence for this is scattered throughout many of the following chapters, but much of it is collected in Ch.4, §1). As for groups versus individuals, Darwin in fact harped on groups all the time, both in *Origin* and *Descent* (this is for Ch. 5).

Darwin's constant use of 'savages' does not tell against him because that was a commonly used term in that era. But what scholars rarely pay attention to is the fact that there were some humanitarians who now and then questioned the use of it and there were many more who wondered who the real savages were, the uncivilized peoples or the civilized (see Ch. 2). Except for a brief moment in his youth, Darwin would not join them.

The reason why the point that not all were racists back then recurs over many chapters and is not investigated all in one place is that I think it best that

this comes out naturally as each issue is discussed (e.g., European attitudes towards savages, the fight to emancipate the slaves and what constituted success, the implications of a holistic approach to evolution). Even if there had been only one writer who identified racism as such---the ranking of races from lower to higher and the contempt and arrogance this breeds towards the so-called lower races---who identified it as a problem that must be opposed because it creates injustices, that would be enough to show that it was possible in the 19th century to have a consciousness of racism as a pernicious phenomenon based on false premises. One example would be enough. As we will see, there was a lot more than one, and hard as it is to discuss this, Darwin was not among them but rather joined the racist position (even though his contempt was usually low-key). That put him safely in the majority. But the fact that the majority in his time rejected the anti-racist viewpoint does not mean anti-racism is an anachronistic category for that day. The majority heard the complaints of the anti-racists and rejected them. That is what is significant. It was indeed possible to think about and promote anti-racist policies even if most people made a choice not to listen.

A third defense of Darwin is that his stand against slavery tells us that he was a great humanitarian who respected the equality and fundamental rights of people of color. This point has been stretched beyond the truth. He was a limited humanitarian in the case of slavery. He opposed legalized slavery and mainly for its physical cruelties, not for its economic injustice. He never addressed the continuation of *de facto* slavery or forced labor, as some of his contemporaries did. (There is one possible slight exception to this in his *Diary*, 424, in a brief remark about the Hottentots, "the ill treated aboriginals" of South Africa [also in *Narrative*, 575], but he does not elaborate; see next chapter.) Also, he never acknowledged the belief of many humanitarians that the dispossession of colonized peoples was tantamount to slavery. He was indeed quite passionate about the evil of legal slavery, but he kept his concern limited to that one manifestation. This will be dealt with in Chapter 4.

Although this may shock a lot of people, it was distinctly possible to be an abolitionist and a racist. Several examples of Darwin's contemporaries who combined the two and who were more racist than he was---Anthony Trollope, Thomas Huxley, and Joseph Hooker (it is well to remember there were degrees of racism, and these three were stronger representatives of it than Darwin)---will be presented in Chapter 4. It was more common than most people realize. That does not mean that being an abolitionist implies one was a racist, but it does mean that we cannot conclude that if someone was in favor of emancipation, then they were also anti-racist. That did not follow at all in that time. In any event, the main racist issue in Darwin's case concerned

his attitude towards Aborigines, not slaves.

To finish up this section, I will go over one way in which Darwin was a great humanitarian and, in the next section, one in which he constricted his compassion.

If humanitarianism begins at home, Darwin was one of the greatest. I understand why so many people loved Darwin and had a high opinion of his humanity. On a personal level, he was grand. You could not ask for a better father, husband, brother, son, or friend. When he chose to be passionate about something, he went all the way. His son Francis Darwin quotes from some notes made by J.M. Herbert who had been friends with his father since their school days (they met in 1828 when Darwin was about nineteen). The warmth of Herbert's memories of his old chum is quite affecting: "... he was the most genial, warm-hearted, generous, and affectionate of friends ... he had a cordial hatred for everything false, or vile, or cruel, or mean, or dishonourable. He was not only great, but pre-eminently good, and just, and loveable" (LL 1.166). "It stirred one's inmost depth of feeling to hear him descant upon, and groan over, the horrors of the slave trade, or the cruelties to which the suffering Poles were subjected to at Warsaw ... These, and other like proofs have left on my mind the conviction that a more humane or tender-hearted man never lived" (LL 1.167).

I don't know if the following is an example of his compassion, but it certainly demonstrates his good-heartedness. When he and his wife Emma were first married, they discussed how they would raise their children. As they had furnished their home with expensive items and the children could wear out the furnishings, they talked over how controlling they should be. They decided to let the children have the run of the place (mostly). According to Emma Darwin, "So chairs and other furniture used to get piled up for railways and coaches, just as the fancy took them ... I believe we have all been much the happier in consequence" (in Keynes, 96; from the reminiscence of Louisa Nash in an 1890 article).

That does not mean frustration did not occasionally take over. When Emma was away for over a week, Charles wrote to her, "The children are growing so quite out of all rule in the drawing-room, jumping on everything & butting like young bulls at every chair & sofa, that I am going to have the dining-room fire lighted tomorrow & keep them out of the drawing-room. I declare a months such wear, w^d spoil every thing in the whole drawing-room" (Feb. 3-4, 1845; CCD 3.132). There seems to be a hint here that words alone would have been useless with them, so much had they been used to free rein. Darwin had to resort to a ruse to control them. Maybe too he did not have the heart to lecture them. It must have been a wild household. One cousin recalled

that their midday dinner was "a violent luncheon" (Keynes, 95).

In his *Autobiography* (81), Darwin directly addresses his grown-up children: "When you were very young it was my delight to play with you all, and I think with a sigh that such days can never return." He was by all accounts a very affectionate man with his family. In writing to W.D. Fox (Sept. 28, 1841; CCD 2.305), after having agreed to be the godfather of his children, Darwin wonders, "... if you are as fond of kissing babies, as I am--- some fathers are more cleanly in their tastes." How could you not love a man who wonders whether his friend loved kissing babies as much as he did? There is no end to the anecdotes about Darwin the family man and good friend. Just read the notes to himself that Darwin wrote of his daughter Anne one week after she died at the age of ten, so that he would not forget, as the years passed, what she looked like, sounded like, felt like (CCD 5.540-42). Anyone who can read the hurried notes that passed between Darwin and his wife during their daughter's last days without being reduced to sobs has a dead heart (CCD 5.13-25).

Interestingly, Darwin did not think a humane disposition was an innate quality. It was, he thought, a learned characteristic. In his own case, Darwin recounts some cruel things he did as a boy, normal for that age and more mischievous than cruel, and attributes his own education in this to his older sisters: "I can say in my own favour that I was as a boy humane, but I owed this entirely to the instruction and example of my sisters. I doubt indeed whether humanity is a natural or innate quality" (*Autobiography*, 25). His mother died when he was eight. No doubt his older sisters did most of the raising. One example he gives: When he started collecting dead insects, the question arose whether it was right to kill living insects to add to his finds. "[O]n consulting my sister, I concluded that it was not right to kill insects for the sake of making a collection" (40). The man really cared, whether taught to be this way or not, and tried to alleviate suffering whenever he could. I would not underrate the importance of the fact of his sensitivity. But it is not the whole story.

If he was right about the necessity of learning humaneness, that means one can ask how well, how extensively, and how deeply it was learned. There are degrees to any kind of learning. It could be argued that our humanity (kindness, compassion, empathy) is the most important part of us. It is therefore exceptionally noteworthy that Darwin thought humaneness was more acquired than innate even while he believed "most of our qualities are innate" (*Autobiography*, 38). His experience taught him that a humanitarian inclination was an exception to the general rule. He does not discuss the implications of this, but clearly, one is that if we imbibe humanity in varying

degrees, then different cultures can have or promote this quality to a greater or lesser extent, depending on their teachings about this in their traditions. European culture might not come out ahead in this category.

Darwin was not just a good man but an exceptionally good man on both a personal level and as a scientist who valued evidence and accuracy. As I said earlier, if racism can get to Darwin, it can get to anyone. If we don't make the effort to see how pernicious racism can be in corrupting good people, then western civilization is in a lot of trouble. I will be told this could cause a lot of problems. Yes? Well, the Aborigines who were persecuted and killed by racism---they too had families and loved them. It does not matter that they have been labeled losers in history. I can't see that winning and losing are what really matter in life.

Darwin's strong family feelings stood him in good stead when it came to empathizing with slaves. The breaking up of slave families was one of the things he hated most about slavery. Early in his voyage around the world on the *Beagle*, he recorded what one slave said: "If I could but see my father & my two sisters once again, I should be happy. I never can forget them" (*Diary*, 45; Mar. 12, 1832; it is not clear whether Darwin personally heard this or whether he was reporting what someone else told him). He was horrified by the selling of slave mothers and children: "Against such facts how weak are the arguments of those who maintain that slavery is a tolerable evil!" (*Diary*, 58). After reading Lyell's book on his travels in America, Darwin remonstrated with him for not caring enough about the terrible injustice done to slave families. "How could you relate so placidly that atrocious sentiment about separating children from their parents; & in the next page, speak of being distressed at the Whites not having prospered; I assure you the contrast made me exclaim out" (CCD 3.242; Aug. 25, 1845), and then he promised Lyell "no more on this odious deadly subject."

But the same tearing apart of families was done in varying degrees to Aborigines around the world. Darwin knew it, if only from some of the books he read, like James Bischoff's *Sketch of the History of Van Diemen's Land* (1832) and James Bonwick's *The Last of the Tasmanians* (1870). In both these books (which I will return to again and again in future chapters), he read about the abduction of native women and children. He also read his favorite author, Alexander von Humboldt, describe in detail one terrible case of an Indian woman losing her children (next chapter). If Darwin felt any outrage about the dismembering of native families, he kept it under wraps.

What makes us human? Our ability to dominate or to empathize? When a human tribe disappears from the world, was it because it was less human or more human? Who is more civilized and who more savage, the conqueror or

the vanquished? As we will find out, Darwin never really considers this. He never answers any of these questions. Never asks them. But plenty of others did.

~ 5 ~

The second example of Darwin's humanitarianism concerns his feeling about cruelty to animals. He detested it. But as we will see, no animal rights group today would adopt Charles Darwin as a patron saint.

His great-great-grandson, Randal Keynes, recounts, by way of an anecdote from Darwin's son William, the time Darwin heard villagers complain about a gentleman who had allowed some of his sheep to starve to death. "Legal actions against gentry were rare, but when Charles heard about the matter, he went round the whole parish, collected all the evidence himself, had the case brought before the magistrates, and secured a conviction" (Keynes, 125).

Francis Darwin remembered several incidents demonstrating his father's quick reaction when cruelty occurred in his presence. "He returned one day from his walk pale and faint from having seen a horse ill-used, and from the agitation of violently remonstrating with the man. On another occasion he saw a horse-breaker teaching his son to ride, the little boy was frightened and the man was rough; my father stopped, and jumping out of the carriage reproved the man in no measured terms" (LL 3.200). One time, a visitor to the Darwin home told the driver to go faster. The man responded, "If I had whipped the horse *this* much, driving Mr. Darwin, he would have got out of the carriage and abused me well" (ibid.). Obviously, he had a temper, so that at the same time, his son informs us, he "dreaded ... having to scold a servant" because his anger might get away from him (LL 1.141).

Take a dip into any study of Charles Darwin and you will quickly come across tales of his compassion. Adrian Desmond and James Moore bring up the pamphlet which he and his wife Emma wrote and distributed to protest "the use of gin traps, the dog-toothed steel-sprung jaws so favoured by gamekeepers ... which smashed the leg of any animal that stepped into them" (*Sacred Cause*, 336). Entitled "An Appeal" (available online) and unsigned, it is written in the first person, presumably the voice of Emma Darwin, as it seems to have been addressed particularly to women, reproducing a woodcut of the device for the benefit of women who may not have seen it. The appeal gives very vivid descriptions of the suffering of animals caught in one of these traps. In concluding, they remark, "Some who reflect upon this subject for the first time will wonder how such cruelty can have been permitted to continue in these days of civilisation." It should also not be forgotten that "Emma worked with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to

institute a prize for the design of a humane replacement" (*Sacred Cause*, 336).

When various writers have considered the matter of Darwin's compassion, the one example that everyone loves to pull out of a treasure trove of such stories concerns the Ichneumon wasp. In order to give her larvae live food to eat, the female wasp paralyzes, but does not kill, the caterpillars in which she will lay her eggs. The larvae then eat the caterpillar from the inside out. Darwin's grandfather had already given attention to this wasp in Canto IV, "Of Good and Evil" (in lines 31-36) in *The Temple of Nature*. That Canto is dedicated to describing the cruelties of nature and states early on "How few, alas! in Nature's wide domains/ The sacred charm of SYMPATHY restrains!" (IV, 3-4). The last two lines on the wasp are: "The cruel larva mines its silky course,/ And tears the vitals of its fostering nurse."

Richard Dawkins brings up Charles Darwin's reaction to this freakish creation of nature three times in *The Greatest Show on Earth* (370, 395, 400). Adam Gopnik uses it to make a point about Darwin's sensitivity (Gopnik, 186). Darwin mentions this wasp behavior several times in *The Origin of Species* (253, 279, 518) as one of the oddities of nature, but it is only in a letter to his American friend and botanist Asa Gray that he more fully expresses his disgust with it: "I own that I cannot see as plainly as others do, & as I shd wish to do, evidence of design & beneficence on all sides of us. There seems to be too much misery in the world. I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent & omnipotent God would have designedly created the Ichneumonidæ with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice" (CCD 8.224; May 22, 1860).

(For the sake of completeness, I should point out that in the same letter he also says that he cannot accept that "everything is the result of brute force," using the latter term as an equivalent for 'chance'. On the subject of design versus chance, or brute force, he always confessed to bewilderment, as he does in many of his letters, and could never make up his mind which was right. Also, contrary to what he says in this letter about "too much misery in the world," over a dozen years later in his *Autobiography*, 74, his judgment is that "happiness decidedly prevails, though this would be very difficult to prove.")

Note that he also singled out the more common sight of a cat playing with mice as an example of cruelty, but it is typical of many writers to mention only the exotic case of the wasp. He is even more emphatic on the horrors of nature in another letter to Joseph Hooker (July 13, 1856; CCD 6.178): "What a book a Devil's chaplain might write on the clumsy, wasteful, blundering low & horridly cruel works of nature!" One of the things that troubled him most

about animals was their general lack of sympathy or love for other animals. There were some exceptions. It delighted Darwin to collect anecdotes of animals, especially dogs and monkeys, showing signs of sympathy, devotion, courage, loyalty, as is abundantly obvious in *The Descent of Man*. But he knew that, all too often, examples of the opposite tendency could be given. "That animals sometimes are far from feeling any sympathy is too certain; for they will expel a wounded animal from the herd, or gore or worry it to death." He called this treatment of wounded members "almost the blackest fact in natural history" (*Descent*, 125). It is a sure sign of how much he valued love, caring, and affection.

My own favorite example of Darwin's compassion is from *Descent*, even if it does not satisfy current animal rights activists. He found vivisection, experimental surgery on a living animal, disturbing. In *Descent* (90), Darwin would condemn to a lifetime of torment anyone who performed vivisection on a dog, unless he had excellent reason for doing it: "... every one has heard of the dog suffering under vivisection, who licked the hand of the operator; this man, unless the operation was fully justified by an increase of our knowledge, or unless he had a heart of stone, must have felt remorse to the last hour of his life." That remorse would be hell to Darwin.

To Professor Ray Lankester (March 22, 1871; LL 3.200), he wrote: "You ask about my opinion on vivisection. I quite agree that it is justifiable for real investigations on physiology; but not for mere damnable and detestable curiosity. It is a subject which makes me sick with horror, so I will not say another word about it, else I shall not sleep to-night." Darwin's position would not please activists today because he did approve of such experiments if the intent was to gain real knowledge that could help alleviate human suffering, but it is also clear that it caused him considerable agony.

Several years later, on November 3, 1875, he provided very brief testimony to a Royal Commission's investigation into the subject of experimentation on animals with the purpose of recommending legislation to regulate it (*Report of the Royal Commission*, 234; see *Testimony* in bibliography). Darwin stated, "I am fully convinced that physiology can progress only by the aid of experiments on living animals." It would be "a very great evil," he said, to prohibit them altogether. He could understand why a vegetarian Hindu would object to such experiments, but "It is unintelligible to me how anybody [else] could object to such experiments." Most of his testimony was to the effect of asking them not to recommend a complete ban on animal experimentation. (A few years later, in a letter to a professor which was reprinted in the *London Times*, April 18, 1881 [available online], on the same subject of experimentation on animals, he said it is his

"deepest conviction that he who retards the progress of physiology commits a crime against mankind;" see "Letter on vivisection" in Bibliography.) At the very end of his testimony, when asked what he thought about performing a painful experiment without anesthetics when it could be done with anesthetics, or generally about inflicting unnecessary pain, he answered, "It deserves detestation and abhorrence."

The question Darwin never seems to have considered was what happens when the anesthesia wears off. How does the animal feel then? Darwin was not a purist about opposition to animal cruelty, nor probably on any other subject. There were limits to his concerns. He put human beings first, animals second, and could accept some pain inflicted on animals. The reason why some people can express a more glamorous opinion of him is because of selective quotation. His son Francis, who can be forgiven for promoting a nobler image of him, truncates his testimony before the Royal Commission this way: In describing his father's opinions on certain subjects as giving him "a noble air of strong and generous conviction," Francis continues, "as, for instance, when he gave his evidence before the Royal Commission on vivisection and came out with his words about cruelty, 'It deserves detestation and abhorrence.'" (LL 1.141).

Francis Darwin may not have consciously intended to do this, but by quoting only the last remark, he misconstrued the import of the entire testimony. Charles Darwin was not there to protest scientific cruelty towards animals. On the contrary, he was there to defend the right of scientists to study animals, even if they had to inflict some pain. His *whole* testimony was to plead with the Commissioners *not* to recommend the prohibition of experiments on living animals which he believed had to go forward. The general question of what is cruelty (the different forms it can take) never came up. And the pain following surgery is not something he considered even for a moment.

Something similar happens when writers like Dawkins and Gopnik prefer the example of the wasp paralyzing its victim to the case of vivisection on a dog as an example of Darwin's compassion. They are selecting out of context to present a purer Darwin. Darwin's horror of the wasp's behavior is a purer example of his compassion whereas his attitude towards operating on a dog is what people would now call a flawed example. He did not oppose it entirely as the benefits to humanity were important to him, and for this reason, it does not help to create the pure Darwin of myth (except for his son who is entitled to it). The real Darwin with his conflicted conscience is much more touching, if you are interested in that sort of thing.

By way of contrast and comparison, I'd like to turn to Robert Chambers's

view of our continuity with the animal world. Remember that he is publishing his work in 1844, a few months after Darwin finished his second (unpublished) essay on natural selection (there were two such essays, one in 1842 and one in 1844), and fifteen years before *On The Origin of Species* appeared. Chambers never admitted to being the author of *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* while he lived, and for good reason. By 1847, due to a variety of factors, many scientists, including Darwin, had figured out who Mr. Vestiges was, as he was sometimes popularly called. They hated his book, vehemently attacking it again and again, though never naming him. Chambers died in 1871. His identity was not officially revealed until 1884.

Both Darwin and Chambers saw the continuity of man with the wider world of animals. There is a continuum of intelligence from the lowest animals up through man, as Darwin would argue in 1871 in *The Descent of Man*. Chambers had already been there. In *Vestiges*, he saw gradations of intelligence from animals to mankind. "Bound up as we thus are," said Chambers, "by an identity in the character of our mental organization with the lower animals ..." (*Vestiges*, 347). "The difference between mind in the lower animals and in man is a difference in degree only" (335).

Chambers takes this a little further. Since "[i]t has pleased Providence to arrange that one species should give birth to another ...[then] be it so, it is our part to admire and to submit" (234). In that 'submit' is a spectacularly clear thought about humility. The idea that this descent from lower animals could be degrading in any way is the result of "false pride and ignorant prejudice" (235). It is completely wrong, Chambers argues, to question God "if He, as appears, has chosen to employ inferior organisms as a generative mechanism ... what right have we, his humble creatures, to find fault?" (*ibid.*). Darwin is often praised for the humility implied in his scientific views, but Chambers is much clearer about this. He even adds the unbelievably bold insight, "There is, also, in this prejudice [against the theory of descent from lower animals], an element of unkindliness towards the lower animals, which is utterly out of place."

It is that last point I want to focus on. All this was in the very first edition of *Vestiges*. In the fifth edition (238), he adds these thoughts: "A deep moral principle seems involved in the history of the origin of man" and since man's relation to other animals "is, after all, one of kindred ... he bears from nature an obligation to abstain from wantonly injuring them, and as far as possible to cherish and protect them." In other words, we are all family. Darwin would never say it that way, "cherish and protect," even though he certainly agreed about not "wantonly injuring them." We get some idea of how important this was to Chambers from the fact that it is a thought he keeps returning to. And

so in 1846, in *Explanations* (second edition):

[The development theory, which he calls 'the new view of nature'] extends the principle of humanity to the meaner creatures also. LIFE is everywhere ONE. The inferior animals are only less advanced types of that form of being perfected in ourselves ... We are bound to respect the rights of animals as of our human associates. We are bound to respect even their feelings ... we shall reap as certain a harvest of benefit to ourselves ... Is our own position affected injuriously by this view ...? Assuredly not. Our character is now seen to be a definite part of a system which is definite ... The place we hold in comparison is humble beyond all statement of a degree; yet it is a certain and intelligible place. We know where we stand, and have some sense also of our chronological place ... [and] the stage of his [man's] long descended history. [*Explanations*, 185-87; his emphases]

If I quote at such length from Chambers, it is because hardly anyone else does (you won't find Darwinists doing it). I am not aware that Darwin ever went as far as Chambers did in declaring that we should respect the rights and feelings of animals. He was opposed to unnecessary vivisection and all cruelty, as we saw, all wanton injury, though he gave no thought to how an animal feels when the anesthetic wears off. He was very clear that animals serve us and that not to experiment on them when it might be of use to us was a crime against mankind. Chambers's "cherish and protect" is probably taking it further than Darwin was prepared to go. If Darwin ever did go as far as Chambers, he never expressed it this forthrightly.

As for humility, Chambers also went much further than Darwin. Both believed that man occupied the highest rung in creation. Darwin would argue that natural selection and other factors "raise[d] man to his present high position in the organic scale" (*Descent*, 85) and at the end of the same book, "Man may be excused for feeling some pride at having risen, though not through his own exertions, to the very summit of the organic scale" (689). Even at the very end of *Origin* (536) he could call the production of the higher animals "the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving." In *Descent* (193), he put it this way: "The world, it has often been remarked, appears as if it had long been preparing for the advent of man." The "long line of progenitors" has been leading to man. Darwin could say that it is "a truer and more cheerful view that progress has been much more general than retrogression ... man has risen ... from a lowly condition to the highest standard ..." (172). For Chambers too, man is at the head of creation

(*Explanations*, 185), but more than Darwin, he emphasized that being at the top is still only a place in the whole of what we call creation. It should make us humble, not arrogant.

Both attacked the false pride that kept us from seeing that we are descended from lower life forms. "It is only our natural prejudice, and that arrogance which made our forefathers declare that they were descended from demi-gods, which leads us to demur to this conclusion," said Darwin (*Descent*, 43). As noted above, Chambers too blamed resistance to the idea of common descent on "false pride and ignorant prejudice" (*Vestiges*, 235). He too knew that we would have to wait for "when time has abated prejudice" (*Explanations*, 185). Yet even here on this common ground, there is a difference between them.

For Darwin, exaggerated human pride was merely an obstacle to the truth of human descent from lower life forms, something to be shoved aside to establish the correct scientific answer. For Chambers, humility was the whole point of this new theory. The answer was not just that we are descended from humbler forms of life. It was even more important to realize our own humble place in the world and its history. Getting rid of pride was not merely a means to an end, *it was the end*. There is only one rank or level in the world and that is *the wholeness of life*. Within that wholeness, ranking things is just arrogance. Good science should give us a whole new attitude towards life.

When Chambers said, "Bound up as we thus are by an identity in the character of our mental organization with the lower animals, we are yet ... advance[d] in development" (*Vestiges*, 347), which Darwin would completely agree with, his point was that it is not how many degrees separated us, but that being "bound up" with the animals produced a kind of brotherhood of all living things.

The comparable passage in Darwin to the above blocked quote from Chambers in *Explanations* comes in the last paragraph of Chapter 6 of *Descent*. Here is where you can really see the difference between them. Both have been arguing for man's descent from lower forms of life. For Chambers, this is immensely humbling and worth celebrating because it gives us a greater appreciation of the organization of the whole of life in which we play *only a part*, however exalted our part may be. Even the potential extinction of man, I should note, does not ruffle Chambers's feathers. That all humanity may be "gone, lost, hushed in the stillness of a mightier death than has hitherto been thought of!" is troubling, but then Chambers sees in "the far-extending Past but one intense Present, glorious and everlasting" (*Explanations*, 188). He was always looking to the whole---in space and time.

Darwin, in this last paragraph of Chapter 6 of *Descent*, is a little concerned

that our pedigree (descended from lower animals) is "not ... of noble quality." Unlike Chambers, he does not look to the whole for solace. Rather, he looks for the fact that there is something lower still: "The most humble organism is something much higher than the inorganic dust under our feet ... any living creature, however humble [i.e., low in form] ... [has] marvelous structure and properties." It seems that Darwin, with his strong sense of order and rank, could not see worth in something unless there was something or someone else beneath it. We may be descended from low forms of life but even low life forms are superior to inorganic dust. If it were proven that mankind is descended from inorganic material, Chambers would likely have celebrated that too. Darwin would have to look for something that was even lower than the inorganic.

Chambers and Darwin were equally committed to proving that species are not fixed and to opposing special or independent creation (which is usually called creationism today). They argued that species are gradually transmuting over time; in fact, species have descended from a common ancestor. They even use much of the same evidence to support it. (In Chapter 8, I will discuss the insights of Chambers, which are stunningly the same, point for point, as Darwin's.) But the spirit of their work is very different. Chambers's belief that all things are netted in development (or evolution) from a common origin meant that he saw such deep connecting links between creatures that injustice towards others would invariably come back as self-destruction to the party that commenced the sequence of injuries. Simply put: What goes round comes round. That's the Chambers theory of evolution in a nutshell. It should make us humble in our relationship to the rest of the world.

Chambers concludes his theory of evolution in *Vestiges* by arguing that slavery, war, and one class in society taking advantage of other classes ("if one portion of a nation ... grasp at some advantages injurious to the other sections of the people ...") are all similar evils (382-83). War he regards as "a tremendous example of evil ... waste of human life, and mis-spending of human energies" (365), "purely an evil, even to the conqueror" (366). He would never include it as a positive part of a system of competition. Evil will always bounce back to the detriment of the perpetrator. Chambers puts it thus: "an individual, a party, a people, can no more act unjustly with safety, than I could with safety place my leg in the track of a coming train ..." (383). He had a much firmer grasp on all things being bound in a common net than Darwin did.

Chambers never refers to competition and competing species or dominance or one species beating another as Darwin often does. He does once mention that "... the best types will remain predominant" (310), but it is not a thought

he emphasizes or seeks to develop further. His book is animated by a very different spirit than what we find in *Origin of Species*. In the view of Chambers, no species gets a break or special consideration just because they are dominant or more intelligent; every place, no matter how high, is just a humble part of the whole. Since he does not see things in the same categories as Darwin did, I will have to take a stab at how Chambers might respond to the Darwinian view. If dominant and weak species were presented to Chambers as very important distinctions, he probably would have said they are bound together in one common life force. That commonness was the essence of evolution for him and not their ranking. "Constituted as its head ... we are yet essentially connected with the humbler vehicles of vitality and intelligence, and placed in moral relations towards them" (*Explanations*, 185). Because he did not buy into the major *zeitgeist* of the time (i.e., to dominate and to rule), as Darwin did, this became the major reason why he was and still is so disregarded.

Robert Chambers was no better or kinder a man than Charles Darwin. His feeling of greater humility and connection to animals was the result of his holistic vision of evolution. I would not discount the effect of some part of their personal life on their views. Darwin was upper class, Chambers working class. Economic and class status could easily give a particular turn to one's ideas about what it means to make one's way in a world populated by vastly different creatures. Do we love differences or do we take advantage of weaknesses in the other? Should we all try to get along or do we shove the lower forms out of the way? Whatever went into their decision-making process about these things, the personal goodness of each man, I would guess, was about the same.

Darwin and Chambers, while believing in the same idea of development or descent of species from ancestral species, made different choices about how to think about this. It's not so much what you believe that counts, it's how you believe it. A system of thinking can give you a truer picture of the world or it can quash reality. Chambers and Darwin were both looking for truth, for a pattern of evidence that would help them see things more clearly. Chambers found it in a holism that revealed our connections to all of nature. Darwin found it in the fight for survival and a hierarchy of domination in that fight. Who made the better choice is still unresolved in our day because the issue has never been squarely confronted. If holistic thinking and natural selection can bring us different results in the case of how to treat animals, one can only imagine the even greater consequences when human beings come into it.

2

SAVAGES: THE POLISHED AND THE MELANCHOLY

[I]ndeed, civilization is savage beyond belief, *to the defenceless*, even in its very bosom! The fact is, that the civilized man is as cruel as the savage man, only his cruelties are *different*, and more concealed ... the civilized man is more secret.

---Charles Napier in 1835 (his emphases)

I am content that man will probably advance & care not much whether we are looked at as mere savages in a remotely distant future.

---Charles Darwin in 1860

~ 1 ~

Darwin's racism is so intertwined with his colonialist agenda that it is best to begin with his attitude towards the inhabitants of colonized countries, the savages as they were often called, and to see it in the context of how some of the genuine humanitarians regarded these peoples. Darwin's acceptance of European colonialism, with its necessary implication that the natives of the undeveloped parts of the world were inferior to westerners, is in such contrast to how he viewed slavery, that a few words on his anti-slavery position must come first.

Perhaps the best known example of Darwin's feelings about human evil and cruelty is in regard to his opposition to legalized slavery. Many have used this to emphasize his humanitarianism. In the last chapter of *The Voyage of the Beagle*, Darwin condemns the slave trade and recounts some of what he learned in his long round-the-world trip. He had come up close and personal to the ugly reality of slavery. Stephen Gould admires one long passage at the

end of this chapter so much (and rightly so) that he quotes most of it twice in *The Mismeasure of Man* (69, 422-23). Darwin details some of the abuses he became aware of:

I thank God, I shall never again visit a slave-country. To this day if I hear a distant scream, it recalls with painful vividness my feelings, when passing a house near Pernambuco, I heard the most pitiable moans, and could not but suspect that some poor slave was being tortured, yet knew that I was as powerless as a child even to remonstrate ... Near Rio de Janeiro I lived opposite an old lady, who kept screws to crush the fingers of her female slaves. I have stayed in a house where a young household mulatto, daily and hourly, was reviled, beaten, and persecuted enough to break the spirit of the lowest animal. I have seen a little boy, six or seven years old, struck thrice with a horsewhip (before I could interfere) on his naked head, for having handed me a glass of water not quite clean ... I was present when a kind-hearted man was on the point of separating forever the men, women, and little children of a large number of families who had long lived together. I will not even allude to the many heart-sickening atrocities which I authentically heard of ... It is argued that self-interest will prevent excessive cruelty; as if self-interest protected our domestic animals, which are far less likely than degraded slaves, to stir up the rage of their savage masters. [*Voyage*, 430-31; *Journal*, 499-500]

Darwin ends this heart-felt cry and plea for justice with this sentence: "It makes one's blood boil, yet heart tremble, to think that we Englishmen and our American descendants, with their boastful cry of liberty, have been and are so guilty." (To be noted: Britain banned the slave trade in 1807 and slavery itself throughout the empire in 1833, a couple of years into Darwin's journey, with a system of gradual emancipation taking effect in August 1834 and reaching completion in 1838. The above passage on slavery is not in the original *Beagle Diary* which ends in November 1836, though other anti-slavery comments are strewn throughout the *Diary*. Nor was this passage in the first 1839 published edition, *Narrative*. It was added for the 1845 version, known as *Journal of Researches*. By this time, emancipation of slaves was no longer an issue in Britain, though the consequences of it and whether these had been good or bad continued to be debated.)

The original *Diary* contains a mixture of comments about slaves, most of them revealing his strong aversion to it, though in a couple of places he

remarks on their happy lives (e.g., 45, 57, 80). In Brazil, on a ferry crossing, Darwin relates that in attempting to communicate with a Negro man, he was waving his arms which the man mistook for an oncoming blow, and "Instantly, with a frightened look and half-shut eyes, he dropped his hands. I shall never forget my feelings of surprise, disgust, and shame, at seeing a great powerful man afraid even to ward off a blow, directed, as he thought, at his face. This man had been trained to a degradation lower than the slavery of the most helpless animal" (*Narrative*, 28; *Voyage*, 21).

If this is Darwin at his best, we are in another world when we get to his attitude towards colonialism and the native peoples it ruled. It is as if Darwin had turned into another human being and did a complete about-face from how he felt about slavery. If "The purpose of poetry is to remind us/ how difficult it is to remain just one person," as Czesław Miłosz reminds us in his poem *Ars Poetica?* (quoted in Ali Smith's *Artful*, 86), then Darwin's writings deliver the same truth in painful and unexpected ways.

~ 2 ~

Darwin never writes about the evils of colonialism as he does about slavery, though it dispossessed people of family and land just as much as the slave system did. In that same voyage on the *Beagle*, he had gotten as close to colonial horrors as he had to slavery. His strongest comments on colonialism concerned New Zealand and Argentina. He was no doubt moved, but not nearly as much as he was over the evil committed by slave masters. In the entry for January 12, 1836 (but added later; not in the original *Diary*; see below), he relates, "It was melancholy at New Zealand to hear the fine energetic natives saying, that they knew the land was doomed to pass from their children" (*Voyage*, 375). Melancholy, but no fulmination similar to what he felt about slavery. In fact, he here adds that this sort of action of man against man is very similar to what animals do to each other: "The varieties of man seem to act on each other in the same way as different species of animals---the stronger always extirpating the weaker" (*ibid.*). Already he is trying to mitigate the injustice and cruelty of colonialism by making colonial dispossession of natives appear natural.

This might seem to be a striking remark to make before he discovered the theory of natural selection around September 1838, but this was not in the original *Beagle Diary*. It was added for the first published edition of the *Diary*, the 1839 Volume 3 of *Narrative* (520), after he thought of natural selection. This might have been his first public utterance resulting from his new theory. More likely though, he was just stating a commonly held belief.

The stronger eliminating the weaker was not a new thought to most people,

as evidenced by the fact that Darwin does not have to explain or justify it to his readers. In 1839, he was writing for a general audience to whom this idea would be intelligible without needing any knowledge of his still secret theory of natural selection. Darwin was relying on this being a long-held idea. It needed no further explanation. Thus, it would seem to be the case that the stronger extirpating the weaker was an ideology that Darwin was stuck with before natural selection ever occurred to him. One could even say that this is all you need to know about Darwin's science, though it would be a bit of an overstatement. It is a sign of how deeply and fatefully cultural beliefs and science can intersect and interact with each other. Science is not always as objective as we would like to believe. Maybe it never is. Perhaps more often than not, it serves cultural interests which dictate ahead of time what will count as acceptable results.

Justifying a melancholy or tragic situation by appeal to nature is not something Darwin would do with slavery. Slavery was completely unjustifiable. Imperialism with its consequences by contrast was something Darwin made an allowance for as natural to a great degree. This early expression of Darwin's interest in the fight for survival remained memorable for some. When James Bonwick published *The Last of the Tasmanians* in 1870, he reached all the way back to Darwin's *Narrative* to quote this line about man acting like animals in an effort to make comprehensible the enormity of the elimination of an entire people (*Last*, 377). It is not clear whether Bonwick quoted these words approvingly, as expressing a profound, if uncomfortable, truth, or whether he was dismayed by the expression of such sentiments. In Chapter 6 (§5), we will meet Herman Merivale who in 1841 quoted the same Darwin sentence, and the longer passage in which it is embedded, and made it very clear he found nothing admirable or accurate about it, though he otherwise admired the young Darwin. In Merivale's view, though he does not quite put it this way, it amounts to a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Another melancholy remark (also not found in the original *Diary*) occurs where Darwin describes in some detail the extermination of the Indians in Argentina: "It is melancholy to trace how the Indians have given way before the Spanish invaders" (*Voyage*, 86; *Narrative*, 122). He obviously had some sympathy for the natives of the various countries he visited. He was too decent a man to feel nothing. Following this last melancholy rumination, he describes with considerable admiration how an Indian and his son escaped their captors: "What a fine picture one can form in one's mind, the naked, bronze-like figure of the old man with his little boy, riding like a Mazeppa on the white horse, thus leaving far behind him the host of his pursuers!"

Both Darwin's melancholy remarks sound good. I would like to believe that they were genuine. The problem as always is context. When we dig a little deeper and open up both comments in the context of their time and all of Darwin's other remarks on savages, it turns out that they may not be as genuinely sympathetic as they first appear.

In Darwin's time, it was quite common to lament what was happening to Aborigines around the world (often using the word 'melancholy' much as we use 'tragic' and 'tragedy'), but, for many, this did not affect one iota their celebration of getting rid of the savages. Perhaps the expression of melancholy was only meant to reassure themselves: We are still human, we have feelings about these things, we have not entirely lost our humanity. But they went right on committing acts and carrying out policies that were leading to the extermination of native populations. Only in a very few was the melancholy meant to inspire anyone to ease up or to change tactics, producing more humane results. It is highly unlikely that Darwin was one of these few, as the exploration of all the evidence in this book will demonstrate.

Patrick Brantlinger gives many examples of lamenters in his exceptionally fine book *Dark Vanishings*. Here is Andrew Jackson in his presidential message of 1830: "Humanity has often wept over the fate of the aborigines of this country ... one by one have many powerful tribes disappeared from the earth. To follow to the tomb the last of his race and to tread on the graves of extinct nations excite melancholy reflections" (in *Dark Vanishings*, 57-58; see 205 n5 and 206 n10, for a couple of other melancholy declarations from 1843 and 1828 respectively). It's interesting that Jackson does not explicitly supply the active subject in that last sentence. He seems to mean that we Americans follow to the tomb and tread on the graves and therefore we have melancholy reflections, but he hides that 'we' and never says that 'we' are driving them to their graves. A very imperfect conscience seems to be at work.

This had become the standard American way of talking about the native population. In 1805, in his inaugural address for his second presidential term, Thomas Jefferson said, "The aboriginal inhabitants of these countries I have regarded with the commiseration their history inspires" (quoted in Williams, *Savage Anxieties*, 216). Absent is any sense that *we* have done this to them, as it would be missing in Jackson's remarks. Jefferson describes the Indians as the victims of impersonal forces: "the stream of overflowing population from other regions directed itself on these shores ... [Indians] have been overwhelmed by the current or driven before it." As Robert A. Williams, Jr. sums up this viewpoint, "White Americans really were not to blame for the fact that the 'Savage as the Wolf' [George Washington's phrase] was fated to be overwhelmed by a civilized society of cultivators who claimed a superior

sovereignty and rights ..." (*Savage*, 217). This idea of natives as the victims of fate or impersonal forces was expressed often in the 19th century. It was obvious to James Bonwick in 1870 who noted that being "utterly swept away by the flood-tide of European colonization," as one writer of his time called it, was "the common idea of many good people, who call it 'an inscrutable Providence'" (*Last*, 374).

(Was it really an impersonal fate that doomed the Savage as the Wolf? In American history, referring to Indians as wolves preceded Washington by many decades. In 1703, Solomon Stoddard, a minister in Massachusetts, wrote to the Governor that "They act like wolves, and are to be dealt with as wolves" [quoted in Mancall, 348]. He recommended that dogs be trained to hunt Indians down. Nothing impersonal about that. Hunted down and swept away are not quite the same thing. Even in South Africa, natives could be referred to as "wolves prowling"; see Bannister, *Humane* [1830], 204.)

In Jackson's case, one can certainly question what he intended by his melancholy reflections. He has the reputation of being the worst persecutor of Indians in pre-Civil War America (Brantlinger cites Rogin, 13). Despite this, it is possible that Jackson was indeed touched by the fate of the Indians. Another possibility is that he said this to soothe his own conscience, as if to say, See, I'm a good person, I'm not all bad, I do have human feelings about this. It might also be that it is not the Indians' demise that inspires melancholy, but reflecting on the mortality of all human groups. In the very next sentence in that speech, Jackson says, "But true philanthropy [humanitarianism] reconciles the mind to these vicissitudes as it does to the extinction of one generation to make room for another."

Or it might just simply be that Jackson was telling his audience exactly what he thought it wanted to hear. Many of us are talking about the native population this way, so I give you what is expected of us and me. If the sincerity of Jackson or anyone else who pondered the fate of Aborigines with sadness can be questioned, so too in Darwin's case.

I have found many examples of melancholy utterances over the fate of natives which British readers would have been familiar with and some of which appeared during Darwin's younger years. Nineteenth century writers on both sides of the Atlantic loved the word 'melancholy' and used it about as often as we use 'tragic' and 'tragedy' and usually as synonymous with those words, but it could also mean sad, unhappy, depressing, or pessimistic. Once you start looking for this particular expression, it is hard to find a writer who did not use it.

Just like President Jackson, British naval officer John Lort Stokes, who shared a cabin with Darwin on the *Beagle* voyage, had his melancholy

reflections over the fate of Aborigines. In his 1846 *Discoveries in Australia*, he recounts coming across a lighthouse that had been built by "the aborigines imprisoned on the island." "I could not avoid indulging in melancholy reflections as I gazed upon this building, erected by the hands of a people which seemed destined to perish from the face of the earth without being able to leave any durable monuments of their existence, except fabrics such as this, constructed under the control of a conquering race" (2.516). One should also know that Stokes considered the British extermination of natives a "national crime" and the talk of its inevitability to be a way of avoiding moral responsibility; I will return to his remarks on extinction as the alleged result of "some all-powerful law" in Chapter 6 (§7).

In 1870 in *The Last of the Tasmanians* (which Darwin refers to several times in the second edition of *The Descent of Man*), Bonwick does not put it quite as Jackson and Stokes did, but he brings the two words close together: "There is something of a peculiarly *melancholy* interest in the *reflection*, that the remnant of the Tasmanian tribes should expire within sight of the Bruni depot of their day of strength and independence" (214; emphases added).

Otto von Kotzebue, Russian explorer, whom Darwin also certainly read (see further on) tells us in his *Voyage of Discovery* (1821), "The melancholy history of the Marianas is sufficiently known in Europe" (3.78). A Christian missionary had arrived in these islands in 1667, "but he was followed by soldiers and arms. Already before the end of the century, the work was finished, and this nation had ceased to exist! The Spaniards call it *Pacificar*" (ibid.). Kotzebue acknowledges that the whole population may not have been completely wiped out, but all their arts and language were lost (3.80), so that the native culture was indeed eradicated.

Another example comes from George Grey who served as Governor in South Australia, New Zealand, and Cape Colony in South Africa. In 1841, he would say of the future of Australian Aborigines (in yet another book Darwin read), "the prospect is most melancholy" (2.367). Their future destiny had two possibilities: "either they must disappear before advancing civilization ... or they must exist ... [as] a despised and inferior race" (ibid.) Grey regards the chief cause of "their present depressed condition" as due to prejudice.

Almost as if he were summing it up for everyone, Saxe Bannister wrote in 1838, on the very first page of the first chapter of his book *British Colonization and Coloured Tribes*, "The sanguinary struggles between the white and coloured races ... ending as disgracefully to us, the enlightened and powerful, as fatally to our weak and ignorant victims,---offer ... one of the most melancholy subjects of reflection." Bannister had been Attorney General in New South Wales in the mid-1820s and also had experience in other

colonies, particularly in South Africa where he did legal work on behalf of the Hottentots. He was also one of the founders of the Aborigines' Protection Society. Reflections can lead to different conclusions for different people. For some, as in President Jackson's case, all this meant that the primitive natives were inevitably doomed to disappear by Fate or Nature or Providence, melancholy as this was. But Stokes believed this was just a convenient way to deny moral responsibility (quoted in full in Ch. 6, §7).

For Bannister, these reflections led to thinking about "the long and melancholy story of Christian domination over the coloured races" (*Colonization*, 6) and "a melancholy picture of the sufferings which the strong inflict on the weak" (247). Elsewhere, he called it "the melancholy results of our colonization to millions of coloured people" (*Humane* [1840], ii). In the same book, Bannister blamed the problem in part on a combination of native vices and abuse of European power (*Humane*, 35), but his general tendency was to emphasize the latter. He concluded that the problem lay in "a defect in the character of the more civilized race" and not in "an aggravated inferiority in the barbarian" (*Colonization*, 11). We will see this again. Writers could see melancholy in the disappearance of the natives and still be sharply divided over what constitutes the melancholy. Was the tragedy in being a victim of some impersonal Fate or the implacable laws of nature, or did it lie in the injustices committed by the so-called superior civilization? Darwin seems a lot closer to Jackson than to people like Bannister and Stokes.

'Melancholy' comes up a number of times in the epic poetry of Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of Charles, particularly in *The Temple of Nature*. His use of it and his knowing when not to use it is instructive. He is usually referring to the brevity of life. In Canto II of *Temple*, in a note on the first line's "How short the span of LIFE!" he quotes a comment of Hippocrates on the shortness of life and remarks, "A melancholy reflection to philosophers!" (which included scientists). This is about the loss of individual life, even if it happen many times over---"Poetic MELANCHOLY loves to tread,/ And bend in silence o'er the countless Dead" (II, 193-94).

This is not really applicable to what native peoples as nations were going through. They were not suffering from a brief lifespan. These indigenous societies and races had been around for thousands of years. The tragedy they were facing was not brevity of life, but an abrupt end to their long existence, as the result of terrible violence, dispossession, and other injustices. This would seem to make melancholy too cheap a sentiment to describe their predicament. Erasmus Darwin might have agreed. In another place in *Temple* (III, 235-40), he again brings 'reflective' and 'melancholy' together, but uses melancholy in a wider way and also sees its limitations in a note. He ponders

"the lingering wreck" of past civilizations (much like Stokes's reflection on the lighthouse) and muses:

... reflective Taste surveys
With folded arms and sympathetic gaze;
Charm'd with poetic Melancholy treads
O'er ruin'd towns and desolated meads;
Or rides sublime on Time's expanded wings,
And views the fate of ever-changing things.

A few lines after this, in a note on III, 246, he recognizes that there are "dreadful situations," like shipwrecks, which "belong rather to the terrible, or horrid, than to the tragic." This would seem to include the wrecking of whole civilizations. He suggests they are beyond what is suitable for reflective Taste and hence, for melancholy. There can be no aesthetic pleasure in contemplating such devastating ruin. Australian missionary R.M. Lyon would have agreed. In June 1833, he said, "An exterminating war over a continent as large as Europe, and abounding with tribes unknown and innumerable! The very thought is appalling ..." (in Reynolds, *Whispering*, 80). In the same speech, he called a war of extermination "the madness of a policy so uncalled for, so demoniacal ..." (81).

Erasmus Darwin was asking his readers to think about when it is appropriate to use words like melancholy and tragedy. Aren't some events too large and too dreadful to be called melancholy? Maybe we will still use that word, but even if there are no other words available to adequately convey what is going on in a catastrophe, we should be thinking about what exactly is being characterized as melancholy. Though Erasmus Darwin does not specifically suggest the following, it would not be unreasonable to draw these questions about melancholy out of his thoughts: Is it the unlucky fate of Aborigines? The destruction of their traditions? Or the injustices committed by the invaders? Or, taking it a step further, the failure to punish the perpetrators of those injustices? All of these are possibilities. If the devastation is large and brutal enough, then words like 'melancholy' and 'tragic' might be inadequate and Erasmus Darwin's sense of the "terrible, or horrid" would be closer to the truth, though 'melancholy' might be the word that most people would continue to use.

Three such examples come from essentially the same source, the House of Commons Select Committee on Aborigines, which began hearing evidence in 1835. One is from its investigation and two are from its final *Report* in 1837. The one instance is from testimony it took, some of which was published in *Christianity the Means of Civilization*, edited by Dandeson Coates *et al.* The

following was offered by the Rev. William Ellis as part of his response to a question about how to protect the natives: "... all our intercourse with the former [the natives] should be based upon the principles of humanity, justice, and truth. It is a melancholy fact, that in almost every instance of the first intercourse between Europeans and uncivilized nations, there has been a cruel disregard of the first and strongest dictates of humanity" (Coates, 72). Today, we would say it is a tragic fact. He goes on to say that Europeans have used the violence of fire-arms and murder "to inspire them [the natives] with dread" and "to convince [them] of their power to chastise or to destroy" (73).

The second example is from the actual *Report*, containing a quotation from a Report of the Colonial Commissioners which stated that the "melancholy fact, which admits of no dispute, and which cannot be too deeply deplored, [is] that the native tribes of Australia have hitherto been exposed to injustice and cruelty in their intercourse with Europeans" (*Report*, 12). The third is the Report's recounting of what it called a "melancholy detail" and "an atrocious crime" (17), characterizing both the massacre of a number of Maoris by a British Captain Stewart and the failure to punish him.

It is interesting that in all three of these examples, the stress on where the melancholy or tragedy lies is on the injustices committed by Europeans, and not merely on the end result for the Aborigines (just as with Saxe Bannister, who, as it happens, testified before the Committee). In fact, the *Report* (17) dwells on "the inequality of the measure of justice which appears to be dealt out to the European and the native by our Australian courts." It also here refers to some British subjects in New South Wales as "the enactors of savage deeds" who evade the consequences of their actions. The authors of the *Report* thus added their own authoritative judgment to confirm the idea that civilized people were capable of acting like savages. (I mention this because a few pages further on, I will review a number of examples of 19th century writers accusing the civilized of being no better than savages.) The fate of the natives for the Select Committee is not tragic in some general way but specifically because of the way they have been treated. In Darwin's melancholy remarks, this could be implied, but he has not gone out of his way to make it obvious. He never singles out the injustices as the tragedy that was facing the natives.

While Darwin said the New Zealanders (the Maoris) were losing their land, he did not say *how* (*by what methods*); he rather highlighted the naturalness of it. In the other remark, he mentioned Spanish invaders, but they are not the subject of the sentence, they are more like a passive implement of the Indians' fate---whereas the Select Committee sees the melancholy in the *details* of the injustices and cruelties committed by the invaders, including the

failure to punish murder committed by a British subject, and not in some abstract destiny faced by Aborigines. There were humanitarians who were a lot clearer than Darwin was about wherein lies the tragedy. His focus was on the end result, the melancholy of losing the land, while their focus was on the injustices that led to the end result.

I suspect that this kind of language of lamenting what was happening to native peoples was part of the oral culture of the time. In conversations, people probably nodded sympathetically when someone offered such laments. To jump back across the pond just for a moment, Helen Hunt, in her study of the ways the American government broke treaty promises with the Indians, *A Century of Dishonor* (1881), discusses one "glaring instance of confused multiplication of injustices" and invokes "the melancholy record of the experiences of our Indians" (102). She has primarily injustices in mind. Helen Hunt's sincerity in her impassioned book comes shining through. The literary elite, while expressing their remorse, were perhaps not as sincere. They combined their regrets with celebration. "Even as they celebrated the westward expansion of the United States, early American historians, novelists, poets, and artists grieved over the inevitable vanishing, whether through extinction or removal, of the Indians" (Brantlinger, *Dark*, 58-59).

The ones who seemed most sincere when expressing a melancholy lament over what was happening to the natives were people like Stokes, Kotzebue, Bannister, Hunt, and the authors of the *Report*. They were wringing their conscience over the misfortunes of indigenes, but they were not at the same time cheering the triumph of western colonialism. The main focus of their melancholy reflections were the cruelties inflicted on Aboriginal peoples. Darwin never takes a stand that was as clear as theirs.

The fact that both Darwin's melancholy utterances occur in passages (musing on the extinction of native populations) that are not in the *Beagle Diary*, but were added for the first published edition, lends weight to the supposition that Darwin was contributing to accepted public discourse on the extermination of savages, but was not deeply committed to doing anything about it. There is only one place in the original *Diary* where Darwin expresses melancholy and only one place where he refers to natives being destined to lose their land, but they are not the same place, and neither one of these puts Darwin in the humanitarian camp.

Darwin has a melancholy moment when they returned three Fuegians, who had been educated in England, to their native land in February 1833. (The three were York Minster, Jemmy Button, and Fuegia Basket, who were taken on a previous voyage of the *Beagle*; a fourth, Boat Memory, died before the return was effected. Captain King talks about first meeting these natives in the

last few chapters of Volume 1 of *Narrative*.) FitzRoy's hope had been to civilize and Christianize these savages and return them as native missionaries, accompanied by a British supervising missionary, Richard Matthews. Darwin's regret was that savage life may well win out over civilization if the Fuegians revert back to their native way of life. "It was quite melancholy leaving our Fuegians amongst their barbarous countrymen ... I am afraid whatever other ends their excursion to England produces, it will not be conducive to their happiness.---They have far too much sense not to see the vast superiority of civilized over uncivilized habits; & yet I am afraid to the latter they must return" (*Diary*, 142-43; slightly rewritten for *Journal*, 226, and *Voyage*, 191, but the melancholy remark is retained). This at least appears to be a genuine feeling and not an afterthought added for public consumption. He is sorry that even for a small moment his civilization might lose out to savage culture; this is the only time he uses 'melancholy' in the *Diary*. When they returned one year later in March 1834, Darwin saw that at least Jemmy was doing well. "I hope & have little doubt he will be as happy as if he had never left his country; which is more than I formerly thought" (*Diary*, 227).

Regarding natives losing their land, the one place where Darwin might have expressed melancholy but failed to do so was in New South Wales (Jan. 19, 1836). He remarks on how the natives are so pleased with trivial gifts from settlers (like borrowing dogs, getting cow's milk) and adds, "The thoughtless Aboriginal, blinded by these trifling advantages, is delighted at the approach of the White Man, who seems predestined to inherit the country of his children" (*Diary*, 401-02; also in *Narrative*, 525; *Voyage*, 380). That is all he has to say. Darwin says nothing here about the melancholy of this destiny for the Aborigine.

As for New Zealand and Argentina, we simply don't know for sure whether Darwin was struck with melancholy at the time he was in these colonies or afterwards. And since he says so little about it, we cannot really be sure what exactly constituted the melancholy or tragedy for him. In addition, as we will see, he made plenty of other comments indicating that he found western colonialism, even with all its egregious faults, highly acceptable.

~ 3 ~

This melancholy history reminds me of the Lewis Carroll poem "The Walrus and the Carpenter" in *Through the Looking-Glass*, the follow-up to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. The Walrus holds his pocket handkerchief before his eyes as he bemoans the disappearance of the oysters and eats them at the same time:

"I weep for you," the Walrus said:
"I deeply sympathize."
With sobs and tears he sorted out
Those of the largest size,
Holding his pocket-handkerchief
Before his streaming eyes.

He laments the fate of the victims even as he exterminates them non-stop. That in essence is European colonialism and genocide. But Carroll gives us more than that. So much in the poem seems to correspond to the details of the colonial project.

In the next and last stanza, the Carpenter invites the oysters to trot home again (an odd thing to do, as if he had no conscience or awareness of what he and the Walrus had done). "But answer came there none---/ And this was scarcely odd, because/ They'd eaten every one." Total extermination, the victims apparently of impersonal forces. Alice says she likes the Walrus best "because he was a *little* sorry for the poor oysters." To which Tweedledee responds, "He ate more than the Carpenter, though. You see he held his handkerchief in front, so that the Carpenter couldn't count how many he took: contrariwise." The sympathy hides the genocide, contrariwise. As for the Carpenter, "he ate as many as he could get." Carroll is posing this dilemma: Who is worse, the openly genocidal maniac or the one who combines murderous tendencies with sympathy for the victims? Carroll's comment on behalf of Alice: "This was a puzzler." It still is.

Through the Looking-Glass was published in 1871, the same year as the first edition of *The Descent of Man*. It seems to have been Carroll's commentary on European genocide. He is in fact comparing imperialists to cannibals, an idea that has a long history to it going back to Jonathan Swift (which I do not have time to explore, but see Boulukos, 109).

For Carroll, this genocide began with "A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk/ along the briny beach." Well before mid-century, there were already plenty of books about the colonizing venture, some of which (see below) would testify to the original pleasantness before it turned sour. What happened, for example, in Tasmania, originally called Van Diemen's Land, was well-documented in book after book. Carroll's poem opens with the sun ruling in the night which is the moon's domain. Didn't they used to say that the sun never sets on the British empire? It is literally true in Carroll's poem. "It's very rude of him to come and spoil the fun," complains the moon---echoing the complaints of Aborigines all over the world. (I believe the saying "his Majesty's dominions, on which the sun never sets" was originated in 1829 by

Christopher North, pseudonym for John Wilson, in *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, appearing in installments in a magazine; for later book editions, see Bibliography.)

As Darwin proudly recorded, "it is surprising to see how Englishmen find their way to every corner of the globe" (*Diary*, 145; Mar. 2, 1833); and "little embryo Englands are hatching in all parts" (424). Darwin shows little awareness of the way natives experienced this. Ironically, in New Zealand, the complaints that Darwin was sensitive to was that of the missionaries who "complain far more of the conduct of their countrymen than of the natives. It is strange ... the only protection which they need & on which they rely is from the native Chiefs against Englishmen!" (384; Dec. 22, 1835; compare this to the Select Committee *Report*, 18, which gave an example of native chiefs in the Sandwich Islands protecting missionaries). Missionaries sometimes bore witness to the rudeness of the imperial invaders. Would Darwin have been as sensitive to this if the complaining had come from natives? I really don't know. On the same page as the "little embryo Englands" remark, Darwin calls the Hottentots "the ill treated aboriginals of the country [the Cape of Good Hope]," but he gives no details (also in *Narrative*, 575). This is one exception to Darwin's general tendency to ignore the situation faced by the indigenous population.

(Most likely, Darwin was referring to the fact that Hottentots were virtually slaves; if so, this is the only occasion I know of where Darwin shows any awareness of forced labor or illegal slavery. Of the Hottentots, the Select Committee said in 1837, "They had fallen, as we have seen, into a state of bondage to the [Boer] farmers, through a system of forced contracts of service, and of apprenticeship of their children" [*Report*, 60]. Earlier [26], the *Report* described them as "the actual, though not the nominal, slaves of the boors" with laws being passed to keep their movements under "rigorous control." The *Report* attributes this to the Boers' greed to take all their land and cattle. "Avarice is the motive, and its fruits are systematic robbery and murder" [29]. The *Report* here also provides one of the earliest examples of government orders calling for or approving of genocide, though I have no idea if Darwin, or Lewis Carroll, was aware of this. It quotes at length from a statement by a Captain Stockenstrom who said, in part, that "many documents still extant clearly demonstrate ..." that in the late 18th century "extermination [of the Bushmen and some Hottentot tribes] ... became its [the local colonial government's] avowed object ..." [27]. The *Report* goes on to note, "In 1774, an order was issued for the extirpation of the whole of the Bushmen" [ibid.] and further on, from a statement of a Colonel Collins, "The total extinction of the Bosjesmen race is actually stated to have been at one time confidently

hoped for" [28]. But this sort of documented evidence for intentional genocide under colonialism is rare.)

If you read French explorer François Peron's account of his party's first encounter with the natives of Tasmania in 1802 (during his travels from 1801 to 1804, published in English in 1809)--meeting the charming, young, "lively and animated" Ouré-Ouré and her family (Peron, 177-80)--you will see that it was very much "a pleasant walk, a pleasant talk," sharing food, presents, and music. Finally, it came time for these first European visitors to leave: "[W]hen we put off, their sorrow was expressed in the most affecting manner: they made signs to us to come again, and as if to point out the spot, they lighted a large fire on the hill ... it even appeared that they passed the night at this place, as we saw the fire till the morning" (180). Less than half a century later, as a result of returning again and again to that place marked by the fire on the hill, European rudeness had spoiled all the fun. Almost the entire population (probably between 5,000 and 7,000 at first contact) had been wiped out.

The two interlopers in Carroll's poem pretend they want to civilize the Aboriginal Oysters. The Walrus invites them on that pleasant walk and talk. Carroll's whimsical version of the civilizing mission is "To talk of many things: Of shoes---and ships---and sealing-wax---Of cabbages---and kings---And why the sea is boiling hot---And whether pigs have wings." But it's just a ruse. "It seems a shame," the Walrus said, "To play them such a trick. After we've brought them out so far, And made them trot so quick!" Offering civilization was merely a deception, so they could consume them all. The more honest genocidal perpetrator, the Carpenter, will only say, "The butter's spread too thick!" The one time the Carpenter weeps is at the beginning when he sheds "a bitter tear" over their inability to rearrange the landscape (to sweep away all the sand) to suit their needs or whims. Both of them "wept like anything to see/ Such quantities of sand" which could not be entirely swept away. The native Oysters who are about to be eaten voice their own lament over being consumed: "that would be a dismal thing to do!"

Dismal it was. No one would be trotting home again. That is as perfect a summary of what happened to the Tasmanians as any I have ever seen.

The extraordinary thing about this poem is that except for the ending---all the Oysters have been eaten---and a bare hint at the beginning with the sun rudely spoiling the fun, there is nothing overtly brutal in the poem. It's all politeness: a pleasant walk, a pleasant talk, weeping through a handkerchief, delightful conversation about the wonders of civilization, a simple meal of bread, pepper, and vinegar. The ruthlessness is almost entirely hidden. You don't see it, cannot see it, it is so well covered up, but somehow it is there.

Real life colonialism was not quite so perfectly polite. Too much of the

brutality was always apparent (like shooting an Aboriginal child on his mother's back to demonstrate the accuracy of a rifle at a great distance---recounted by Alfred Wallace in his 1865 essay "How to Civilize Savages"), but Carroll captures the essential smiling, self-satisfied cruelty of colonialism. In a review of a book on Carroll, Michael Wood writes "how often [Carroll's] Wonderland looks not like an alternative world but a crazed, sardonic representation of our own" (Wood, 15, col. 3). One could also say that sometimes Carroll's world looks exactly like our own. It takes some melancholy reflection to see the abominable behavior in the oh-so-polite Walrus and Carpenter, but it is there. Maybe that's what Carroll was going for. Maybe he wanted us to see it by reflecting. Equally haunting is this: What was Carroll thinking, putting a poem about genocide in a children's book?

George Arthur, Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land (1824-1836), wrote of the colonist John "Batman's sympathy for the Aborigines, but also observed that he 'had much slaughter to account for'" (Boyce, *Van Diemen's Land*, 201). Sounds very much like the Walrus, doesn't it? The same in fact can be said of Arthur himself. He could easily out-walrus the Walrus. He expressed a lot of compassion for the natives, especially after the few remaining members had been removed from the main island to the smaller Flinders Island, but also earlier when he issued proclamation after proclamation containing pleas for their humane treatment. He did much official weeping. Yet he was the one who declared martial law, who had only some hesitancy using convicts to go after the natives, who was fully committed to the expropriation of their land without compensation ("Such quantities of sand: 'If this were only cleared away,' They said, 'it would be grand!'", who never prosecuted a single white man for the murder of an Aborigine, despite threats to do so. The whole history of Tasmania is one of compassion and extermination, until "They'd eaten every one."

When George Robinson asked if a handful of natives could be moved back to their homeland, he recorded Governor Arthur's response in his journal (Dec. 18, 1838): "he was sure the [white] inhabitants would raise such a hue and cry against it that could not be withstood ... He said if the natives were brought, property would immediately fall in value very considerably ..." (P, W, 608). That could not be allowed, so they had to continue to colonize until they'd eaten or ejected every one. Lewis Carroll could not have written a more accurate history of Van Diemen's Land, or Tasmania, if he had had personal access to Robinson's journals, which was impossible as this part of the journals was not published until 1987; but Robinson did periodically make official reports to the Colonial Office, and local newspapers frequently reported on his activities.

No matter how much they wept for the natives, the logic of greed was more compelling still. They would not stop gorging themselves until the end result was achieved. I will go over the details of what happened in Tasmania in Chapter 11, along with a discussion of what Darwin wrote about the place and what he knew based on what he had read.

~ 4 ~

When Darwin tosses out a clipped comment of sympathy but offers no sustained critique of the evil of colonialism as he does for slavery, we have a right to be a little suspicious that he was merely participating in the common discourse about the extermination of the savages, but was not deeply regretting the situation. Standard public discourse is not necessarily a sign of insincerity, but it can mean utterances were made without much thought.

In sharp contrast to his own melancholy remarks, and in a sense, making him an equivalent to the Walrus eating the oysters as he laments their disappearance, Darwin was also capable of commenting with approval on the complete removal of the Tasmanians from their home: "All the aborigines have been removed ... so that Van Diemen's Land [Tasmania] enjoys the great advantage of being free from a native population" (*Narrative*, 533). Advantageous to Europeans, that is, which Darwin does not have to specify because it is obvious to him and his readers. Complete and free access by white people to land and resources is not melancholy to Darwin but a good thing. They sorted out and got rid of all the Aborigines/oysters. You can almost hear Darwin chomping on the oysters. In Chapter 6 (§4), we will see Darwin's friend Charles Lyell also remark that not sharing the country with another race is a good fortune. The melancholy and the feeling of great advantage from being native-free do not jive. It will only be the totality of the evidence that will allow us to decide just where Darwin really stood and what he really meant by his melancholy.

~ 5 ~

Argentina is where Darwin was also told of some of the atrocities that were being committed. A Spaniard, whom he calls his informer, told him about the Indians he had killed in an expedition against one of the tribes and his troop's success in nearly exterminating the whole lot (*Diary*, 179-80, Sept. 4-7, 1833; *Voyage*, 84-85). Darwin continues (*Voyage*, 85):

This is a dark picture; but how much more shocking is the unquestionable fact, that all the women who appear above twenty years old are massacred in cold blood! When I exclaimed ["I

ventured to hint" in the original *Diary*, 180] that this appeared rather inhuman, he answered, "Why, what can be done? They breed so!" ... Who would believe in this age that such atrocities could be committed in a Christian civilized country? The children of the Indians are saved, to be sold or given away as servants, or rather slaves for as long a time as the owners can make them believe themselves slaves; but I believe in their treatment there is little to complain of. [See below for the missing bit indicated by the ellipsis.]

That last sentence seems shockingly naive, considering Darwin's own awareness of the evil of slavery. (In the *Diary*, 194, Oct. 3rd and 4th, 1833, he notes without comment, "The children are sold for between 3 & 4 pound sterling;" decades later, as we saw in Ch. 1, §4, he would strongly criticize Charles Lyell for writing "placidly" about slavery's effect on families, yet he did the same in his *Diary*.)

Perhaps I should not pass over so quickly Darwin's apparently insensitive comment about these children. Normally, Darwin is incensed at the treatment of children in slavery. This makes his muted reaction here quite curious. From Johannes Fabian, I learned that in Africa, native children, sometimes as slaves, were often quite useful to imperialist explorers. They were used as domestic servants and interpreters, and for their intelligence and skills at negotiating relationships with the local people and geography (see *Out of*, 30-31, 131, 138-39; also see 32-33 on underreporting the role of African women in explorations). Is it possible that such was the case here too? Did Darwin consider these children valuable for Europe's imperial expansion? Were children used in any part of Darwin's explorations (which in and of itself might have been legitimate, especially if they were paid for it)? I throw out these questions in the hope that someone will one day spot the evidence to confirm or refute them.

My feeling is that there is a lot more going on in Darwin's attitude towards these Indian children than is immediately obvious and that we may never understand. The difficulty in answering any of these questions stems from the fact that Darwin writes like a typical European travel writer of the time---promoting the myth of the intrepid, *solitary* explorer and scientist who risks life and limb to bring back knowledge. But as Johannes Fabian reminds us, "Solitary explorers never traveled alone" (*Out of*, 29; cf. 38). Most writers on Darwin, including myself, constantly forget that Darwin had a servant with him on his voyage, Syms Covington, who stayed with him until 1839 at which time he emigrated to Australia. Yet Covington is almost entirely absent from

Darwin's journal of the voyage. There is one mention of "My servant [whom] I despatched ... to shoot & skin birds" (*Diary*, 191, from Sept. 21-26, 1833) and a few other even briefer mentions. To his sister Catherine, he wrote that he did not like Covington very much but "having a servant ... has made a great difference in my comfort ... I am rendered much more independent ..." (CCD 1.392; July 20-29, 1834). Maybe native children served a similar purpose.

To return to the above quoted passage, I do admire Darwin not only for confronting his informant but also for not hiding from himself or his readers the true brutality of what some colonizers were doing. He knew what was going on. A little further on in this same section, he clearly explains that the intent of one General Rosas was to exterminate all the Indians and that some "whole tribes [have] been exterminated." Acknowledging such vile acts seems close to what he has to say about slavery. But there are two crucial differences.

One is that the overall tone is nothing like the way he writes about slaves and their masters. With colonial horrors, he sighs---sighing very deeply---and then turns away. If anything, he seems to have regarded these events in the same way he looked at the Ichneumon wasp and the cat and mouse. In fact, the wasp and the cat are pretty decent (did I say decent?) metaphors for colonial masters. In the end, they were all cruel facts of nature that one could do nothing about: "the stronger always extirpating the weaker" (*Voyage*, 375). He never uses this to justify slavery. If the stronger can entirely eliminate the weaker, why cannot they also enslave? Darwin accepted one but not the other.

The second peculiar thing is this: When discussing slavery, Darwin sometimes mentions a defense of the system offered by its supporters (e.g., we don't treat our poor very well, so slaves have nothing to complain about). He then points out how abominable that reply is. He treats colonialism very differently. He accepts defenses of colonial brutality. With the Argentine Indians, immediately after recording his informant's statement "Why, what can be done? They breed so!", Darwin gives us the colonialists' position (in the ellipsis in the above blocked quote): "Everyone here is fully convinced that this is the most just war, because it is against barbarians." Even though Darwin follows this up by noting these are atrocities, he never really condemns the idea that this is a just war. He lets both comments (just war, atrocities) stand side by side.

In fact, in the *Diary* (190-91), later in the same month (Sept. 19, 1833), he makes a follow-up comment on the colonists' "enthusiasm for Rosas & for the success of this 'most just of all wars, because against Barbarians'", adding "It is however natural enough, for even here neither man, woman, horse or cow was safe from the attacks of the Indians." He does not criticize the idea that

we need this exterminating war to keep us safe. In the end, Darwin seems to have been on the side of the colonists. He took the same position that, contemporaneously, Colonial Secretary George Murray and Governor George Arthur were taking in Van Diemen's Land. These two officials fully acknowledged that the white settlers had initiated the violence and injustices against the natives, but the bottom line for them was that white lives and property had to be protected (as we will see in Chapter 11).

Darwin would never concede that anyone defending legal slavery had a point. He is in a rage about slavery. Not so with colonial abuses. Here, he is disappointed, not enraged. He accepts the stronger extirpating (but not enslaving) the weaker, however ugly it gets. He counterpoises no vigorous, lengthy attack on this sort of thinking. He lets the defense of a just war stand alongside the observation that atrocities have occurred. Later on in his *Diary* (293; Feb. 22, 1835), in Valdivia, Darwin records, "my friend the Padre at Cudico bitterly regretted that it [fertile lands in Chili still held by Indians] should be so wasted & wished with *Christian* humanity, that all the provinces would unite & make a complete end of the Indian race" (his emphasis). Darwin seems to be expressing muted shock at this Christian wish for extermination, not unlike the remark about atrocities in a Christian, civilized country in the above blocked quote. No one would ever characterize his feelings about the brutalities of legal slavery as muted shock.

Bear in mind that this low-key reaction to extermination and the previously quoted melancholy remarks are Darwin's *strongest* expressions of sympathy for natives.

In his original *Diary* of this voyage, there are two passages (from August and September 1833) about the economic benefits of exterminating an entire people. Both were deleted for the published version. I will discuss the second one first:

If this warfare is successful, that is if all the Indians are butchered, a grand extent of country will be gained for the production of cattle: & the vallies of the R. Negro, Colorado, Sauce [rivers] will be most productive in corn." [*Diary*, 181; Sept. 4-7, 1833]

That is as openly brutal as the Carpenter's sentiments in Lewis Carroll's poem. No hiding it with weeping behind a handkerchief. Desmond and Moore suggest that Darwin was shocked by his thought and so had it removed (*Sacred Cause*, 149). That is one possibility. Other possibilities: he may have only felt it was a little embarrassing or it was redundant or perhaps too speculative. It may not have bothered him at all. (We should not be quick to

jump to conclusions about omissions and changes. In the next chapter, §3, I give an example of a *Diary* passage which comments favorably on the character of black slaves in Brazil and yet was not included in any of the published versions of the *Diary*. There are many reasons for editorial changes. They do not always indicate queasiness over the deleted portions.)

Butchering all the Indians is a way of creating a native free country. Remember that Darwin had no problem expressing the same thought in a less brutal way in the first published edition of his *Diary*, quoted above, where he said that after the removal of the Aborigines, "Van Diemen's Land enjoys the great advantage of being free from a native population" (*Narrative*, 533). Removal turned out to be a more sophisticated form of genocide or ethnic cleansing, as many think (see Lyndall Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 215, also citing James Boyce). Darwin *might* have been embarrassed by the brutality inherent in his remark about the Indians, but it seems that he was not at all averse to the end result.

There is another possible reason for the deletion. Also expunged were the sentences immediately following the butchering quote: "The country will be in the hands of white Gaucho savages instead of copper-coloured Indians. The former being a little superior in civilization, as they are inferior in every moral virtue." It could be that the entire passage was eliminated because he regretted calling some Europeans savages. It may also be that several of these possibilities all hold true. Darwin could have been shocked and embarrassed by his remark about butchering the Indians to clear the land and then equally embarrassed by his calling Spanish Gauchos savages. It does not always have to be a case of either/or.

As far as I know, this is the only place where Darwin referred to any European colonists as savages. There are also two instances in the original *Diary* of Darwin using 'savage' in relation to slave owners (discussed below). These three examples are the sum total of his attempts to see civilized people as savage. Only one is found in a published version of the *Diary*. What we seem to have here is the youthful Darwin trying out the ideas and language of other writers who saw savagery among the civilized (also see below). They were talking like this, so he gave it a shot. He was trying out their idealism and noble sentiments to see how it suited him. The more mature Darwin abandoned this way of thinking.

(There are two other references to Gauchos as savages, but I would group all three together as one example. He called several of the Gaucho cavalry "the most savage picturesque group I ever beheld" [*Diary*, 99] and another group "my half-savage hosts" [105]. None of these are in the published versions. It is also noteworthy that while Darwin quite plainly states in the

published editions that the Indians are being exterminated, he avoids using adjectives like 'savage' and 'barbarous' to describe the European Spaniards who are doing the exterminating. Only "the remaining Indians" are said to "have become more barbarous" [*Narrative*, 122; *Voyage*, 86-87]. But in the original *Diary*, he refers to this "barbarous & cruel warfare" [*Diary*, 99] and the war "carried on in the most barbarous manner" [100]; here, he is likely referring to both Indians and Spanish, but as these remarks are not in the published journal, his readers would have no way of knowing that he considered Europeans in this war to be just as barbarous as the Indians. In the published version, it is only Indians who are savage in behavior.)

The other remark about the economic reward of extermination is this:

This war of extermination, although carried on with the most shocking barbarity, will certainly produce great benefits; it will at once throw open four or 500 miles in length of fine country for the produce of cattle. [*Diary*, 172; Aug. 16, 1833]

Was this deleted prior to publication because of the suggestion that great economic benefits justified extermination or because he mentioned "shocking barbarity", even though it is not explicitly stated that Europeans are committing the barbarity? (I suppose this could be considered a second place where he at least implicitly accuses European colonizers of savagery.) Whatever the reason for deleting these comments from the published journal, it is possible that Darwin still believed in the justification of the events he described but thought it should not be expressed publicly.

For another take on what increased production of corn and other benefits mean, here is Charles Stuart from his 1836 biography of Granville Sharp, whose anti-slavery views I will get to in just a few pages (the antecedent for *their* in the following is white colonists):

Strangers come, and he [the native] is swept from the land of his forefathers---*their* fields wave rich with corn---*their* trees hang heavy with fruit---*their* church spires pierce the skies ... commerce, arts, arms flourish---literature is rife, and palace-like are the dwellings which adorn the land ... [Yet] slavery is nursed in the lap of republics,---and the aborigines have perished; or linger in oppressed and scattered remnants, a memento to armed colonies, of the cruel iniquity of their heart, and of the daring hypocrisy of their boastings. [Stuart, 69-70; his emphases]

Stuart could see the benefits of colonialism as well as Darwin or anyone else,

but he would not lightly dismiss the immoralities that brought us these gains. He sees what indigenous peoples have lost. This was published only three years after Darwin's *Diary* entries. Many people may wish that Darwin had written something like this, but he didn't. Note well that Stuart implicitly connects, as many humanitarians did, slavery and the abuses of colonialism as twin evils. Darwin seems to have had a very hard time seeing this.

It is important to know that calling the white Gauchos savages was from Darwin's youth (not yet thirty years) and it is not something he would repeat in his more mature years. The other two 'savage' remarks (also from this youthful period) are in reference to slavery. One, like the 'white Gaucho savages', is from a part of the original *Beagle Diary* that was never published (45; Mar. 12, 1832) and the other is from the second (1845) published edition of this diary, known as *Journal of Researches* (500; also in *Voyage of the Beagle*, 431). To take the latter first, he compares slave owners to 'savage masters' who mistreat their domesticated animals; this makes the slave owners equally savage. The slave or animal (quite innocently) stirs up the rage of the savage master. In the other unpublished example from the *Beagle Diary*, Darwin calls his countrymen who do not consider slaves their brethren "the polished savages in England" (45). These are the sum total of Darwin's efforts to castigate the civilized people of Europe (or some of them) for actions and attitudes that can be called barbaric.

As I said, this was the young Darwin, expressing his dismay at European behavior. Was he perhaps influenced by Alexander von Humboldt, the German explorer, naturalist, and writer? Humboldt was one of Darwin's favorite authors (see *Autobiography*, 57-58; he is also mentioned often throughout the Notebooks and a few times in *Descent*). He met him once, but was disappointed because "my anticipations probably were too high" (*Autobiography*, 89). It was Humboldt's descriptions of nature that enthralled him. But Humboldt also wrote about some of the outrages western Europe committed against the "uncivilized" peoples. Dr. Thomas Hodgkin, who wrote on many medical subjects and gave his name to Hodgkin's Disease, and who later became one of the main activists in the early years of the Aborigines' Protection Society, was inspired by this side of Humboldt. In 1819, Hodgkin wrote "Essay on The Promotion of Civilization" in which he said that the civilized nations "in the last five hundred years ... have done far more to degrade, corrupt and exterminate their uncivilized fellow creatures than all the heathen world, since the creation of man" (quoted in Kass, 39). He was as much a man of science as Darwin, but the two men's reading of Humboldt could not have been more different. And yet Darwin does not seem to have been entirely unaffected by Humboldt's humanitarian concerns.

Keep in mind Darwin's "polished savages in England" and read this from Volume 1 of Humboldt's *Researches Concerning the Institutions & Monuments of the Ancient Inhabitants of America* (1814; translated by Helen Maria Williams; all emphases added):

... in times less remote, what *savage effects* of religious intolerance do we not ourselves see *amid the civilization* of the human race, at the period of a general amelioration of characters and manners? ... Posterity will scarcely conceive, that in *polished Europe*, under the influence of a religion, which, from the nature of its principles, favours liberty, and proclaims the sacred rights of mankind, there exist laws, which sanction the slavery of the blacks, which permit the planter to tear the child from its mother's arms, to sell it in a distant land ... whole nations may advance rapidly towards civilization, while their particular institutions, and their religious rites, retain the marks of their *original barbarism*. [1.224-25]

This also reminds me of Darwin's remark about the savage Gauchos who are superior in civilization and inferior in moral virtues. Or consider Humboldt's mention of "the moral degradation of our species, and the contrast between the virtue of a savage, and the barbarism of civilized man!" from his *Personal Narrative* (in seven volumes, 1814-1829; Darwin read them all; this quote being from 5(Part 1).234 in 1821). Humboldt did not romanticize native peoples. He just applied the same standards to Europeans and to natives of other lands. He was horrified wherever he saw irrational violence. Savagery should be identified as such wherever it occurs. Whether Darwin was directly influenced by Humboldt or by anyone else who may have written in a similar manner is probably unknowable.

I believe that the polished savage of the civilized world had become a well-worn device for criticizing European behavior. The term 'polished' might originally have been intended as a contrast to the vulgar habits of the common people, and used in such a way as to suggest that the polish had achieved little else besides a superficial improvement. In a 1782 essay, "On Cruelty to Inferior Animals", in which he excoriates all people who are cruel to animals as "dæmons in human shapes" (Jenyns, *Disquisitions*, 20), and especially the hunting sportsmen who are malevolent and detestable (25-26), Soame Jenyns links low behavior in the polished to both savages "who are happy in executing, the most exquisite tortures" and the common people (in civilized countries) who "are delighted with ... bull-baitings, prize-fightings, executions, and all spectacles of cruelty and horror" (22). He says, "the most

polished are not ashamed to be pleased with scenes of little less barbarity, and, to the disgrace of human nature, to dignify them with the name of sports" (22). No matter the polished sheen, it is despicable cruelty.

I came across this in an 1807 book on New Zealand: the author John Savage observes that "savage life has its cares and perplexities as well as that of the polished native of the most enlightened country" (18). Sometimes 'civilized savage' was used, as in a remark by William J. Darling, a British naval officer in charge of the natives on Flinders Island (1833-34), who had been exiled from their home in Van Diemen's Land. He wrote to the Colonial Secretary in February 1833 to complain of, among other things, "the brutal treatment which it is beyond a doubt has been practised upon them [the natives] by *civilized savages* ..." (in *P, W*, 998; Darling's emphasis). There were many other variations on this theme.

James Bonwick in *The Last of the Tasmanians* used 'Christian savages' (59) and further on quoted George Robinson's use of 'white heathen' (215; Bonwick does not give a date for this last, but it is probably from the early 1830s when Robinson was on his mission to bring in the natives of Van Diemen's Land or Tasmania). Saxe Bannister quoted an American sailor, who was grateful that he and his shipwrecked crew (about 60) had been saved and were well-treated by Caffres in South Africa, and related "the wrongs they [the Caffres] ... had endured from the savage whites" (*Humane* [1830], 203).

I found this in Robinson's journal entry for April 14, 1831 (*P, F*, 342): After some natives had an uneventful visit at a settler's farm, "white men mustered together and followed them, and came upon them at night and fired in amongst them ... This was not only cowardly but cruel, to attack an unarmed people, to steal upon them by surprise and then to fire upon them ... Such merciless conduct as this only tends to irritate and to goad the natives on to commit outrage. Thus the *white savage* is by far worse than the black, for from the former we would hope better things" (emphasis added). Towards the end of that year (Dec. 12), Robinson bemoaned "civilisation with its vassalage and its harsh restraint, its cruel practices, and base and ungrateful conduct" (550).

Constantine Rafinesque (1783-1840), one of the early evolutionists whom I will review more extensively in Chapter 9, decried our tendency to make a hero (in war or otherwise) out of "him who kills the most/ Of human brothers" (lines 3225-26) in his 1836 poem *The World, or Instability*. "'Tis murder, even so, the worst of crimes," he said and continued: "We savage deem and call, the man who scalps/ And bloody trophies thus collects; but him/ Who spills his brother's blood, and stains the earth ... A hero! praised for this foul deed by many./ A savage glory, he acquires .../ Nay he is said to be thus born to

rule, And rule obtains ..." (lines 3230-37). Like Humboldt, Rafinesque cannot see why we should distinguish between the savagery of the uncivilized and that of the civilized. He goes on to criticize the idea that "Where force is right, and weakness must submit/ To all the foulest whims of cruelty" (3246-47). Foresightful as he often is, Rafinesque will recommend a kind of United Nations to settle disputes ("All states become allies", "new Diplomacy", "In congress meet", lines 3365, 3366, 3368) and if any nation continues to be belligerent, trade sanctions should be imposed ("trade forbidden, under a blockade") "Until her senses may return" (3375).

Having gotten used to this frequent accusation of the savagery of western civilization, I found myself reading the British military hero Charles James Napier's denunciations of colonialism's treatment of natives in his 1835 book *Colonization* (about which I will have so much more to say in the next chapter), and I kept wondering when he would chime in with the idea that the civilized have proven to be more savage than the savages. And there it is! On page 177: "indeed, civilization is savage beyond belief, to *the defenceless*, even in its very bosom! The fact is, that the civilized man is as cruel as the savage man, only his cruelties are *different*, and more concealed ... the civilized man is more secret" (his emphases).

Rafinesque too made the point, in some of his less well-formed verses, that the strongest party has always enforced the cruel laws of war, and the only difference now is that these laws are "... in milder forms presented/ By modern pity rul'd or modified,/ Still must allow, admit of striking deeds/ Of cruelty ..." (lines 3271-74). Napier is clearer and more decisive on this point, but Rafinesque too conveys the idea that the civilized try to be more subtle or hidden in the ways they employ brute force.

Napier makes a big deal of the fact that civilized Europeans try to hide their cruelties (177-81). We have advanced beyond actions like "to mummoc a man's brains all about (like raspberry jam) with a great club" (181). We prefer to kill in less obvious ways, "not being so evident, so nasty, and so *offensive to the sight*" (179; his emphasis). Napier here gives the example of child labor in manufacturing, which he considers abominably cruel, but earlier he explained that gradual dispossession of the natives leads to their deaths: "we rob the aborigines of Australia ... when we oblige them to concentrate their population, they must perish ... We deprive them of a range of territory ... and without which territory they starve! This is not JUST---our first act is one of progressive extirpation, and, therefore, of great injustice" (102; his emphasis). Our dispossessing them and carrying out a gradual (progressive) extermination is as savage as anything the natives do, it is just more concealed, less "*offensive to the sight*," as Napier would say.

The goal is to destroy, but not to be so obvious about it: "we *dilute* our cruelty; we don't dabble in blood, quite so openly; our *new drop* is more cleanly and civilized ... and that is pretty nearly as much as we can say, I think, in favour of our boasted humanity" (180-81; his emphases). We have created a system (which is the word he uses) and while it is not as dramatic as a club used to bash out a man's brains, the system will end "in the extermination of a fine race of men" (147). No surprise then that even 'polished' puts in an appearance in Napier's assessment of civilized barbarians, when he looks at the horrible practices among savages and civilized alike. The difference is that "their manners are rude; ours are polished" (125). The polish is used to hide the savagery.

When Saxe Bannister talks about the whites and the Caffres in South Africa, he writes, "it would not be hard to say where the barbarism lies ... It is an abuse of language to call them [the Caffres] savages: their personal character is far from that, however much needing to be improved" (*Humane* [1830], 200). At one point, he even puts "savage" in quotation marks when referring to one South African native (149). Georg Gerland, German natural scientist and anthropologist (about whom more in the next section), also used quotation marks once (Gerland, 141) and would even call them "so-called savages" (89; *sogenannten Wilden*). These writers were not saints. They were not scrupulous about entirely foregoing the use of the term 'savage', though they more often used 'natives'. They were also capable of using other terms similar to 'savages' (Bannister was particularly fond of 'wild men'), and all humanitarians would frequently call them the uncivilized. But they did at least sometimes question and reject 'savage' in the face of its huge popularity and, more importantly, whatever terms they used, they frequently provoked thought on what is the essence of being a savage and who really deserves this epithet. The older Darwin refrained from joining this humanitarian tendency.

At one time, Darwin had been close to becoming this kind of insightful thinker, but once he put his *Diary* aside, he never returned to questioning whether and for whom the category of 'savage' was appropriate. The young Darwin was impressionable like any other young person. He tried out in his own style the thoughts that many others were expressing. What the above examples of his use of 'savage' show is that there was a moment in time when Darwin was capable of looking at colonialism (at least in some incarnations) and slavery in the same light---as savagery in practice. The moment did not last very long.

The older Darwin seems to have become more callous. A remark that strikes me as one of his harshest---one of those offhand comments that reveals so much---comes at the end of a letter to Charles Lyell (May 4, 1860; CCD

8.189): "I am content that man will probably advance & care not much whether we are looked at as mere savages in a remotely distant future." By 'man', he means, as he often does, European man. He is thus dismissing all future criticisms that Europeans of his time once behaved like savages. He claims to be indifferent to such condemnation.

This is especially shocking considering that Darwin had to have known that such criticism was not coming from a remote future, but was made in his own time. He had to have been aware how often some of his contemporaries, both opponents of slavery and critics of colonialism, were raising the issue of European inhumanity or savagery. In Granville Sharp's 1769 anti-slavery pamphlet *A Representation of the Injustice and Dangerous Tendency of Tolerating Slavery*, words derived from *humanity* and *inhumanity* appear often enough, as in "those inhuman establishments of government" which oppress slave men, women, and children (73) and "A toleration of Slavery is, in effect, a toleration of inhumanity" (79); he sees in those who have upheld slavery "the barbarity of several generations" (163). Many more examples could be given. Sharp denounces the cruelties of some slave owners, declaring "they profess the knowledge of what is right, and yet behave as if themselves were heathens and barbarians" (70; he frames this in a rhetorical question).

It was not just slavery's potential for cruelty that concerned Sharp, but the fact that slavery in and of itself violated human rights in a fundamental way and that doing this was inhumane or savage behavior. To enslave someone is to divest them of their humanity and turn them into property, a thing or a beast like a horse or dog, and this no one has a right to do: The Negro "has not been guilty of any offences, that I know of, for which he might *lawfully be divested of his humanity*" (18). And even if someone has already been made into a slave, it "make[s] no alteration in *his human nature*" (19; all emphases are Sharp's). (If Negroes are like animals, which Sharp absolutely denies, they are more like free, wild beasts and we ought to give them at least the same respect as we give a bear or a hawk; see 13-14; but see 69 where he calls ranking Negroes with beasts "this abominable insult to human nature.") Only voluntary consent or having done something wrong can make one a slave and neither apply to Africans.

Anti-slavery humanitarians like Sharp did not just want to free slaves, they wanted to free them for the right reasons---namely, that freedom is an essential quality of English civilization ("Slavery is an innovation in England, contrary to the spirit and intention of our present laws and constitution;" 42), that any human being touching on English soil was entitled to it, and that it was a fundamental human right due to all humans. My favorite remark from this intense debate over ending slavery, which went on for a century or more,

is Sharp's quotation of Lord Chief Justice Holt: "one may be a villain in England, but not a Slave" (6); the Chief Justice here also asserted, "as soon as a Negro comes into England, he becomes free."

Sharp was deeply aware that the rights of Englishmen were entwined with rights for all humans: "the spirit and equity," for example, of trial by jury (denied to slaves) would be "entirely lost, if we partially confine that justice to ourselves alone, when we have it in our power to extend it to others" (71; this point too was presented in a rhetorical question). "The *natural right of all mankind* must principally justify our insisting upon this necessary privilege in favour of ourselves in particular ... we certainly undermine the equitable force and reason of those laws, by which *we ourselves are protected* ..." if we do not extend them to all men (ibid.; his emphases).

It was this concern for human rights that carried over to the movement to help Aborigines who were losing their land without compensation. (In fact, Sharp himself made a connection between the cause of slaves and Aborigines, as I will review in Ch. 4, §2, and remember this was in 1769!) To make Aborigines out to be savages was, like enslavement, to divest them of their humanity. Humanitarians had a two-pronged approach to combat this. One was to emphasize the humanity of Aborigines all over the world (their rationality, their moral sense and intelligence, their forms of government, etc.) and the other was to see savagery itself as a human failing that occurs just as much among the civilized as among so-called savages. If they struggled so hard to resist letting 'savage' be used for only one part of mankind, it was because they wanted to establish the human rights of the indigenous and recognize their dignity. That is why there was for so many a continuity between opposing slavery and colonial abuses.

This does not mean that the humanitarian arguments of Sharp and others won the day. It would be decades in the case of slavery and much longer in the case of Aborigines before these arguments began to gain ground in society, in academia, and in the courts. In the short term, one could say that these arguments in a sense backfired, though in the long term they laid the groundwork for future success. If Sharp was going to insist on the humanity of slaves (and ultimately of Aborigines as well), then slaveholders and imperialists would do exactly what Sharp said they must not do. They would divest Negroes and savages of their humanity, if that is what it took to maintain their system. "... criticism of the dehumanizing effects of slavery led slavery's apologists to deny explicitly African humanity before it led to political gains and practical reforms" (Boulukos, 101). Sharp was making the right points, but that does not mean everyone was buying the idea of human rights for all God's children.

Sharp's legal career was a fascinating one. He was an attorney who successfully won freedom for many of his African clients, but he was having a hard time winning the larger legal principle he was fighting for, which was to establish that slavery in England must be abolished. In perhaps his most famous case, that of James Somerset in 1772 (Sharp organized the defense; another attorney, Francis Hargrave, did the arguing in court), he secured Somerset's freedom, but the judge, Lord Mansfield, decided it on narrower grounds than Sharp wished. Mansfield had merely ruled that if a master brings his slave to England, he cannot forcibly remove him from England and return him to the colony where slavery is practiced. Nevertheless, Sharp did in effect win the larger principle when it became popularly misunderstood that Mansfield had declared that all slaves in England must be set free. I think what happened was that because Sharp won, people assumed Lord Mansfield had bought all his humanistic reasoning, which unfortunately had not been the case.

Darwin never uses the language of human rights for slaves. He never argues they are not property or they are entitled to freedom simply as a human right. I think he probably did believe these things, at least to some degree, but it is interesting that he never used such strong language as "divesting them of their humanity" as others did. His focus was almost exclusively on the cruel acts committed by slave owners and not on the basic issue of rights and justice. We should not assume that just because Darwin was opposed to legal slavery that he had the same high-minded ideas as the best humanitarians.

There is something else which can be gleaned from Sharp's pamphlet (and I take Sharp to be representative of many other abolitionists, though certainly not all), which I cannot find in Darwin's limited anti-slavery stance. Twice Sharp tells us that slavery is "destructive of the human species" (*Representative*, 80, 97). (In the next chapter, we will see Darwin say almost the exact opposite when it came to exterminating Aborigines; he believed their disappearance would improve the human race.) Sharp's statement seems to be based on his belief that the oppression of one part of society, if unchecked, will spread to other parts, particularly to the common people (99). (He also notes that, for starters, the free Negroes, Mulattoes, and Indians in the colonies suffer oppressive measures as a result of the way slaves are treated [99n*].) There is implied in this a holistic view of human society. The whole binds all the parts together so that injustice cannot be confined to one part; whatever wrongs are done to one will spread to other parts of the whole. Sharp saw connections where racists and slaveholders saw disconnections.

In combating the extermination facing Aboriginal tribes, some humanitarians followed the same holistic logic that Sharp did: It is destructive

of civilization. You can see it in the translations annotated in the margins of Darwin's copy of Georg Gerland's 1868 book. (Whether Darwin was responsible for these translations or not, these would have been the points in Gerland's book that he paid particular attention to.) For example: "Now nothing is more degrading to civilised than to sink back into savagery & the destructive exterminating [exterminatory?] wars of the nations & degraded [illegible; them?] generally. There is here another reason for the preservation of savages" (on 143). On the previous page, the annotation is: "But it wld be very bad for humanity to tread out germs [i.e., seeds] capable of life only because they are not of the same nature with us." (I will return to Gerland's points in Ch. 10, §7.) Humanity will fall, not rise, if we allow that to happen, which was precisely Sharp's argument---because the whole connects us all. As Sharp also put it, when we tolerate "the customs of *uncivilized* nations, and the *uncivilized customs* which disgrace our own colonies" (such as slavery) to the point that these customs "become so familiar" to us, then "we ourselves must insensibly degenerate to the same degree of baseness ..." (104-05). This was the humanitarian theme, whether they were fighting for the rights of slaves or Aborigines.

In the American 1771 *Extract* of Sharp's pamphlet, there is appended an *Extract of a Sermon* by the Bishop of Gloucester, delivered in 1766, in which the Bishop says that treating rational creatures as property "shocks all the feelings of humanity, and the dictates of common sense" (Sharp, *Extract*, 51). He ends by calling slave holders and traders who encourage the hunting of Africans "these very civilized violators of humanity"---which is very much like 'civilized savages'---and those who do the actual hunting are "the fiercer savages" (53; this extracted sermon begins in mid-point by contrasting "the savages in bonds" to "the free-savages;" it is not clear but the latter may be the same as polished savages).

There is a strong sense in the critics of slavery and colonialism that one cannot claim to be a truly civilized person if you are violating basic dictates of humanity and justice. Using civilization as a cover or polish for misdeeds makes one closer to a "fiercer savage" as that Bishop might have put it. *Savage* often functions as a synonym for inhumane, and so, argue the humanitarians, it can be found in all human beings regardless of their state of civilization. Darwin's response is that he doesn't care and reimagines such criticism as coming from a remote future.

Just as callous in my opinion is a comment in his *Beagle Diary* about the extermination of savages. On this voyage, Darwin wondered from time to time about why there were no natives in certain places. For example, when they went around to the Pacific side of South America, he is perplexed: "The

entire absence of all Indians amongst these islands is a complete puzzle ... I should suppose the tribe has become extinct; one step to the final extermination of the Indian race in S. America" (*Diary*, 278; Jan. 4, 1835). He is so casual about it. It is merely one more step to an inevitable fate, a simple matter of fact. He never once expresses any deep outrage at genocide.

This sort of callousness was not limited to Darwin. We can see it in other so-called great men (I have no problem with identifying certain specific accomplishments as great, but to make any person out to be great in general is a deification that harms us all). Consider the way Thomas Jefferson maintained a different attitude toward nature as a whole and toward human beings. He believed so much in an unbroken chain of being that he could not imagine God or nature would allow any link to become extinct. "Such is the economy of nature, that no instance can be produced, of her having permitted any one race of her animals to become extinct; of her having formed any link in her great work so weak as to be broken" (*Notes*, 52). But he had no problem imagining that a human group could disappear. He was so afraid of the emancipation of slaves that he conceived it "will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions, which will probably never end but in the extermination of one or the other race" (144). He does not say that it will be blacks who will be exterminated, but his discourse on the inferiority of blacks (145-50) does not leave much room for doubt; this inferiority (which he couches as a hypothesis or "speculation only", 150) is "a powerful obstacle to the emancipation of these people" (151). What can one say about someone who finds it unthinkable that any link in nature's chain of being should become extinct, but can easily imagine and accept it for a race of human beings? Callous seems almost too slight a word.

(Jefferson was a complicated man, no doubt. He was not self-righteous about white superiority. He well knew the abuses of the slave system. This could prompt him to say, "Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: that his justice cannot sleep forever ... a revolution of the wheel fortune, an exchange of situation is among possible events," 170-71, and he hopes there will come "a total emancipation ... with the consent of the masters, rather than by their extirpation," 171.)

On the war of extermination waged by General Rosas in South America against Indians and, more importantly, on the popular enthusiasm for it and its ultimate success, there is Darwin's comment which I quoted a few pages back, "It is however natural enough, for even here neither man, woman, horse or cow was safe from the attacks of the Indians" (*Diary*, 190-91; Sept 19, 1833). He is excusing extermination as natural and as an understandable response to threats from the Indians. Contrast this attitude to that of Helen Hunt who was

concerned to reveal the outrageousness of a policy of extermination: "early in our [American] history was the ingenious plan evolved of first maddening the Indians into war, and then falling upon them with exterminating punishment" (Hunt, 40). A little further on, she quotes from an 1853 report: this "system of removals ... It is the legalized murder of a whole nation. It is expensive, vicious, and inhuman, and producing these consequences, and these alone. The custom, being judged by its fruits, should not be persisted in" (78). There is nothing like this in Darwin's writings.

The realization that removing indigenous people from their land or that squeezing them into a smaller corner of it would have devastating, inhumane consequences for them, leading directly to extermination, was voiced by a number of people, as we will see, including Charles Napier and Thomas Malthus. There were more than a few alternative voices in the 19th century. We should not deceive ourselves into thinking that everyone found extermination natural. For a hardy minority, it was an unqualified horror.

It is possible that when Darwin spoke of extermination, he meant, like others of his time, the elimination of pure Aboriginal races only. It is not at all clear what Darwin thought of those of mixed descent. But whatever group Darwin applied his exterminationist fantasies to, it is shocking that he seems to have had no major qualms about it.

Was it just a remote future that was on his mind in the letter to Lyell, or were present accusations of European savagery also of concern? That the latter was the case is indicated in the postscript comment that immediately follows in this letter. He responds to a criticism that had recently been made in an article on *The Origin of Species*. The article appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* (see editors' note at CCD 8.189 n10). It was entitled "National and individual rapacity vindicated by the law of nature" and had given Louis Napoleon's capture of a piece of territory as an example. Darwin's response: "I have received in a Manchester Newspaper a rather a good squib, showing that I have proved 'might is right', & therefore that Napoleon is right & every cheating Tradesman is also right."

Darwin's mockery might indicate some anxiety over the truth of this. 'Might is right' is not an unfair commentary on his work as Darwin himself had ended Chapter VII of *Origin* with "let the strongest live and the weakest die." Why shouldn't a tradesman cheat if survival and beating competitors are the only things that matter and determine fitness? Darwin could not have been so naive as not to know that connecting cheating with the behavior of the stronger long preceded his theory. In testimony before the Select Committee in 1837, in the form of two of his papers read into evidence, Saxe Bannister made reference to "frauds in trading, with oppressions in the ordinary

intercourse of the strong with the weak" and regretted that this problem had not been sufficiently provided against in the colonies (*Report*, "Minutes of Evidence", 12). In one of his books, concerning his experience in South Africa, Bannister pointed out that civilizing the natives will be impossible "if our cupidity gives them no breathing time" (*Humane* [1830], 104n). Napier identified an obsession with "that damnable thing called 'national wealth'" or that "false and stupid expression, '*national wealth*'" as one of the sources of our cruelties and also as the means we use to disguise them (see Napier, 33, 96, 172, 179.)

Competition, domination, and beating are dominant themes in *Origin*. As some humanitarians saw it, this made for a certain amount of savagery in civilized western culture. It is possible that what Darwin was anxious about in his letter to Lyell was that a *majority* in some remote future would consider him and his contemporaries to have been savages. Maybe minority opinions did not concern him much. But I think that any charge of savagery, even if made by a few, also haunted him. He just put it on the backburner. If it ever deeply troubled Darwin that civilized people practiced their savage abominations, by 1860 he was eager to proclaim to Lyell that it no longer did.

~ 6 ~

What is it that makes for savagery? In 1870, James Bonwick would approvingly quote one unnamed author (*Last*, 376): "He who talks of a necessity that uncivilized man must perish away before civilized ... is, with respect to the nobler qualities of man, barbarous and uncivilized himself." There it is again: that accusation that the civilized are barbaric and uncivilized. According to this same unknown author, the spokespeople for western civilization were the real savages when they insisted on the inevitability of wiping out other races. (This would make Darwin a savage, as we will see in the next chapter, for he too insisted that it was inevitable that the uncivilized tribes would be eliminated.) This author quoted by Bonwick admits that "almost all historical experience is on the side of the exterminating politician ... to the shame of our race and of our country" but goes on to protest, "we indignantly deny that the circumstances which impel the civilized race to root out the uncivilized are inevitable."

Bonwick had more to say about the shameful of this attitude that extinction was necessary. He approvingly cited Professor (Theodor) Waitz (German anthropologist, whose book Darwin read) for his belief that "the higher races are destined to displace the lower" is an impiety and self-delusive blindness (*Last*, 375). Bonwick was also bitterly critical of another, Mr. Squier, an ethnologist, who seemed to regard melancholy---"sympathy [may]

drop a tear"---as a waste because more truthfully our "short-sighted philanthropy [i.e., humanitarianism] may lament ... as it looks forward to the total disappearance of the lower forms of humanity, but the laws of nature are irreversible ..." (ibid.). Bonwick himself mocks the phony sympathy by observing "the Blacks go before the superior Caucasian race, as the old, gigantic Saurians before other types of beings, and we have but to shrug our shoulders, and cry, 'Poor fellows!'" (ibid.). In other words: We weep for you, we deeply sympathize---just like the Walrus. Alice calls them "the poor oysters." I don't know if Bonwick was a direct influence, but Lewis Carroll's poem, published in *Looking-Glass* a year after Bonwick's book, could be read as an extended commentary on Bonwick's remark.

Since Darwin read Bonwick, he knew by the time of this 1870 book that the 'remotely distant future' was possibly now. (Bonwick is not mentioned in the 1871 first edition of *Descent*, but there are several references to him in the 1874 second edition; presumably, Darwin had a couple of years to read Bonwick very carefully.) Darwin knew even earlier that Europeans could be judged as savages. He himself had done so over thirty years before with respect to the Gauchos and his fellow Englishmen who rejected slaves as their brothers. Did he forget that? Had he forgotten Humboldt's writings? He had to be aware that some of his contemporaries, including himself at an earlier time in his life, were complaining that Europeans could sink this low.

Even if Darwin genuinely believed in 1860 that the charge of European savagery was for some remote time, he would have been disabused of this notion when Georg Gerland's *Über das Aussterben der Naturvölker (On the Extinction of Primitive Peoples)* appeared in 1868. Gerland was a student of the aforementioned Theodor Waitz. Darwin read his book in preparation for *The Descent of Man* and kept a running translation/paraphrase (or had someone make it for him) in the margins of his copy of Gerland's book. Whoever made these annotations, the translations stick strictly to noting precisely Gerland's points and do not offer additional commentary.

In his last chapter, Gerland warns that it will be a relapsing (*Zurücksinken*) into savagery (*Rohheit*---rawness, crudeness, brutality) if we exterminate any indigenous people. A couple of chapters earlier, in Chapter 22, he describes the savagery of European nations. Darwin, or his assistant, took note in his marginalia. On 143, the translation has it, "Now nothing is more degrading to civilised than to sink back into savagery & the destructive exterminating [exterminatory?] wars of the nations ... There is here another reason for the preservation of savages." On 135, this is recorded: "The Inhuman and bloodthirsty way in which savages have been treated shows that the gulf which separates civilised and savages is not so great as has been thought---

for these are essentially savage traits."

Gerland also points out (my translations follow) that "this very savage and horrible bloodthirstiness" (*einer viel wilderen und grauenvolleren Blutgier*) of civilized peoples is all the more frightful for being juxtaposed with highly developed intellectual capabilities (135). He sees "a very imperfect [or defective] moral development of white people" (*sehr mangelhaften moralischen Entwicklung der Weissen*) in that they believe that all the violence and outrages committed against indigenes is "hardly a crime" (*kaum einen Frevel*) (140; hence, as he also says here and as so many others pointed out, every transgression a native commits against a white person is severely punished, while the crimes of Europeans against natives go unpunished). He is highly critical of the view that the less civilized are biologically inferior (122-25) and calls it a false view (*wie irrig die Ansicht ist*) that "vanishing peoples were dying out as a consequence of the inferiority of their race" (125; *dass die hinschwindenden Völker in Folge der Inferiortät ihrer Raçe ausstürben*). (I will have much more to say about Gerland's book and Darwin's awareness of his insights in Ch. 6, §5, and Ch. 10, §7, but Darwin's awareness was kept to the marginal annotations; none of Gerland's insights made it into *Descent*.)

Thirty years earlier, as previously noted, Saxe Bannister had offered similar thoughts. The difficulties between the civilized and uncivilized races are due more, he said, to "a defect in the character of the more civilized race" than to "an aggravated inferiority in the barbarian" (*Colonization*, 11).

Nowhere in the published writings of his mature years does Darwin show that he has taken these thoughts seriously, nor does he ever acknowledge that this point of view is being espoused by others and is worthy of consideration. Outside of the marginalia in his copy of Gerland's 1868 book, which offer only translations without expressing agreement, you would never know that Darwin had paid any attention to this kind of thinking.

That remote future turned out to be 1868 in Gerland's book---or even earlier in 1865. Here is Alfred Wallace in his 1865 essay "How to Civilize Savages" (and Darwin likely read everything Wallace published): "The white men in our Colonies are too frequently the true savages, and require to be taught and Christianized quite as much as the natives" (S113orig, 671). Wallace also describes these European settlers as "so deficient in humanity, justice, and charity" and relates some appalling examples of European cruelty. The older Darwin seems not to have cared. Whether the accusation of savagery awaited a future moment or it occurred in his own living present, he was equally indifferent. Extermination of others was natural and inevitable as far as he was concerned. In that comment to Lyell, Darwin seems to be saying

that he (unlike Gerland, Wallace, the author Bonwick quoted, and plenty of others) feels no shame at the prospect that we might all be considered savages one day. That is by any measure a hard-hearted attitude. What mattered to him was that his culture was on top and winning.

I should add that Bonwick embraced the humanitarian standard of that unnamed author. In a later book *The Lost Tasmanian Race* (1884; two years after Darwin died), Bonwick writes in the preface almost as if he is directly rebuking Darwin's way of thinking:

Are all *Dark Skins* to perish, like the unhappy Tasmanians, before Europeans? Have we not often been, in our civilizing processes, more savage than the Savages?

If the Natural *Law of Selection* necessitates the destruction of inferior races, as History has illustrated thus far, is there not in Humanity a *Higher Law*, happily better recognized in our day, which should and could be employed, by moral force, to resist this fearfully selfish struggle for existence? [his emphases]

He had made basically the same point in the earlier *The Last of the Tasmanians*, which, again, Darwin read. After quoting a Buffalo newspaper which had boasted that Americans will explode in population and soon take over the globe, Bonwick commented, "It is this heartless egoism of our common race of Britain and America that so shocks the benevolent mind, and chills the aspiration for a better policy toward the native peoples" (*Last*, 380). Darwin does not seem to have been too shocked or inclined to object to the chilling effect of this egoism.

Acceptance of colonialism and extermination permeates Darwin's writings from his earliest efforts. In Notebook E 65 (Dec. 1838), he wrote, "The range of man is not unlike that of animals transported by floating ice.---I agree with Mr. Lyell., man is not an *intruder*" (his emphasis). Man (in general, which includes European man) is never intruding, he has a natural right to be wherever he chooses to go, to trample wherever his boots land him. This remark immediately follows Darwin's observation that some human groups "have been exterminated on *principles*. strictly applicable to the universe" (E 64; his emphasis). He was already linking extermination and colonialism as a principle of nature. It is a rather strange analogy he makes. The amount of organization and deliberation it takes to build large ships and sail half way round the world, learning the art of navigation, studying the stars, winds, and currents, not to mention the outfitting of seamen and soldiers, is absolutely nothing like floating on a piece of ice. Even native tribes setting out in canoes does not really resemble animals getting stuck on an ice floe. Darwin's

naturalization of imperialism (man is not an intruder) by comparing it to floating on ice is strained to say the least.

Darwin apparently did not even think about his own experience of a long sea voyage. Was it anything like transportation by ice? Before venturing out, he and Captain FitzRoy would have had to reach an understanding about what his term of service and duties would be. Others who served on the *Beagle* would have had their own agreements about pay, duties, length of service, and under what conditions they could be terminated (Darwin could leave whenever he wanted, as FitzRoy had doubts about his stamina). A great sea voyage like this was a cooperative enterprise and, in the case of the *Beagle*, backed by the resources of government. Private ventures would have been funded by shareholders who expected a return on their investment and, likely, insurance would have been purchased in case of disaster.

The *Beagle* surveying voyage was a government operation. It was important that Britain have accurate maps in order to maintain dominance in world trade. Admiralty headquarters back home was in charge. There was constant communication between the Admiralty and Captain FitzRoy during the voyage. For example, they did not approve of his buying and refitting, even at his own expense, a schooner to help with the charting. He resigned at one point and then withdrew his resignation. There was a continual negotiating and renegotiating how this voyage would be conducted. Do animals floating away on ice maintain a line of communication with the home country they have left behind? Darwin never attended much to all the negotiation, bargaining, trading, and diplomacy that goes on in *all human cultures*. He simplified human endeavors into a lethal struggle for existence.

Though the ice floe was an incredible oversimplification of European colonialism, it was only natural that Darwin would use the image of transportation by a river. He took part in the thought and language of his time. It had become common self-referential parlance in the English-speaking world. Earlier in §2 of this chapter, we saw Thomas Jefferson in his 1805 inaugural speech referring to European colonizers as a stream and a current. Near the end of the century (1894), John Westlake's legal treatise *Chapters on the Principles of International Law* tells us that "The inflow of the white race cannot be stopped ..." (quoted in Williams, *Savage Anxieties*, 228). He adds that only a "fanatical admirer of savage life" would argue that the whites should be kept out. Apparently, with respect to indigenous peoples, Europeans did not have a will of their own. Rather they were an irresistible force of nature. Darwin was just one voice that helped to legitimize this way of thinking. James Bonwick saw that the natives were being described as "utterly swept away by the flood-tide of European colonization" (*Last*, 374; quoted

previously in §2), but at least he was critical of this point of view.

Notebook E 65 is an early example of how Darwin's commitment to European colonization and conquest overrode his scientific sense. His willingness to misuse science to justify an ethically questionable enterprise of subjugating and destroying other peoples never changed.

For Darwin, Britain is the quintessential non-intruder. It is not intruding because it has a right to be everywhere. His pride in colonialism is evident in several comments in his *Beagle Diary*. One comes at the end as they near home in England (in a long section following the entry for September 25, 1836) where he summarizes some of what he has learned on this long voyage: "It is impossible for an Englishman to behold these distant colonies, without a high pride and satisfaction. To hoist the British flag seems to draw as a certain consequence wealth, prosperity and civilization" (*Diary*, 446; this remains substantially the same in all the published editions; e.g., *Voyage*, 436). In the next chapter, we will see the scientific parallel version of this in *Origin*. What Darwin does not have to spell out for his readers (because they all share this assumption) is that it is wealth and prosperity for the British, not necessarily for the natives.

Several other such comments in the *Diary* are worth quoting, even if I have previously quoted a couple of these. He is proud (it is surprising, he says) "to see how Englishmen find their way to every corner of the globe. I do not suppose there is an inhabited & civilized place where they are not to be found" (145); "little embryo Englands are hatching in all parts" (424); "Seeing, when amongst foreigners, the strength & power of ones own Nation, gives a feeling of exultation which is not felt at home" (78); and approving another writer's opinion that "the English nation alone would ever have thought of making the Is^d of Ascension a productive spot; any other people would have held it, without any further views, as a mere fortress in the ocean" (432). In a letter, Darwin congratulated George Grey for his contribution to colonialism---"on the prominent part you have played in two countries [New Zealand and South Australia], destined in future centuries to be great fields of civilization" (CCD 4.95; Nov. 13, 1847).

You will never see Darwin musing that maybe we shouldn't be here or maybe we owe these people something. That of course would have been true of almost every Briton of his time. We cannot blame him for his nationalism. But incorporating nationalist pride and a barefaced colonial agenda into a scientific system is something else altogether.

His first published piece of writing (previously some of his *Beagle* letters were printed for *private* circulation among members of a scientific society) was an essay in the form of a letter co-authored with Captain Robert FitzRoy.

It was a defense of Christian missionary activity and Christian imperialism, which had been criticized by some, and was entitled "A Letter, containing Remarks on the Moral State of Tahiti, New Zealand, &c.", published in September 1836 in a South African Christian newspaper (Gould gives a good account in *Mismeasure*, 413-16; also see Browne, *Voyaging*, 330-31; and in this book, Ch. 10, §2; the full "Letter" is available online). Darwin and FitzRoy were very sensitive to the fact that critics had questioned the Christian mission. Alfred Wallace in the second half of the 19th century also questioned the moral state of western civilization and the Christian venture. Darwin could not bring himself to join in on that, not early or late in his career. Christian or western imperialism was always a good thing in his eyes.

There is a long section in the *Beagle Diary* (376-77; Nov. 22, 1835) in which Darwin rants against those who criticize Christian missionary work. (It was reproduced in all three of the published versions; e.g., *Voyage*, 356-57). I call it a rant because Darwin never considers the specific objections of those critics and whether there might be any substance to them and because at certain moments he sounds like advocates of slavery must have sounded like to him. In Tahiti, among the natives, he never saw "so many merry, happy faces." He dismisses the idea that natives might be afraid of the missionaries. He claims fear and respect are sometimes confused. He would have been livid if someone defended slavery that way.

He singles out Otto von Kotzebue, the Russian explorer whom I quoted earlier, as a "strongly adverse" critic and "many who attack even more acrimoniously than Kotzebue, both the Missionaries, their system & the effect produced." Curiously, he neglects to mention Humboldt, who was too important to him to be merely included in a vague reference to the "many who attack." We should not repeat Darwin's omission. I will return in just a bit to Humboldt who in fact thought legislation might be needed to rein in the abuses of the missionary system. Apparently, Darwin forgot this part of Humboldt or did not want to remember it.

Darwin praised Christianity for reducing "dishonesty, intemperance & licentiousness" and abolishing bloody wars (*Diary*, 377). Kotzebue, whose three volume *Voyage of Discovery* was published in 1821, the same year as Humboldt's volume 5 of *Personal Narrative*, saw it differently. "The rage for converting savage nations is now spreading over the whole South Sea, and causes much mischief ... what should bring them [the natives] happiness and tranquility, becomes the source of bloody wars; as for example, in the Friendly Islands, where the Christians and heathens reciprocally try to exterminate each other" (1.280). "The missionaries do them almost more injury [than the corrupting influence of sailors], because, by the religious

hatred which they excite, they destroy whole nations" (1.353). Kotzebue also refers to the "contempt which the missionaries have for the people ... None of them appear to have troubled themselves about their history, customs, religions, or languages" (3.47). Where Darwin suggests respect is operating, Kotzebue clearly sees fear in Indians in California (still ruled by Spain) who might all like to run away from the missionary system, as some have tried, "were they not deterred by their fears of the soldiers, who catch them, and bring them back to the Mission as criminals" (1.284).

The part about not learning native languages is not an insignificant complaint. Polynesian languages, for example, turned out to have been as complicated and nuanced as English. Missionaries had a great deal of difficulty learning them. Perhaps Kotzebue should have given more credit to some of them for at least trying. As Anna Johnston has pointed out in *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860*, "Language learning thus brought about a crisis in European self-confidence, and could threaten the previously impermeable boundaries between the missionary self and the heathen other" (130). Language learning, as she also notes, could dispel many of the stereotypes that Europeans had about native cultures. It certainly did that for some of the missionaries in Australia who had a higher opinion of Aborigines than armchair anthropologists. "Many of the pioneer missionaries studied Aboriginal languages ... They found them to be richer, more complex and more sophisticated than they had initially expected" (Reynolds, *Whispering*, 27). Missionary R.M. Lyon realized in one case that "the whole tribe are bards" and that, as Reynolds sums up his insight, "Their whole history and geography was handed down generation to generation in verse" (74). The more astute observers tended to rate the intelligence of these people much higher than others did. Darwin himself who had considerable scientific acumen for flora and fauna never applied that acumen to understanding indigenous societies.

Darwin was even outraged by the criticisms of Augustus Earle (the *Beagle's* resident artist on a previous voyage) whose remarks were rather mild. Earle complained (in his 1832 book) about the missionaries' "coldness and inhospitality" to him (Earle, 58) and their abstruse religious preaching to the natives instead of teaching them practical trades (59, 60-61). To his sister Caroline, Darwin wrote, "We are quite indignant with Earle's book, beside extreme injustice it shows ingratitude" (CCD 1.472; Dec. 27, 1835). He assured his sister that the missionaries had been quite civil to Earle and that he himself could testify to "merry & pleasant an evening with these *austere* men" (his emphasis). It seems a strong response to such slight criticisms. Perhaps he held some personal feelings against Earle from a brief time they spent

rooming together in Brazil earlier in the voyage (D&M, *Sacred Cause*, 80). The missionaries' treatment of natives gets no mention in this letter (though there is a brief reference in *Diary*, 390, where he seems to disagree with Earle's views).

In the *Diary*, Darwin winds up, "It is base ingratitude in a Voyager to forget these things [Christianity reducing dishonesty, intemperance, etc., as noted above]; at the point of Shipwreck on some unknown coast he will most devoutly pray that the lesson of the Missionary may have extended thus far" (377; the same point was also made in the joint "Letter" with FitzRoy, 235, 236). Darwin wanted everyone to be grateful that missionaries had made Aboriginal lands much safer for Europeans. The consequence for the natives could only be to become more civilized. Any criticism of Christian missionary work made Darwin hot under the collar---which is exactly how defenders of slavery felt about criticism of slave owners. Hardly anyone worried about making Europeans safe for natives.

When Darwin relates that "trifling anecdote," as he called it, of the Negro man on the ferry who thought he was about to be hit (reported in §1 of this chapter), he says that trivial though it was, this incident "struck me more forcibly than any story of cruelty" (*Voyage*, 21). The man had observational powers. He could draw the full import of a system from the tiniest clue. (Just as I see so much in Darwin's comment that he does not care if European man will be judged a savage one day.) I am not aware of any similar Darwin anecdote regarding colonialism, which would lead him to draw a deep insight from a trivial clue. Yet he must have experienced many comparable scenes of degradation in the colonial world and he certainly read about them in Humboldt, Kotzebue, and other writers. When it came to the imperial system, Darwin seems to have turned off his powers of observation, or suppressed his full conscience, or else, whatever he learned, he managed to convey it in a heavily disguised language (this is for Chapter 10). With colonialism, he was more interested in concealing than revealing.

Darwin did not live up to his own standards. One of the things he detested most about slavery was the breakup of families (as reported in Ch. 1, §4, he complained to Charles Lyell of his writing so placidly about this atrocious practice). He was incensed if people did not get how horrible this was. The example the young Darwin gives to justify calling some of his fellow Englishmen "polished savages" is their self-willed ignorance of what can be heard in the remark of one slave: "If I could but see my father & my two sisters once again, I should be happy. I never can forget them" (*Beagle Diary*, 45). Yet the same ignorance about what was happening to Aborigines pervades Darwin's writings.

The quote I offered before from Volume 5 (Part 1) of Humboldt's *Personal Narrative* on "the moral degradation of our species" comes at the introduction of a long story of an Indian (Guahiba) woman whose two infant children had been torn from her by a Spanish missionary with the assistance of other Indians and who was tortured and brutalized for her repeated attempts (some of them temporarily successful) at reuniting with her children. In this case, as in others, Humboldt tells us, the children were taken to serve "as *poitos*, or slaves of the Christians" (5.234). (Darwin on one occasion noted that Christian teachers have sometimes turned Indians into their slaves; *Diary*, 267, Nov. 26, 1834; and in the margin, he cited a different work of Humboldt's.) At one point, the Indian woman escaped from a boat and swam to shore, the current carrying her to a rock. When recaptured, she was taken back to that rock, later named for her. "Stretched upon the rock (*la Piedra de la Madre*) a cruel punishment was inflicted on her with those straps of manatee leather, which serve for whips in that country ..." (5.235-36). "This unhappy woman," as Humboldt calls her, after several more arduous journeys to retrieve her children, was imprisoned in a mission and eventually died "refusing all kind of nourishment" (5.238).

Humboldt did not relish telling this story but did so, he said, "to display an affecting instance of maternal tenderness in a race of people so long calumniated; and because I thought some benefit might accrue from publishing a fact ... which proves how much the system of the missions calls for the care of the legislator" (5.238). Be it noted: If Humboldt was recommending legislation, it was not because of this one incident. There had to have been many more similar cases to justify making such a request.

This misfortune inflicted on the woman is something Darwin should have been able to relate to. He was a hugely devoted family man. I am sure he was moved when he read this, but it is a sign of how limited was Darwin's moral vision that, as far as I know, he registered no complaints about the destruction of Aborigine families, something he despised so much when it was done to slaves. As the Negro ferryman had revealed all the degradation and ugliness of slavery to Darwin, so too this could have been the anecdote that revealed the terrors of colonialism. If this or any other story did that for Darwin, he kept it a secret in his own heart, so secret it was hidden even from himself.

As for other stories, he would have read in Kotzebue (one of the critics he railed against in the *Beagle Diary*) that Indians in California longed for their homes: "Twice in the year they receive permission to return to their native homes. This short time is the happiest period of their existence; and I myself have seen them going home in crowds, with loud rejoicing" (1.283). I previously noted how any who tried to permanently escape were chased and

caught and returned to the Mission as criminals. Those who were not well enough to go on the permitted journey home would sit for several days "mournfully gazing on the distant summits of the mountains which surround their homes" (ibid.). Kotzebue also notes that many of the converted Indians "die very soon in their new faith, as they cannot accustom themselves to the different mode of life" (ibid.). In a paraphrase of Bob Dylan, something is happening here, and you don't know what it is, do you, Mr. Missionary?

A lot of people in the 19th century could have fit the bill as a potential Mr. Jones or Mr. Missionary. The Aborigines' Protection Society failed here too (see Heartfield, 120, 123). It seems like almost everyone thought it was a good idea to rip native children away from their parents and sometimes parents from their homes to give them a western education, though in the case related by Humboldt education was not the motivation. One of the positive examples the APS cited in their 1847 report was an Australian boy who had been sent to England by Edward Eyre, when he was appointed Protector of Aborigines (Heartfield, 120). They thought this was a very good deed. W.J. Darling, the previously mentioned British officer, in one of his letters to Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur in Van Diemen's Land, recommends that four boys between the ages of six and nine be removed from their community: "... by remaining here [they] will only grow up in ignorance; I take the liberty of strongly recommending that they be taken from hence and put into the Orphan School, or into the service of kind masters ... I feel convinced that a very great deal might be done with them" (P, W, 992; May 4, 1832). Darling was one of the best humanitarians who protested injustices against the natives. It was typical of the times for everyone to recommend improvement of the ways of indigenous people.

Kotzebue understood a lot more than Darwin apparently did. Darwin's melancholy remarks about the natives losing their land do not convey that much. Aborigines were not just losing land, they were losing their homes. Did Darwin hear that? He heard something like it in the above quoted remark of a slave, "If I could but see my father & my two sisters once again, I should be happy. I never can forget them" (*Beagle Diary*, 45). When it came to slaves, he listened to every nuance. Not so much with native peoples subjected to colonial domination. A similar sentiment to that of the slave could have been uttered by those Indians on the shore mournfully gazing at the distant mountains surrounding their homes. Those of Darwin's countrymen who could not hear a slave missing his family he called "polished savages." He concludes that passage in the *Diary* by declaring that slavery contains "miseries perhaps even greater than he [an anti-slavery advocate] imagines." Wouldn't the same be true of colonialism? And wouldn't deafness to what

critics of colonialism were reporting also qualify one to be termed a polished savage? Was Darwin, by his own standards, a polished savage? How difficult it is to remain just one consistent person.

Humboldt's *Personal Narrative* was a book Darwin "read with care and profound interest" (*Autobiography*, 57). "Few things give me so much pleasure as reading the *Personal Narrative*" (*Beagle Diary*, 67; May 26, 1832). He also did much rereading of parts of it (see CCD 1.125-26; also 2.240 where he mentioned that there were passages "which I have read over and over again, & have copied out, that they might ever be present in my mind" in an 1839 letter to Humboldt). "I formerly admired Humboldt, I now almost adore him [for his description of the Tropics]," he wrote in 1832 (CCD 1.237). His sister Caroline worried that his style (in the journal she was reading) might in certain places be too influenced by Humboldt's flowery expressions whereas she preferred her brother's "own simple straight forward & far more agreeable style" (CCD 1.345). Darwin possessed all seven volumes of *Personal Narrative* and likely read them all as they "all ... have some marginal scoring of passages and occasional comments" (CCD 1.120 n2; Notebook B 142 contains a reference to Volume 5, Part 2; Keynes in note 2 on page 24 of the *Diary* says Darwin had volumes 1 and 2 with him on the *Beagle* voyage). Darwin's repeated references to Humboldt, whether in his *Diary* or the *Notebooks* or his letters, are exclusively to his descriptions of nature. Thomas Hodgkin, as I pointed out, read Humboldt very differently, though Hodgkin and Darwin were both men of science.

Keep in mind that in relating the tale of the Indian mother, Humboldt was countering the nonsense and lies about these Indians (e.g., they did not have maternal feelings) just as much as Darwin was revolted by the lies about slavery when he was on his world voyage: "I have seen enough of Slavery & the dispositions of the negros, to be thoroughly disgusted with the lies & nonsense one hears on the subject in England" (to a friend, J.M. Herbert, June 2, 1833; CCD 1.320). But Darwin could never extend this sensitivity to lies about native peoples. In fact, he seemed put off by anyone who did think nonsense about Aborigines should be corrected. In his 1864 paper "The Origin of Human Races," Alfred Wallace wrote that man "is social and sympathetic. In the rudest tribes the sick are assisted at least with food; less robust health and vigour than the average does not entail death ... the weaker ... do not suffer the extreme penalty which falls upon animals so defective" (S093, clxii). Darwin's comment in the margin of his copy of this paper was "Does not act ... only civilized man!" (quoted in D & M, *Sacred Cause*, 344). Wallace's sense of social responsibility continued to grow. Darwin cut this off in himself. It seems that neither Humboldt nor Wallace nor Bonwick nor

Gerland nor anyone else could move him in another direction. (Bonwick and Gerland are cited a few times in *The Descent of Man*, but never for their points about the savagery of European imperialism.)

It should not go unmentioned that while colonialism brought native peoples few benefits and a lot of grief, the record of missionaries was not all on the downside. Quakers, Baptists, and Methodists can especially be commended. Not only were they active in the antislavery movement---and some of them did not stop there, but even took the side of ex-slaves in their struggle for civil rights---they also fought for the rights of Aborigines against the colonial authorities who sought to deprive them. Oddly enough, Darwin expressed no interest in the good which missionaries did on behalf of natives who were brutalized by colonialism. It was what missionaries did for Europeans that interested him. Perhaps he did not pay attention to the help missionaries offered natives because to do so would have meant to acknowledge the uglier side of missionary activity as well. He confined himself to considering only how much safer missionaries made distant lands for Europeans.

I observed previously that, in his long *Diary* rant against those who would criticize Christian missionaries, how curious it is that he never mentions Humboldt. It seems that Darwin's commitment to colonialism was so strong that he could not allow himself to reflect that his beloved Humboldt was one of its critics, even to the point of recommending legislation to curb some of its excesses (at least with respect to the missionary side of colonialism). So will it be a surprise to find so many colonial metaphors and images in *The Origin of Species*? Will it be all that surprising, given how deep all this went in Darwin and his culture, that racism will make its way effortlessly into his work?

I would not dispute the truth of any of the recollections of Darwin as a great friend and family man, but the full truth is that Darwin did limit his moral sense and humane concerns. I don't think it is merely that some cruelties escaped his notice. I don't think anything got past his acute observational powers. It is more the case that somewhere inside himself he decided to ignore some very evident injustices and moral quagmires. I am not sure how significant it is that his old friend J.M. Herbert also remembered that "he always kept up the closest connection with the friends of his own standing" (LL 1.169), other than that this testifies to his class consciousness (in a letter, he said "a Duke in my eyes is no common mortal, & not to be judged by common rules!"; CCD 16.527; and in another early letter which I have lost track of, he rebuked his correspondent for making fun of an aristocrat). More importantly, he was capable of looking the other way (e.g.,

when animals must have suffered recovering from surgery even with anesthesia) when it suited his scientific interests. For whatever complex of reasons, he construed it as in his scientific interest that disappearing natives should fit into his theory of evolution and extermination of species.

For my money, the single most puzzling thing about Darwin is that he could hate one form of cruelty (slavery) so much and be so tolerant of another (imperialism) which was essentially the same thing. Both dispossessed people of their culture, their land, their families, and their human rights. I don't know if this can ever be resolved. This is not just a question about Darwin. It applies to many others. Brantlinger points out that Darwin was not alone in being opposed to slavery and yet disgusted by Aborigines and accepting or even in favor of their extermination (*Dark Vanishings*, 9-10). Three prominent names he mentions in this regard are Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, and Mark Twain. As Lewis Carroll might have put it: This is a puzzler. We will need to explore a lot more evidence before we have any hope of making sense of this, or just give up altogether finding sense in human irrationality.

Brantlinger's three examples were all writers. It is one thing when a literary figure or artist expresses racist or genocidal opinions. It is a whole other dimension when a scientist does it. A work of art may or may not be affected by obnoxious or abusive ideas of the artist. It is almost impossible for the quality of scientific work to be immune to any warped views of the scientist. There is an outside chance, a far outside chance, that a racist against blacks might write a decent history of Africa, or a biased person against Judaism could write a decent book on Jewish culture. I would not bet on it. It is unlikely in the extreme. It is just as unlikely that a scientist could have strong opinions about the inferiority of other peoples and their inevitable extermination, and yet his anthropology has emerged clean, objective, and entirely accurate. You will lose your pants if you bet on that.

When his friend Joseph Hooker was about to embark on a trip to Morocco in 1871 (about one month after *Descent* was published), Darwin wrote to him, "Now don't be a fool, & do take care of yourself.---I know nothing about the natives, but I am convinced that they are blood-thirsty savages" (CCD 19.203; further on, he reminds him again not to be a fool and not to take risks). If anyone else had written this (anyone other than a scientist), I would not make too much of it. This could just be a friend worried about his friend's safety. But when a scientist says this---and one who claims to have anthropological knowledge no less!---it gives us cause to suspect his objectivity. There is an outside chance Darwin made this remark jokingly, but as it comports with so much else Darwin wrote about savages, I don't think the possibility of this being a joke merits much consideration. (In New Zealand, in his *Diary* [384],

he gives us, the "twinkling in the eye [which he sees in the natives] ... cannot indicate anything but cunning & ferocity;" it was his general tendency to see violence in savages.)

Janet Browne takes note of some of the contradictions in Darwin's nature but what she points to is not really it and they are not even contradictions. "Darwin saw no incongruity in the wide-scale employment of servants, for example, and was as patronising as the next man about the lowly nature of the uneducated masses in Britain or the indigenous people he met in various parts of the globe" (*Voyaging*, 245). She observes that his family "exploited cheap labor" and that "The money-making classes of Britain perpetuated forms of human bondage which seemed to many critics merely a variant of slavery" (*ibid.*).

The reason these are not contradictions to his position on slavery is that Darwin was never opposed to slavery because he believed in equality or the brotherhood of man or the unity of the human race. I think he knew that some abolitionists would use unity and brotherhood to promote their cause and he may not have been entirely opposed to that, but the main issue for him was simply cruelty (D & M, *Sacred Cause*, 336, express a similar opinion). All the examples Darwin gives in that long passage from *Voyage* on the horrors of slavery which I quoted from earlier are about physical cruelty. He never says anything about the unfairness of making people work for nothing or for mere subsistence. If that was of any concern to him, he did not express it.

Whatever Darwin expected of abolition in the way of ending brutality and cruelties, he did not expect it to end social or economic equality. He had firm ideas that equality was bad for society. "The perfect equality among the individuals composing the Fuegian tribes must for a long time retard their civilization" (*Voyage*, 193; in *Diary*, 141, it is "prevent their civilization"). Even "animals, whose instinct compels them to live in society and obey a chief, are most capable of improvement" and "so is it with the races of mankind" (*Voyage*, 193).

This might be startling to us, but slaves who did not observe formalities seem to have bothered him too. After describing the Maori custom of greeting by rubbing or pressing noses, he says, "I noticed that the slave would press noses with any one he met, indifferently either before or after his master, the Chief.---Although amongst savages the chief has absolute power of life & death over his slave, yet there is generally an entire absence of ceremony between them" (*Diary*, 387-88; *Narrative*, 505; *Voyage*, 365). This may seem an innocent enough observation, but he follows this with: "Where civilization has arrived at a certain point, as among the Tahitians, complex formalities are soon instituted between the different grades of life [society, in all the

published editions]" (*Diary*, 388; cf. 254). Maintaining different social grades was important to Darwin. Slavery should be ended for other reasons, but not for reasons of bringing about social equality. In a civilized country, a slave or a poor man should not know or suffer brutality, but should know his place.

Darwin could accept inequality as long as it was not overly harsh (and he could accept pain inflicted on animals in experiments if it was unavoidable). The inequality inherent in slavery is not what really bothered him about it. He hated slavery for primarily one reason and one reason only: It was extremely cruel. He did not see that cruelty in other forms of economic oppression (mentioned by Browne) which is why there was no contradiction for him in his acceptance of these other aspects of his society. Since slavery seemed to be inherently cruel, the logical conclusion for Darwin was to favor freedom for the enslaved, but not social upheaval.

What about colonialism? Wasn't that just as heartless as slavery? Yes, but here Darwin was prepared to look the other way, and therein lies the dilemma and the real contradiction. He could tolerate one form of cruelty but not another, though they were very similar. He was never big on equality and he never saw economic or social discrepancies among humans as particularly unfair or exceptionally cruel. He seemed to think some inequality was necessary for society to advance. He was consistent on these points and consistent with others of his class.

His grandfather Josiah Wedgwood's famous medallion depicting a slave in chains and on bended knee, pleading "Am I Not a Man and a Brother" (there is no question mark in the inscription on the medal) is remembered today for being one of the inspirations of the British anti-slavery movement, but what is the slave begging for? Freedom and kind treatment certainly, but perhaps not equality. Indeed, while Thomas Huxley, a staunch abolitionist, happily greeted the end of slavery at the conclusion of the American Civil War in his (1865?) lecture "Emancipation---Black and White", he opened with the statement that the "plaintive inquiry, 'Am I not a man and a brother?' seems at last to have received its final reply," but vigorously denied that equality between the races was one of the answers to this famous question and declared that half the arguments brought in favor of abolition had been wrong (*Lectures*, 115; to be discussed more fully in Ch. 4, §4).

Darwin too had early on expressed doubts about a brotherhood of man. In Notebook C 217 (around June 1838), he said "civilized Man, May exclaim with Christian we are all Brothers in spirit---all children of one father.---yet differences carried a long way." Those differences were compelling to Darwin, more compelling than the motto on his grandfather's medallion.

The slave's submissiveness in the Wedgwood medal suggests more

ambiguity than we realize. As Patricia Fara sees it, "His submissive pose offers the reassuring message that liberated Africans will not abuse their new-found freedom by rebelling, but will display their gratitude through continued subservience ... he is not claiming the right to equality" (*Erasmus*, 200). George Boulukos describes the medal as "offering those who would labor for abolition reassurance that ex-slaves would be submissive and grateful to them for their efforts" (Boulukos, 16). The anti-slavery movement from the outset was never pure in its goals. They never had a clear idea of what they thought about black slaves. Given their ambiguous feelings about the humanity and station of slaves, it should not be all that surprising that emancipation produced mixed feelings about its value, as I will discuss in Chapter 4.

And so it was that Darwin's opposition to slavery was really quite limited. It was legal slavery he found objectionable (he had nothing to say about illegal slavery, that is, forced labor) and it was overt physical cruelty that rattled his nerves (the emotional cruelty of separating members of slave families was essentially a physical act). Darwin never rails against racism the way Charles Napier does in 1835 (see next chapter, §3) or dissects it as Georg Gerland did in 1868 (see Ch. 10, §7). Just to give one example from Gerland: "The English and the Dutch have distinguished themselves by indescribable arrogance and hatred towards all people of color, which has been no less harmful to primitive peoples than overt hostility" (Gerland, 134-35; *Die Engländer und Holländer zeichnen sich durch unaussprechlichen Hochmuth und Hass gegen jede farbige Bevölkerung aus, durch welchen sie den Naturvölkern fast nicht mindern Schaden gethan haben, als durch offene Feindseligkeiten*; cf. 91, 93). Gerland uses *Hochmuth* (arrogance) about six times in his text, and at one point, refers to the "rigid, racial arrogance" (*starren Raçenhochmuth*) of the English (130; cf. 112). He clearly sees that this leads to "endless humiliation" (*ewige Demüthigung*) and depression which afflicts not only individuals but entire peoples as well (98).

We never see Darwin doing this kind of thing. He leaves the racism behind slavery and colonialism largely untouched. I don't know how significant this is, but it is interesting that in the translation in the margin of Darwin's copy of Gerland's book, "towards all people of color" is left out of the above sentence. It could have been a need to be brief in the margins, or it might signify something deeper. There is another place (on 98) where Darwin's translator omits Gerland's belief that the "arrogance of caste" (*Kastenhochmuth*) of North-American whites contributed to the melancholy and suicide of a Choctaw Indian. Both these examples may be cases of the translator underplaying the harm inflicted by racism. On the other hand, he or she does translate this insight (on 95), although this could be a case of cultural conflict,

not necessarily racism: "What shall we honour, say they [Indians], when our most sacred laws are trodden under foot---the more personal the intercourse the more complete the demoralisation." Darwin from his own reading of Gerland and from the bits translated by whoever assisted him must have been aware of Gerland's observations on racism and its effects. Whether Darwin blocked them out unconsciously or more deliberately, he certainly never incorporated them in his own work.

For the purposes of this investigation, the single most important thing to remember about evolutionary theory is that it has two directions to it. It points back and it points forward. It points backward to a common ancestry and it points ahead to a future of incredible and very real diversity---and inequality, I may add, at least for Darwin. Darwin believed in divergence of character as much as he believed in commonness of descent. The original ancestor gave rise to very different life forms. All are not on the same level. Inequality is natural. How he used this to formulate his anthropology is one of the subjects of this book.

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As I write and rewrite this book, and most importantly, reorganize it, I find myself wondering whether this type of investigation leads only to despair or whether there is hope in it. This is not just about finding out that a mythical figure of a man, called Charles Darwin, had some serious flaws. There is nothing new in that as a general proposition. We have seen other great men fall (though there would be no falling, if we did not set them up so high). The fall here goes beyond Darwin. This was science that went wrong, the top-notch science of the day, telling lies about non-European peoples, using totally subjective standards, selfish beyond belief, all the while convincing itself that it was making the most objective discoveries. And it did all this in the face of contemporary criticism that it was doing wrong. Charles Napier wrote in 1835: "Verily no man can speak against science; it is a very pretty pastime; makes men rich, and roguish; has a strong antipathy to religion; but what is far more important, it increases '*national wealth*' ..." (Napier, 100). Science can be pretty damn selfish and anything but objective. Its purpose is to serve the gross national product, and sometimes it serves only the wealth of one class. It is just another human endeavor after all. Practicing science is not holy, but I don't think I will ever give up my love of ideal science.

It is also subsequent historical scholarship that went wrong, suppressing and misstating evidence to make a real human being with flaws disappear and replacing him with a fiction that had never breathed life in any known universe. And they were just as dishonest about his context. What appears to

be partly intended as a defense of Darwin and other evolutionary scientists is a statement from John Haller's *Outcasts from Evolution: Scientific Attitudes of Racial Inferiority, 1859-1900*. He writes, "The subject of race inferiority was beyond critical reach in the late nineteenth century" (132). How untrue that is. Criticism of ideas of racial inferiority was well within their grasp. The numerous critics of racist thinking prove that.

A truer statement than Haller's would be: Critiques of racism were suppressed by most mainstream scientists and intellectuals of the day. They did not want to know and chose ignorance over knowledge. Any critics who did appear were treated with disfavor, if their existence was acknowledged at all. The passage of time has not served them any better. Modern scholarship continues to disappear the genuine humanitarians who demonstrated other ways of relating to the evidence about human nature. This is a story about power and greed and the arrogance of believing that academia has an absolute right to control history in the name of progress. Erasing voices is just another form of bullying.

There is a fear we all have that uncovering any painful pieces of history will interfere with the forward momentum of our culture. Ever since the 19th century (and probably even earlier), western civilization has committed itself so heavily to technological and material progress that we are in danger of becoming just this one thing. This is who we essentially are---Progress! Conquest!---and all other parts of our identity get lost or suppressed. Two centuries ago, it went something like this: We know how to gain material comforts better than any other society on earth and we know how to use the natural resources of other countries to that end better than the Aboriginal inhabitants of those countries; therefore by natural right, it all belongs to us. As William Fox, a New Zealand politician, put it (in 1879 or 1881?), "turning the wilderness into a garden" gave Europeans special rights to the land over the Maori (quoted in Orange, 204). Walter Bagehot, a writer Darwin much admired, made a similar point in a series of articles published from 1867 to 1869 (see next chapter).

Closer to the end of the century, Karl Pearson wrote in *The Grammar of Science* (1892):

It is a false view of human solidarity, a weak humanitarianism, not a true humanism, which regrets that a capable and stalwart race of white men should replace a dark-skinned tribe which can neither utilize its land for the full benefit of mankind, nor contribute its quota to the common stock of human knowledge.

[438]

He added that this "must not be taken to justify a brutalizing destruction of human life" because such violence would destroy our own fitness (438n). "At the same time," he goes on, "there is cause for human satisfaction in the replacement of the aborigines throughout America and Australia by white races of far higher civilization" (ibid.). That such comments could appear in a book on science (and one which came to be considered a classic, great work) tells us all we need to know about how badly science compromised itself in the 19th century.

We have not changed much since then. We are just an extension of the 19th century, the longest century ever, with the same values (or one value, whose essence is a belief that technology and a free market will save us all). We have the same sense of entitlement they had: We are entitled to take over ownership of the entire earth and we are entitled to take and use the riches found in other lands to create new and better things. We are not intruders, as Darwin would have said. Our entitlement ensures us that this is not intrusion. What the humanitarians objected to was that all sense of rights and justice was excluded from this worldview---all sense that we should respect other peoples and negotiate with them, not simply take from them. (John Locke begged his culture that mutual consent was the right way to relate to people; they were not listening deeply to him then, and it is questionable how closely we have listened since.)

The existence of humanitarians demonstrates that there is more to western culture than our attempts to justify greed and progress, but our society seems content to become primarily that one thing. Onward. Going forward no matter what. Conquer. They all come to the same thing. It takes time to lose our multiple identities. All cultures at their best are multifaceted and when a culture gradually gives that up for the sake of one identity only, it is a sign of failing health.

One antidote is historical study. It can help to remind us of other possibilities and to keep our potential to be many things. But an obsession with progress (something Darwin very much participated in) gets in the way of discovering the full truth---the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Does progress justify erasing everything we don't like? Maybe for some it does. One of the things that gets rejected is humanitarianism, not only current efforts at it but a close look at such efforts that were attempted in the past. Traditionally, progress and humanitarianism have never been on friendly terms. (Pearson was not the only one who worried that the latter could interfere with the former.) Caring too much about others is seen as an obstruction on the road to greater comforts and greater distractions from whatever ails us. Whether or not historical investigation into humanitarian

actions, or the lack of them, actually interrupts progress, the fear that it might do so stifles a full investigation.

I don't know how to resolve this. Maybe there is no resolution. All I know is that some of us must keep on exploring a detailed examination of the evidence. Historical thinking, like all good science, is about thinking small. You solve small, concrete problems. You answer small, well-defined questions. Progress is about thinking big. In big ideas, there is salvation. Historical study is not looking for salvation. It just wants a few hard truths with a small t. This difference alone might be enough to make history and progress forever opposed to each other. The conflict may be irresolvable. I raise it because we should be aware that there are often bigger issues which, consciously or not, undermine thinking clearly.

For some, the most fundamental question of all is: Do we want to risk slowing down progress by dredging up unpleasant historical facts? For others, it is, as I suggested at the outset: Do you *want* to know whether Darwin was a racist? (Of course, I mean mainly in his science of man.) For those for whom the answer to these questions is an emphatic No!, the rest is silence. There is nothing further to learn.

3

BY ANY OTHER NAME: RACISM

Everywhere, the politics of admission ... is preferable to silence ... The finest gift Europe could give the world would be to offer it the spirit of critical examination that it has conceived and that has saved it from so many perils. It is a poisoned gift [bringing feelings of shame], but one that is indispensable for the survival of humanity.

---Pascal Bruckner (40, 221)

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I could not agree more with Bruckner's sentiment. It applies even more truly to scholarship in any field. The scholarship of admission is to be preferred to the scholarship of silence. Bruckner is particularly interested in its bearing on recent events, but it goes beyond that. It is just as true for history further back. Cultures have long memories. If we incorporate lies in those memories, no matter how far back, they will yield bad fruit. The potential to create rancor will always be there. Besides, there is a line we must never cross over. We do no one an honor by telling big lies about what our past contains. Let us not allow ideology or infatuations or any other preconceived ideas and emotions we bring to a subject to derail the quest for real knowledge.

In the first section of the first chapter, I quoted from Darwin's letter to Lyell where he gave his basic statement of how natural selection gets rid of inferior races. In his theory of how evolution works, based on the struggle for survival, selection acts not only on corporeal structures, as Darwin would put it, but on the mental faculties as well. There is a continuum of intelligence from the lowest animals up through man. Robert Chambers argued for the same point in 1844 in *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*, as previously discussed.

Are all human beings on the same level of intelligence and moral or social values? Darwin did not think so. He believed the savage races were less intelligent and less moral than Europeans, and, *as a direct result of this*, they

would soon become extinct. That's what happens to inferior groups. He used 'extinction' and 'extermination' interchangeably. In the letter to Lyell, he said, "I look at this process as now going on with the races of man; the less intellectual races being exterminated" (CCD 7.345). He would say exactly the same thing a dozen years later in *The Descent of Man* (183): "At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilised races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace, the savage races throughout the world."

Darwin was not a vicious racist. He almost always tried to be matter-of-fact about it, which might make it more chilling for some. But generally, he did not exult in the white man's superiority, though there are a couple of exceptions. One is in a letter to William Graham (July 3, 1881; LL 1.316) where he is discussing the benefit of "natural selection having done and doing more for the progress of civilization." He then points out the good result that "The more civilized so-called Caucasian races have beaten the Turkish hollow in the struggle for existence." There is a little cheering in that remark. He continues with this general observation: "Looking to the world at no very distant date, what an endless number of the lower races will have been eliminated by the higher civilized races throughout the world." Once again, he is clear that natural selection leads to differentiating between groups, such as human communities---between those who are better at survival and those who are not. In another letter to Lyell (Sept. 23, 1860; CCD 8.379), Darwin returns to the subject and writes, "White man is 'improving off the face of the earth' even races nearly his equals" (his use of quotation marks indicates this was a well-known expression), and approves of Lyell's insight that "man now keeping down any new man which might be developed."

This last is a pretty brutal admission on Darwin's part. It might seem he is merely making a non-judgmental observation of what is going on, but it appears closer to a subjective assertion of scientific legitimacy for domination by Europeans. *Other cultures* (even those nearly our equals!) *are still developing, but white men are putting a stop to it.* Darwin apparently finds this perfectly natural. It is a stunning thing to give legitimacy to, in any shape, manner, or form.

Just for context, Charles Dickens believed that "a savage [is] something highly desirable to be civilized off the face of the earth" (June 11, 1853; quoted in Brantlinger, *Dark*, 9-10). At the time the Tasmanians were being cruelly erased from existence, an article in the Melbourne *Argus* pointedly commented that this people had been "in the most literal sense, 'civilized off the face of the earth' ..." (note the use of quotation marks, as Darwin did; quoted in Bonwick, *Last*, 351; no date given, but Bonwick introduced this

article with 'some few years ago'). I believe that "improved or civilized off the face of the earth" became a well-known euphemism for extermination (in 1872, one of Darwin's correspondents used it in a letter, expressing the hope that a Christian mission in Tierra del Fuego would "succeed in preventing the poor people from being 'improved' off the face of the earth;" CCD 20.49).

If these remarks from Darwin are not plain enough, it does not get any plainer than in his 1862 letter (Feb. 6; CCD 10.72) to Charles Kingsley. Darwin writes: "It is very true what you say about the higher races of men, when high enough, replacing & clearing off the lower races. In 500 years how the Anglo-saxon race will have spread & exterminated whole nations; & in consequence how much the Human race, viewed as a unit, will have risen in rank." You can almost hear him celebrating the superiority of Anglo-Saxons, justifying its extermination of lower races because of an implied purification (a word he does not use) which will bring humanity to a higher level ("risen in rank")!

Darwin can write like this because he does not see the pieces of humanity connected into a whole. His understanding that the branches of humanity have descended from a common ancestor does not give him a clue that all human races belong to each other *now*, not just in an ancient past. That is one way to define a racist--someone who believes human groups are disconnected from each other. A racist believes we can destroy a part without destroying the whole. This is a fundamental point that Granville Sharp grasped (see previous chapter, §5). Darwin believed in human disconnection. As he saw it, extinction, whether occurring on its own or with the help of Europeans, threatened no one but the dying piece.

Darwin's racism leads him to seeing the human species free to rise when the disconnected lower races have disappeared. A genuine anti-racist abolitionist like Granville Sharp (see last chapter) saw it in the exact opposite way. Something like slavery is "destructive of the human species" (*Representative*, 80, 97). If that is true of slavery, it is even more true of genocide. If genocide is practiced or allowed to occur, the human race will not rise, it will sink back into savagery (as Georg Gerland would argue in 1868, almost exactly one hundred years after Sharp's pamphlet; see Ch. 10, §7). When faced with the many genocides that were occurring or getting ready to occur in various parts of the world, so many humanitarians said we are falling; Darwin said we are rising. That is probably the starkest contrast in thought I have ever come across in history. Darwin was not prepared to go as deep as the best humanitarians. He saw separation, differences, disconnection where the humanitarians saw connection, bonds, and a relatedness that could not be escaped from because the whole of nature would not allow it.

Any way you examine it, Darwin's statement to Kingsley is a devastating assertion of racial superiority. No wonder few will quote it. And when someone does quote it, it is not quite fully.

This letter to Kingsley affords an opportunity to see how scholarship, even when it is trying to be honest about Darwin, slants things to make him look better or, if not better, less bad. I admire the work of Adrian Desmond and James Moore in their thorough and excellent biography of Darwin and their further study *Darwin's Sacred Cause* (2009), even though their thesis in the latter that Darwin's opposition to slavery helped propel his evolutionary views does not hold up. (It is interesting that the original sub-title for that book, *How a Hatred of Slavery Shaped Darwin's Views on Human Evolution*, was later changed to *Race, Slavery, and the Quest for Human Origins*, when it came out in paperback.) They are almost unique in admitting that Darwin rationalized genocide, as they put it (*Sacred Cause*, 318; cf. 148). They are not averse to offering quotations that do not serve the idealistic image of Darwin.

In this case, they collapse the above quote from the Kingsley letter into one sentence (I am inserting an ellipsis where I think they had probably intended one, but inadvertently omitted it): "It is very true what you say about the higher races of men, when high enough, [...] will have spread & exterminated whole nations" (*Sacred Cause*, 318). Their slight misquotation does reveal Darwin's prejudice. It is not as if they are trying to hide it. But it's not quite as severe as the full quotation which elevates Anglo-Saxons and suggests a kind of purification of the human race when the lower races are gone. They have slanted it so that you won't see the full impact of Darwin's view.

While Desmond and Moore never quite call Darwin a racist (they can't, given their basic premise in *Sacred Cause* that Darwin's passionate opposition to slavery was the moral force that created his evolutionary views), they almost admit his racism (the following quotes all come from *Sacred Cause*). The closest they come is in such comments as "Darwin had ended up calibrating human 'rank' no differently from the rest of his society. After shunning talk of 'high' and 'low' in his youthful evolution notebooks, he had ceased to be unique or interesting on the subject" (318). They acknowledge that his anthropology was "bolstered by the bigotry of the day" (368) and that his science (of man) was "shaped by the race-judging attitudes of his culture" (147-48). They do spot a number of his prejudices against savages (particularly his low opinion of their morality) and conclude, "The racial slant left the *Descent of Man* scarcely like a book on 'human evolution' as we think of it today" (370). There is also a hidden admission of racism in this comment: "Natural selection was now predicated on the weaker being

extinguished. Individuals, races even, had to perish for progress to occur" (151). I think they have just about stated that racism influenced his science, but they may disagree.

(Earlier, Desmond and Moore were more conflicted about this. In 2004, in their introduction to Darwin's *Descent*, they tried to soften this racism into "British gentlemanliness" and "legitimizing the virtues by which upper-class Victorians placed themselves at the apex of civilization" [xxxix]. But then they also vaguely implied that Darwin was influenced by "the racist and supremacist ideology of mid-Victorian times" [xliv]. I should also note that the focus of Desmond and Moore on Darwin's anti-slavery stance really applies to only one point: It could have influenced his commitment to proving that we all have one common ancestor. But *everything else* in Darwin---the variety of species, the dominance of the better adapted or the stronger, extinction, the disappearance of smaller, weaker groups, the success of the widely spread species---points to a belief in inequality and has nothing to do with anti-slavery views. Tony Barta has the better point: "Before Darwin understood species, he understood genocide" ["Mr Darwin's Shooters", 117]--understood it and accepted it. Natural selection, which weeds out the feebler in favor of the stronger, is more closely allied to what Darwin learned about colonizers exterminating the savages and has nothing to do with being anti-legalized-slavery. Barta's essay appeared in 2005 and seems to have influenced the realization of Desmond and Moore that Darwin was harsher than they originally thought.)

It is also important to spell out what kind of racist Darwin was not. He avoided the use of nasty epithets to describe savages, though he made his revulsion at their way of life quite plain, as we will see. Even if he thought a group was inferior, he was capable of judging individuals on their own merit because he knew there was considerable variation within each group. He did not use his prejudices about a group to taint his judgment of an individual, nor did he lump all the dark races into one bag. He saw differences wherever he went. But he did use, or misuse, his science to claim that some groups were inferior in intellect, in morality, and in the struggle for survival. He made their extermination inevitable and expressed no qualms about it. It cannot be stressed enough that *Darwin was convinced this extinction of native peoples was the result of a biological process, namely, natural selection, and not injustice*. There is plenty of evidence in *The Descent of Man* to justify all these insights about Darwin.

It is tempting to blame this kind of thinking on natural selection, but the fact

is that Darwin brought this to natural selection rather than natural selection giving it to him. He put racism into natural selection; it is not inherent in the theory itself. This goes way back for Darwin. He was ranking organisms and exterminating the inferior or unfit almost as soon as he began his evolutionary speculations *before* natural selection occurred to him. Natural selection may have intensified these ideas, but they were in his mind in advance of natural selection entering the picture. Recall the quotations from his *Diary* which I offered in the second chapter. In one, he regarded the enthusiasm for a war of extermination against South American Indians as "natural enough" (in Sept. 1833) and the other was a matter of fact comment on the disappearance of Indians from some islands as "one step to the final extermination of the Indian race in S. America" (in Jan. 1835). These are several years before the idea of natural selection blossomed in his mind.

The basic evolutionary idea (which is racist free) is that species are transmuting in order to adapt to a changing environment, with implications that transmutation points back to a common origin for all living creatures. This was not original to Charles Darwin. It was a brilliant insight shared by a number of people, including his grandfather Erasmus Darwin, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (both reviewed in Ch. 8) and perhaps a handful of other naturalists. Darwin took their ideas with him into the field on his *Beagle* voyage (Dec. 1831- Oct. 1836). After the voyage, he continued exploring their ideas on transmutation in his Notebooks from January 1837 up to September 1838 when he came up with natural selection. In these early Notebooks, you can see him putting his own unique spin on evolution, in particular by emphasizing the role of extinction and the principle of adapt or die---the species or races that die being the inferior or unfit ones.

Common origin was especially intriguing to Erasmus Darwin. Gradual change, or nature never making any leaps, grabbed Lamarck's attention. These were also very important to Charles Darwin. His predecessors offered some evidence for these theories. Charles Darwin was more thorough and meticulous. He was looking for even more evidence to substantiate these views and ultimately to establish the laws that would explain all of nature. But failure to adapt, leading to extinction, an idea that was not present so much in the thinking of Lamarck and Erasmus Darwin, was already far more important to Charles Darwin: "... certain physical changes at last become unfit, the animal cannot change quick enough & perishes" (Notebook C 153; probably around three to four months before natural selection appears in his thoughts). He keeps coming back to the importance of extinction as he ponders these matters in the early Notebooks.

Fitness and unfitness, as he says in the letter to Lyell, are as important for

the mind as for the body. This is his position already in the Notebooks. Darwin sees gradations in both intellectual and physical faculties and tries very hard to rope every mental attribute---instincts, emotions, morals, habits, reasoning---into one vast scheme of gradual improvements. "My theory is a bold theory. which attempts to explain, or asserts to be explicable every instinct in animals" (D 26); reason would be an outgrowth of the instincts, "instincts alter, reason is formed" (D 36).

Human races are no exception, but more evidence of the same. "We see gradation to mans mind in Vertebrate Kindgdom in more instincts in rodents than in other animals & again in *Mans mind, in different races, being unequally developed*" (Notebook C 196; my emphasis). He follows this with references to "Elephant intellectually developed" and "Man amongst Monkeys". He brought the idea of unequal development to natural selection, not the other way around. Darwin is doing two very different things here. On the one hand, he is trying to understand the development of human beings in continuity with other parts of nature. That part is well and good. On the other hand, he is ordering and ranking organisms from lower to higher and looking for biological signs of inequality. It is a key point to remember that Darwin had preformed ideas about natural inequalities which influenced his evolutionary thinking.

Darwin also stressed the principle of adapt or die. As he says in D 49, about fish, "for a very old variety will be harder to vary, & therefore more apt to be extinguished.---???" Or as he said at C 153, quoted above, "... unfit, the animal cannot change quick enough & perishes." Adapt or die. "With respect to future destinies of mankind, some of species or varieties are becoming extinct" (D 38; though he makes an exception for African Negroes who are "not loosing ground"). This is implicit in "*Mans mind, in different races, being unequally developed*" (C 196).

Scientific racism has little to do with science. The racism precedes the science. Racist assumptions are made (e.g., about a hierarchy of human cultures) and then people look for something "scientific" to back it up. The science is irrelevant and bogus (at least as applied to humanity), but the racist feelings guiding it, or its misuse, are very real.

From the very beginning, even before natural selection became the primary vehicle of his thoughts, it was adapt or die, and, for Darwin, this applied as much to human groups as to any other segment of nature. You have to die, disappear, if you don't fit in. Darwin does not spell out all his beliefs in these Notebooks, but one implication seems to be that natives have to adapt to European culture or die. The local environment could not have been the main issue, as the inhabitants had successfully adapted to that thousands of years

ago. Most likely, Darwin had in mind their inability, or refusal, to adapt to European invasion, the superior culture. European imperialism is neither just nor unjust for Darwin. It is simply a natural event that has to be accepted and adapted to. Resistance is futile. The message could not be any more stark.

This was his tendency before natural selection. Natural selection may have had a dramatic impact on his thinking because it gave him a specific mechanism to work with, but extinction and adapt or die, applied ruthlessly to human groups, were prominent in his Notebooks *before* that.

~ 3 ~

Darwin did believe all human beings had a lot in common (like emotions) and he thought many differences were trivial (like skin color and hair texture). But intelligence, moral values, and cultural accomplishments were not trivial differences. They had serious consequences.

The recognition of individual worth is probably the most liberal thing about Darwin. But he tended to see this in people who adapted to European ways. So why wouldn't he be sensitive to human dignity in slaves? Many, if not most, slaves spoke the language of their masters, dressed in a more or less European style, and converted to Christianity. But Aborigines who resisted acculturation to European civilization remained abhorrent to him. It is tempting to say that Darwin was a cultural racist, except for the fact that he made it biological as well.

It also has to be said that Darwin never criticized racism in other scientists or made any attempt to distance himself from those who were more severely racist than he was---not in his published writings nor in his private letters and Notebooks. He took seriously all speculation and half-facts for the superiority of white people. He rarely rejected any argument for this. His friend Thomas Huxley was much more outspoken in his racism, trumpeting the higher abilities of the white race. Darwin said not a critical word about his views. Robert Knox, a notorious racist, is favorably quoted a few times in *The Descent of Man* as are others. (Interestingly, in his book on scientific racism, *The Mismeasure of Man*, Stephen Gould never discusses Huxley or Knox on this issue. He does quote one of the more outrageous racist statements of Huxley, as the epigraph for Chapter 3, but offers no follow-up comments.) In contrast to Huxley, Knox, and others, Darwin was not an ostentatious racist. He was much quieter, but it is there.

Despite the fact that Darwin read authors who pointed out the harmfulness of racism (e.g., James Bonwick and Georg Gerland), he paid no attention. Racism was a non-issue for Darwin, which probably explains why he ignored it in other scientists.

Scattered throughout *Descent* are many instances where we are reminded that Darwin was as fascinated as any of his contemporary scientists with finding measurable physical differences between the races of man as well as the sexes. Yes, he was also looking for commonalities so that he could prove all human beings were descended from lower life forms, but variations were equally compelling to him. Thus, he is quite satisfied (I won't say happy) to point out that the third eyelid, which is found in many birds, reptiles, and fish, is "a mere rudiment" in man, but "apparently somewhat larger in Negroes and Australians than in Europeans" (*Descent*, 35 n35) and also that "the dark-coloured races [have] a finer sense of smell than the white races," even though they don't need it for survival (35, text and n36). He does not blare out the implication, but leaves us with a distinct sense that savages (of generally darker color) are closer to wild animals than white Europeans are.

Darwin is not even averse to citing skull measurements, comparing men and women in all races and drawing conclusions for the lower races. He notes that there may be "extraordinary mental activity" in animals with small brains, like the ant, but then goes on to assert, "The belief that there exists in man some close relation between the size of the brain and the development of the intellectual faculties is supported by the comparison of the skulls of savage and civilised races ..." (*Descent*, 74). Reasoning power is more advanced in the civilized; "with the less civilised nations reason often errs ..." (681).

It is well-known that Darwin thought women were inferior to men in mental capacities. Citing his cousin Francis Galton's work, he concludes ".,, the average of mental power in man must be above that of woman" and just prior to this, "with woman the powers of intuition, of rapid perception, and perhaps of imitation, are more strongly marked than in man; but some, at least, of these faculties are characteristic of the lower races, and therefore of a past and lower state of civilisation" (*Descent*, 629). A little further on (631 n. 26), he favorably quotes Karl Vogt (one of the scientists with problematic racist views whom Gould brings up in *Mismeasure*) on "a remarkable circumstance" that the difference in cranial capacity between the sexes increases with the development of race "so that the male European excels much more the female, than the negro the negress." Darwin notes Vogt's admission that more observations on this are needed, but you can tell that Darwin is happy (here, I think this is the right word) to relate such evidence, putting males and females closer together among savages than among Europeans and thus putting savages closer to the animal world. He soft peddles such racism compared to the way others made use of the same "information", but his tendency is unmistakable.

In all these comments, Darwin participates in a questionable science (pay

attention in *Mismeasure* to how often Gould points out that there was little to no evidence to support such assertions about brain size and intellect). He does not overindulge in this kind of thinking and does not flaunt the conclusion. He is a relatively quiet, unassuming racist, but at the same time, he never notices how much European intellectuals *predisposed* themselves to see these sexual and racial differences.

Nineteenth century *mainstream* science was terribly infected with racial and gender-biased views. The perpetrators of this were not outsiders. They were the well-respected scientific leaders of the time (as Gould too recognizes in *Mismeasure*; e.g., in his observation, 108-09, that Francis Galton was not "some dotty Victorian eccentric" but "a leading intellect of his time"). Very few expressed any misgivings about this. Darwin certainly did not. Not only did Darwin proffer his own racist ideas, his silence on more severe racism in others is extraordinary and telling. He simply erased racism as a problem that must be faced. More importantly: If you ask the question whether Darwin was a biological racist, the answer is decidedly yes. In the first place, because he uses a biological theory, natural selection, to prove the evolved, innate superiority of white Europeans, and in the second, because he is keen on using physical and behavioral differences to score points for the white races.

Occasionally, Darwin could express admiration for a non-European race. In a July 3, 1832 entry in his *Beagle Diary* (80), which was not reproduced in any of the published incarnations, he gives a favorable assessment of African slaves in Brazil. He judges "they will ultimately be the rulers" and draws this conclusion in part "from clearly seeing their intellects have been much underrated." In his enthusiasm for the slaves of Brazil, Darwin made what is probably his most radical statement on behalf of any slaves, in a letter to his sister Catherine, finding himself "almost wishing for Brazil to follow the example of Hayti [where a slave rebellion had occurred]; & considering the enormous healthy looking black population, it will be wonderful [i.e., amazing, unbelievable] if at some future day it does not take place" (CCD 1.313; May to July, 1833). It is a striking comment because almost wishing for revolution was very atypical for Darwin. It sounds more like his grandfather. The mature Charles Darwin was much more cautious, as when he joined the Jamaica Committee close to a year after it was formed to protest Governor Eyre's brutal suppression of the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica and seven months after a Royal Commission had published its scathing report of the events (discussed more fully in §4 of next chapter; Darwin's friends Huxley and Lyell had joined only a month before he did).

In the letter to his sister, he says that his voyage so far has only given him "a much higher estimate of the Negro character.---it is impossible to see a

negro & not feel kindly towards him; such cheerful, open honest expressions & such fine muscular bodies" (CCD 1.312-13). This too is unusual. In general, Darwin does not see intellectual equality or any favorable comparisons between Europeans and other races in the world. A more typical comment from Darwin was made while in Mauritius. "With respect to the negroes, they appeared a very inferior race of men to those of Brazil, & as I believe, of the W. Indies: they come from Madagascar & the Zanzibar coast" (*Diary*, 420). I believe that the main thing which prompted his higher opinion of some Negroes was that they had adapted to European civilization. Indigenous peoples or savages who resisted western encroachment would be another story altogether.

When it came to savages, Darwin, like others of his time, can wonder which savage tribe is the lowest. He was not alone in choosing the Fuegians. "I believe, in this extreme part of South America, man exists in a lower state of improvement than in any other part of the world" (*Narrative*, 235n; *Voyage*, 194). In his *Diary* (222; Feb. 25, 1834), he described six Fuegians he had seen in a canoe: "I never saw more miserable creatures; stunted in their growth, their hideous faces bedaubed with white paint & quite naked ... their red skins filthy & greasy, their hair entangled, their voices discordant, their gesticulation violent & without any dignity ... one can hardly make oneself believe that they are fellow creatures placed in the same world" (also in *Narrative*, 235; cf. *Descent*, 689). In that note in *Narrative* (235n), he considers how they compare to the Australian Aborigines (this same passage is incorporated into the text in *Voyage*, 194, where he acknowledges that he is basing this on what he has read about the Australians). Australians have more acquirements (boomerang, spear, hunting techniques, etc.), but "it by no means follows that he should likewise be so in capabilities ['mental capacity' in *Voyage*, 194]. Indeed, from what we saw of the Fuegians ... I should think the case was the reverse." He has a hard time deciding who is the lowest. Never mind that others who had spent much time close to Aborigines had a very different, higher opinion of them (as I review below).

(This western tendency to rank, judge, and compare races or any groups is still very much with us. In *A Troublesome Inheritance*, 64 [cf. 135, 222, 225, 246], Nicholas Wade ranks Australian Aborigines at the bottom, using state-building and agriculture, and the social skills that go with these, as his criteria. Niall Ferguson in *Civilization*, 5, claims that not to recognize the clear superiority and dominance of western civilization is "demonstrably absurd.")

Another likely reason for the above exceptional estimation of Brazilian slaves is that Darwin was opposed to slavery and needed to make its inhumanity as obvious as possible. That was exactly the same concern that

many others expressed regarding imperialism's treatment of Aborigines, including the colonial oppression and extermination of savages. As Darwin sometimes did for slaves, humanitarians had no problem seeing savages in a better light. It helped to promote their cause of justice for Aborigines. Darwin did not join them in their cause or in their views of Aboriginal capabilities. Several examples from 1807 to 1841 will help make the point.

It should first be said that sometimes humanitarians were writing from their own experience and sometimes they were offering hearsay (which Darwin often relied on). But for my purposes it does not matter where their information came from. The point is that there were lots of stories about savages floating around out there. There weren't only negative depictions of indigenous peoples. There were many complimentary portraits in circulation too. You did not have to look very hard to find them. If you just kept your eyes and ears open, you would come across them everywhere. Every travel book by the humanely inclined contained such accounts. What kind of stories someone chose to pay attention to tells us a lot about that person. Darwin chose to listen only to the most negative assessments of indigenes.

I'll begin with Saxe Bannister. I introduced him in the previous chapter as Attorney General in New South Wales in the mid-1820s, who also spent time in other colonies and would be one of the founders of the APS. He is one of my favorite authors from this period, along with Charles Napier and Georg Gerland, because he was such a pure humanitarian. He kept his eye on justice as the principle, almost the only, thing that mattered in relations with indigenous peoples. "Justice surely is the same, whether we are dealing with the strong, or with the weak; with the well-informed, or with the ignorant" (*Humane* [1830], 43). Or as he put it in a paper submitted to the Select Committee, "the power of law must be pushed ahead of the power of destruction" (*Report*, "Minutes", 15). The same can be said, or rephrased, for scientific observation: The power to accurately observe depends on the power of justice being pushed ahead first---which is the reason why I am reviewing Bannister's humanitarian stance before I get to his opinion of the character of natives.

Bannister urged the Committee that "perfect equality of rights should be declared by law and enforced in the courts for the natives" (*Report*, "Minutes", 19, #6). He could even anticipate that eventually natives should be allowed to serve as judges (*ibid.*). Bear in mind that he would not have made these recommendations if he did not think natives were intelligent. He suggested that since the Colonial Office had a conflict of interest in representing both the colonists and the natives, an independent body should oversee the Colonial Office and look out for the interests of the natives, and

this body should include colored people (15). He also proposed, "When judgments cannot be executed against oppressors of the natives, the governors should indemnify the oppressed" (18). Almost all these recommendations and more were repeated in his book *British Colonization and Coloured Tribes* (273-98). In the book, he compared the problem of protecting Aborigines to that of protecting "the emancipated negroes" (284). Emancipation was only the first step.

Bannister knew that colonialism could not be undone and, like all humanitarians, he struggled with this unsolvable dilemma of how we can be fair in our colonizing drive when colonization itself is unfair. Despite the deep contradiction, he was daring enough to suggest (admittedly in a statement he made only once) that if we cannot master the art of living with natives without destroying them, "it would be a paramount duty to discourage the extension of colonies" (*Humane* [1830], vi), but he did not stick to that. Further on (86-87), he goes back on this by arguing that restraining expansion is impractical, so that regulating it would be the better alternative (also in the Appendix to *Colonization*, he makes it clear that ending new colonization is impractical). He is even stronger on this in his 1840 *Humane Policy* where he writes that "the attempt so unwisely persevered in by the philanthropists [i.e., by some humanitarians] to check colonial enterprise, instead of guiding it, is the most to be lamented" (35). If we try to restrain colonists from acquiring new lands, the result, he argues, will be "to turn them into ungoverned and frequently marauding adventurers" (*ibid.*). What we need is to found "the extension of British colonization, upon a just and wise system" (*ibid.*). What Bannister was opposed to was "greedy and unprincipled colonizations" (*Colonization*, 15). As he says in *Humane* (1840), "By proper measures, the excesses of colonists might be controlled" (35).

More than half a century earlier in 1769, Granville Sharp seemed to go further than Bannister would, by expressing a wish that if "such abominable wickedness!" as mutilating slaves, severing limbs, and killing them could not be prevented, then "It were better for the English nation, that these American dominions had never existed, or even that they should have been sunk into the sea ..." (*Representation*, 73n). He would undo British colonialism, and this was in its earliest stages. Was this too much idealism? Too much passion? Overblown rhetoric? I think Sharp had an excellent point to make, not very different from Bannister's, even if Bannister expressed it more pragmatically in terms of restraining abuses instead of outright banning.

For Sharp, the public good should override the profits of everyone involved in slavery (75) and there is no greater public good than justice extended to all mankind. Sharp was not opposed to profit-making. He was

opposed to using profits to justify or hide outrageous violations of English laws and the constitution. He loved English common law because, as he saw it, it strove for justice and compassion, and it could be made most secure by applying it to all people, regardless of rank, station, parentage, color, or country of origin (see 36, 51, 71-72, 137). Thus, "The law of England acts upon general and extensive principles: it gives liberty, rightly understood, that is, protection, to a Jew, a Turk, or a Heathen ..." (137). Sharp was basically asking whether in new, young colonies, could we not make a course correction at the very beginning in favor of justice? He must have known he was dreaming that justice could come first before the economic self-interest of colonizers. It was not the last time someone thought that, though dream this may be, perhaps such dreams alone could inspire us to transform the world. In the end, both Sharp and Bannister were pleading for the cause of justice.

Bannister also strongly believed that money should be of no concern in implementing "any new system ... capable of protecting and civilizing the aborigines in and near the colonies" because the inhumane approach was far more expensive in the violence it engendered and the loss of peaceful trade it caused (*Report*, "Minutes", 14-15; also in *Colonization*, 273-74). This was a point he made frequently: racism and violence towards natives were irrational as they wrought a terrible costliness to society. Encouraging any system in which "millions went for war, a few thousands only for civilization" (*Report*, "Minutes", 9) was unwise as far as Bannister was concerned. His idealism was really no different than Sharp's. I suppose too one could argue that if any attempt at justice, no matter how small, is going to be blocked, one might as well go for it whole hog, as each of these activists did in their own way.

Bannister's concern for justice for Aborigines was so strong that he recommended that native "laws and usages" should be considered in colonial courts and that there should be no capital punishment or corporal punishment of any kind for natives (*Colonization*, 280). He offers no reasons for the latter, so I can only guess that he thought the death penalty was too often dealt out unfairly on natives (especially one must consider how unfair this was when native testimony was not allowed in court). Perhaps he also understood that the severity of white justice was in stark contrast to native customs which usually demanded fines being paid to victims or the families of victims rather than vicious floggings and executions. In general, Bannister wanted to bend the existing system the other way, so that it did not serve the greed and cruelty of the white colonists.

He was known for his "generous scheme[s]" on behalf of natives, which in one case prompted under-secretary James Stephen (a very strong humanitarian when it came to the emancipation of slaves and combating the

racism underlying slavery) to suggest to the Secretary for the Colonies that Bannister "was suffering from mental aberration!" (Uys, 26).

It makes one wonder whether Bannister was speaking about himself or others when he wrote that "every species of neglect and persecution is heaped on the men" who complain of "these notorious facts", that is, injustices and atrocities (*Colonization*, 258-59). This was in 1838. I think it more likely that he had others in mind, or both himself and others, as even earlier in 1822, he took special note of "the failure of '*encouragement*'" of favorable plans for the Indians as proposed by another (*Remarks*, 32; his emphasis). Interestingly, Bannister accuses under-secretaries of state and ex-governors of colonies of too much influence on the reports of committees of Parliament which make "apologies for the abuses of power; and ... the neglect of plain and deserved accusations against the real delinquents" (*Colonization*, 259), but whether this was said in response to Stephen's remark or prompted the remark is something I don't know. Another contemporary, missionary James Backhouse, said that in Australia, "at Swan River persons have been subjected to great contumely, in consequence of pleading the cause of the blacks, and exposing the atrocities committed upon them" (*Extracts*, March, 1838, last letter in Fifth Part, 55). These were brave men to endure such ostracism and vilification.

So what did Bannister think of natives? As a lawyer, he paid particular attention to native abilities in this regard. In South Africa, he was impressed by their skill in legal arguments. He had heard of one tribe, the Koussas, who were known for being great lawyers and would "hold mock debates, in order to be the better prepared when real business arises" (*Humane* [1830], 45). He also quoted a South African colonist who had experience with natives at trade fairs and spoke favorably in 1820 of the Griquas who "were a thinking people, possessed more knowledge than their white neighbours, were ready to listen to reason, and to yield their assent to the force of argument" (118n). Another witness to the behavior of various tribes at another 1820 fair remarked that though these people "can only be considered in a great measure as savages, [yet they] vied with the colonists in maintaining order and regularity" (120). Bannister believed that it was their deep knowledge of fair legal proceedings that was one of the reasons for "the acuteness with which flagrant injustice is likely to be felt by them" (48).

In paying tribute to the intelligence of indigenes, Bannister recounted what one "savage" (which he put in quotation marks) told a governor in South Africa, "there could be no true peace, if people might not have intercourse with each other" (*Humane* [1830], 149). Bannister's own advice was that "we must be just at every step, and treat the people like rational beings" (162).

Missionary Robert Menli Lyon settled in Australia in 1829. He traveled

widely and had many contacts with Aborigines. In his opinion, as summed up by Henry Reynolds in *This Whispering in Our Hearts*, "In no point were they inferior and in many ways they were superior 'to those of the same grade with themselves in civilized life'. The settlers who insisted they were savage were 'entirely ignorant of their manner and disposition'" (72; Reynolds is quoting from Lyon's 1839 book *Australia: An Appeal to the World on Behalf of the Younger Branch of the Family of Shem*). It was not only ignorance as we will shortly see.

In a book Darwin read, in Volume 2 (1841) of his *Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery*, George Grey (whom I briefly mentioned in the last chapter) writes of the Australian Aborigines that they "have been most unfairly represented as a very inferior race, in fact as one occupying a scale in the creation which nearly places them on a level with the brutes ... certainly a more unfounded [prejudice] never had possession of the public mind" (2.367). He includes a report he wrote in 1840 for the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in which he says that he found the Aborigines "as apt and intelligent as any other race of men I am acquainted with; they are subject to the same affections, appetites and passions as other men ..." (2.374).

Unfortunately, Grey does not give examples of what signs he saw that convinced him of this. It might have had to do with their ability to adapt to European culture, and if so, he was not unlike Darwin in the way Darwin regarded slaves. Grey continues his report by arguing that philanthropists (i.e., humanitarians) have promoted a bad idea that natives should be allowed to continue to live by their own customs as much as possible. Grey is convinced that it is their customs, and not lack of intelligence, which keeps them in a state of barbarism. (Lyon too was convinced it was their environment and not deficiency in intelligence which limited them; Reynolds, *Whispering*, 72.) He believes that English law should be imposed and that Aborigines are more than capable of appreciating the laws and complying.

He had the same concerns when he was Governor in New Zealand (1845-53) and then Governor at the Cape Colony in South Africa (1854-61). But his practice did not approach what his anti-racist views would suggest. Alan Ward says that "although Grey trumpeted loudly about extending English law over the Maori he did not intend to apply it if he was uncertain whether they would submit" (Ward, 75). His record in New Zealand and at the Cape was mixed to say the least. He was not above using the military and imposing martial law to deal with the Maori (73). His concerns for them were more paternalistic; he never made sufficient efforts to include them in positions of power (86). Like other officials, he was more concerned with grabbing their land (88). So I am not sure how deep his anti-racism went.

J.B. Peires would agree with Ward and is even more severe. He calls Grey "a fake humanitarian and a fake explorer who did not relish being shown up by the real thing" (Peires, 51). Grey had "nothing but contempt" for Maori culture (49). His real objective was always "to extend the territories of the British Empire ... while at the same time paying lip service to the moral commitments ... inherited from the anti-slavery movement" (46). Peires says Grey used "court martials, transportations, summary justice and even ... mass starvation" (ibid.)---"a lethal combination of brute force and barefaced lies" (50). "The Maoris of New Zealand suffered most. Through Grey's agency, they lost six million acres of the disputed North Island and all South Island's thirty million acres" (50). The Xhosa in South Africa did not fare much better, as Grey used "Forced labour, arbitrary court-martial, unprovoked invasion and land theft on an unprecedented scale" (324). "[N]o Governor did more to break the independence and steal the land of the Maori and the Xhosa than Sir George Grey" (46).

No one would hold up George Grey as a model humanitarian or a deep anti-racist. For the limited point I am making here, none of his very serious defects matter. He did stand opposed to racist views (cf. Peires, 74 n6, who contrasts Grey to a real racist). Peires admits that "his conviction [was] that all men were inherently equal" and "wherever he went he established and endowed schools and hospitals for indigenous people" (45). He is still remembered in South Africa as a Governor who "briefly demonstrated the value and the possibility of harmonious racial integration" (46). The point is that an unrepentant, hands-on imperialist like Grey understood what racism and anti-racism were, and even if he was not always sincere about it, he could express anti-racist views with the full confidence that his contemporary readers would get it. He did this in a book that Darwin read and yet nowhere in his own writings does Darwin show that any of this registered with him.

History provides us with a panorama of humanitarians and anti-racists. Don't expect them all to look alike and sound the same. Just as there are gradations of species, there are gradations within the genus Humanitarian. George Grey was at one end of the spectrum. He gives us the least that we would expect: A recognition that the idea of the inferiority of certain races does not correspond to human reality. Others, like Saxe Bannister and Charles Napier, took it further and drew conclusions about the justice owed to those oppressed by racism and what justice means. Trying to fit Darwin anywhere in this humanitarian range is difficult and may be impossible. He simply does not belong with the humanitarians. His opposition to legal slavery is so limited, it puts him lower than Grey. Being anti-slavery did not illuminate for Darwin a wider view into human nature. He would remain firmly convinced

all his life of the inferiority of savages and the necessity of their elimination.

To continue with my review of anti-racism in Darwin's time: In 1807, in *Some Account of New Zealand*, John Savage found that "The natives of New Zealand, at least the part of it I visited, are of a very superior order, both in point of personal appearance and intellectual endowments" (Savage, 16). Some of his descriptions in the following pages are "undaunted courage", "robust, cheerful, and active", "the appearance of much joy ... with a degree of elegant and reverential solemnity" (in a religious observance), "kind and affectionate", and further on, "... affection is a very prominent feature in the character of a New Zealander" (Savage, 43). In describing the concern of the natives for some women and children who had almost drowned in a boating accident, he writes, "... their kind and soothing attentions, were such as would by no means have disgraced the moral character of the most refined European" (37). Alan Ward points out that the Maori had a concept called *aroha* which means "care or affection beyond the strict call of obligation" (Ward, 100).

In Tahiti, Darwin's companion, Captain Robert FitzRoy, admits that he was at first disposed to be critical, but was soon impressed by the "intellectual ability shown by the chieftains, and by very many of the natives of a lower class" (*Narrative*, 2.528); he also notes their honesty. There must have been some discussion of this amongst the *Beagle* travelers because there is a similar sentence in Darwin's account. After observing Queen Pomare and some chiefs of the island as they held a Parliament to debate the compensation that Britain claimed was owed, due to an incident, it was noticed that they displayed, according to Darwin, "extreme good sense; reasoning powers, moderation, candor & prompt resolution", and he writes, "I believe every one in our party left the meeting with a very different opinion of the Tahitians from what he entertained when entering" (*Diary*, 379). This admission is much too similar to FitzRoy's to be a coincidence, with the one important difference that Darwin does not extend his good opinion to the lower class of natives as FitzRoy does.

Admittedly, Darwin held the Tahitians in higher esteem than he did most savages, but that exception only proves the rule in Darwin's case. As in *The Origin of Species*, and like many of his contemporary scientists, Darwin demonstrates an obsession with ranking groups, as previously noted. He puts the Tahitians at the top, the Fuegians at the bottom, the New Zealanders "but a few degrees higher" (*Diary*, 385), and Australian Aborigines also just a bit less barbaric than the Fuegians (398). For very brief moments, Darwin might sound like he is trying to be fair and positive about savages. In New South Wales, he describes a small band he met on the road as "... good-humoured &

pleasant & they appeared far from such utterly degraded beings as usually represented.---In their own arts they are admirable" (*Diary*, 398). But it has to be kept in mind that Darwin had a low opinion of their arts (throwing spears, tracking animals). Despite their being superior in certain arts to the Fuegians, "it by no means follows that he [the Australian Aborigine] is likewise superior in mental capacity" and it might even be the reverse as he goes on to suggest (*Voyage*, 194).

Darwin is so convinced of the inferiority of savages that it comes as quite a shock to him when he hears missionaries in New Zealand complaining that they had more to fear from other Englishmen than from the natives and that they relied on native chiefs for protection (*Diary*, 384; quoted in previous chapter, §3). Even with all Darwin knew about how badly English convicts behaved, "It is strange" to him to hear the missionaries' complaints because he cannot conceive how natives could be morally better. (The House Select Committee took notice of a case in the Sandwich Islands when sailors on a whaler out of London attacked an American missionary married couple and were "prevented from murdering them only by the promptitude and decision of the natives in coming to their defence," with the chiefs continuing to post guards around their house for several days [*Report*, 18]. The Committee did not express any strong amazement at this.)

As for those "good-humoured" New South Wales Aborigines, Darwin continues, "They will not however cultivate the ground ... or keep ... flocks of sheep ... or build houses & remain stationary" (*Diary*, 398). This makes them only "a few [degrees] lower in barbarism, than the Fuegians," he says. In King George's Sound, Darwin also notes the good humor of the natives and remarks, "Although true Savages, it is impossible not to feel an inclination to like such good-natured men" (*Diary*, 411). But upon witnessing them dance in a "Corrobery", he sees their "nearly naked figures ... all moving in hideous harmony, formed a perfect representation of a festival amongst the lowest barbarians" (*Diary*, 412; in a deleted sentence, he said he imagines that much the same might be observed among some of the natives in southern Africa).

These are some of Darwin's most sympathetic moments with savages---he sees their good humor and good nature---and yet his prejudices cannot help but come to the fore. The last one seems innocent enough. After all, this kind of dancing might have been a shock to him. But anthropologist Johannes Fabian has a revealing insight about this sort of thing. When he was studying European travelogues of exploration in Central Africa at the end of the 19th century, he noticed that many explorers would attempt to make the "strange" landscapes, weather, and nature of Africa look familiar by comparing it to their memories of home. But those "same explorers ... failed to see, say, in the

faces and demeanor of African 'savages,' those of hard-working peasants at home" (Fabian, *Memory*, 68). This is a perfect example of westerners treating, or reacting to, nature and human beings in very different ways, and Darwin did it too. Fabian continues:

Ritual processions accompanied by drumming and dancing, drunken celebrations of important events would strike them as "primitive" rather than remind them of the village festivals or the raucous drinking parties they must have been familiar with (many travelers had small-town or rural origins and most of them were military officers). As far as human Africa was concerned, exploration depended on forgetting as denial of re-cognition. [68-69]

Despite his sophistication and his own professed belief that humans should be treated as any other part of nature, what Darwin shared with these explorers was a denial or forgetting that these "savages" were behaving in ways comparable to the ways of some Europeans back home. Darwin felt as a European that he was perfectly entitled to do this. Rather than see they were just like us in many ways, rather than compare them to the familiar in his own world as he might do with flora and fauna, Darwin often saw only the hideous in native peoples. He had trouble remembering how human the "hideous" is.

As a contrast to this, here is Joseph Thomson on his travels in Central Africa from 1878-80, describing natives dancing: "The feet stamp into the ground, like the hoofs of circus-horses, and arms and legs are thrown about in that alarming manner only to be seen in Parisian dancing-gardens" (1.96). Thomson can compare what he has seen to something similar in Paris. He resorts to his own prior experiences to see the human in these natives. Perhaps this is not the best example as Thomson hated Paris (see Rotberg, 129), but at least he could see that "savage" behavior was not confined to so-called savage nations. (Thomson's insights were not just limited to native rituals. In other places in his narrative, he also sees their intelligence which is "beyond question" in one instance [1.140].)

In a deeper way, here is Alfred Wallace doing the same. When natives came around to gaze at him, he could compare that to his curiosity about them and even accord them the dignity of seeing scientists in them. "A few years before I had been one of the gazers at the Zoolus and the Aztecs in London. Now the tables were turned upon me, for I was to these people a new and strange variety of man, and had the honour of affording to them, in my own person, an attractive exhibition, gratis" (*Malay*, 2.144). In his original journal, he expresses this in more striking fashion, with the last words after 'my own

person' being "an instructive lesson in comparative Ethnology" (see Sloten, 131-32). He could see they were Ethnologists like himself. It is not that Wallace never expresses disgust at some of the native customs and habits he sees. (This was also true of Thomson who could write, "Now if there is one thing on this earth I abhor it is a dance by almost nude savages," [1.244-45]. His reaction to these native women dancing around him was quite visceral. He turned away, he stuffed his fingers in his ears, and at last ran to his tent where "I crammed my head into the blankets.") It is rather that Wallace is also capable of seeing natives on the heights of humanity, right alongside Europeans (so too Thomson). I have not seen anything comparable in Darwin. (Thomson did not maintain his anti-racist attitude, a sad fact that I will return to.)

There is a very concrete reason why man cannot be made exactly a part of nature like any other part---a point Fabian brings out everywhere in *Out of Our Minds*. Scientific inquiry, as understood by western intellectuals, has always insisted on distance between observer and the observed. But you cannot truly understand other human beings by keeping your distance. You have to engage with them and make some attempt to experience things their way. (These last few points I owe to Fabian.) That is what travelers like Wallace and Thomson occasionally do. They attempt to break down the distance between themselves and the Other. Keeping your distance lends itself to racism. The anti-racist would obliterate or at least modify distance and disconnection, the racist would reinforce them. (This relates to what I said seventeen pages back on Granville Sharp's insight into disconnecting races and the harm this does.) The 'polished savage' was another way to see connections between the so-called civilized world and the uncivilized. In his treatment of other cultures, Darwin constantly emphasized the disconnect between savages and Europe's civilized (such as his insistence that the civilized would save a drowning stranger, while a savage would never do that; see *Descent*, 134).

It is also important to realize that keeping one's distance and objectivity are not the same thing. Distance is no guarantee of objectivity. It is more useful with flora and fauna than with human beings. Distancing is often just another subjective approach, another way the observer chooses to impose him- or herself, along with one's values, on the subject being studied. Distance often implies the superiority of the observer, which undermines objective results like nothing else can. All these problems pervade Darwin's anthropology and have generally been swept under the rug by the scholarly world. (In Chapter 11, we will see that the same problem of keeping Aborigines at a distance pervaded legal developments; e.g., literally keeping them at a distance by not

allowing them to testify in court.)

Darwin's other remark above about Aborigines not cultivating the ground or building houses and remaining stationary is based on the ideology which European invaders and conquerors used to justify their own sense of superiority and their right to dispossess natives of their land. This is not just neutral observation Darwin is engaged in. Before his own evolutionary views were well under way (this is before he started keeping Notebooks on his return home, though he was already thinking about transmutation of species as espoused by Erasmus Darwin and Jean-Baptiste Lamarck), Darwin had brought with him an ideological bias as to what evidence was worth selecting and drawing conclusions from. Darwin did not so much conclude from unbiased data that savages were inferior as bring the idea of inferiority with him into his observed data. Natural selection for Darwin would not be just a scientific idea but a program of European conquest. It would often serve as a synonym, a disguised synonym, for this conquest. *On the Origin of Species* would be in part an objective work of science but also very much in part a work to further the goals of conquering nations. *Origin* is a schizophrenic book, as I will argue in Chapter 6. (For an excellent essay which also proposes that Darwin had ideological predispositions that affected his science, see Barry Butcher in Macleod, 371-94.) The evolutionary thinkers who came before Darwin (to be discussed in Chapters 8 and 9) did not bend their theory to suit imperialism.

Not everyone shared this opinion that nomadic habits were due to the inferiority of savages. Some thought injustice by whites might have a little something to do with it. In her 1881 book, Helen Hunt quoted from the report of a commission appointed by President Grant in 1869: "Why should the Indian be expected to plant corn, fence lands, build houses, or do anything but get food from day to day, when experience has taught him that the product of his labor will be seized by the white man to-morrow?" (Hunt, 339). The same opinion that a nomadic lifestyle was a response prompted by unjust treatment was expressed by Georg Gerland in 1868 about natives in general (Gerland, 114) and Saxe Bannister likewise in two of his books (*Humane* [1830], 194, with respect to Hottentots in South Africa; and in 1822, in *Remarks*, 30-31, concerning North American Indians). In the 1822 book, Bannister cited a writer who in 1803 said, "Doubtless, ill usage often drives them to such a [nomadic] life," and then went on to make the point that their wandering life was comparable to "attempting to shake off the yoke of a tyrant. The act only proves worthiness of character by indicating a love of freedom."

Darwin never showed sensitivity to any of these thoughts. Though Darwin read Gerland's book, it did not shake his conviction that restless habit, "a relic

of barbarism is a great check to civilisation" (*Descent*, 162), or as he also said, "Nomadic habits ... have in every case been highly detrimental [to progress]" (158). His references to a nomadic life in *Descent* always contain hints of disparagement and never suggest that it might have been a response to injustice. It was always a bad thing in Darwin's eyes and a sign of an inferior civilization. This was a cultural prejudice that Darwin would not budge from.

Not only is Darwin's cultural context important when assessing his ideas about savages, but also the context of his wider thoughts. Writers will approvingly quote Darwin's admiration of the savage ability to imitate actions and even the sounds of a language they did not understand. "All savages appear to possess, to an uncommon degree, this power of mimicry" (*Voyage*, 174; his remarks here are expanded from a brief comment in *Diary*, 124). He acknowledges they are far superior to Europeans in this. But one has to know that Darwin did not think very much of the power of imitation. He considered it, along with intuition and rapid perception, natural to women and savages but not indicative of a high intelligence: "some, at least, of these faculties are characteristic of the lower races, and therefore of a past and lower state of civilisation" (*Descent*, 629).

In an Addenda to his volume of the *Beagle* journey, volume 2 of *Narrative*, FitzRoy says the Patagonian Indians have something like "courts of justice" (2.695). Earlier, FitzRoy quotes from Jesuit Thomas Falkner's accounts of Indians in South America and their habit of calling councils in emergency situations (2.165). All of this requires a fair degree of intelligence. Darwin twice refers to Falkner in his *Diary* (183, 193), but only for his naturalist observations and not for information about Indians. As far as I know, Darwin gave no thought to how savages govern themselves (the Tahitians being the one exception). Instead, he categorically asserts of the Fuegians "they had no government" (*Descent*, 689). One feels it is his considered opinion of most savages. In 1838, he described savages as "roasting his parent, naked, artless, not improving yet improvable" (Notebook C 79). He offers no sense of intelligence or self-governance in them. That is quite a contrast to what the genuine humanitarians of this time were saying.

Henry Reynolds provides some examples of missionaries to Australia whose close contact with natives gave them a higher opinion of their intelligence. R.W. Newland in 1840 expressed the belief that "finer formed men and more brilliant intellects are not to be found than some among the Natives around us" (quoted in *Whispering*, 28). William Watson "believed the Aborigines would eventually 'equal if not outshine some of the now civilized and polished nations of Europe'" (ibid.; from Watson's journal in 1832; note the slightly pejorative use of 'polished' again). In 1836, George Robinson

wrote "they have as much interlect [*sic*] as their opponents---the whites" (ibid.). And in 1839, Lyon defiantly commented, "I have seen them in almost all the common walks of life---I have met them by accident in the lonely desert---I have met them by appointment---I have walked and conversed with them---I have eaten, I have drunk, I have slept with them ... and, after all this, I am to be told that I have no premises on which to ground my conclusions and form an estimate of their character" (26).

William Darling, whose 1833 letter to the Colonial Secretary I quoted from in the last chapter, brought out a crucial point. He told the Secretary that the natives of Van Diemen's Land (who will later be called the Tasmanians) have unfairly "been called *bloodthirsty* and *ferocious* Savages" (P, W, 998; his emphases). If they have been violent, he argues, it is only because of the provocation and brutal treatment they have received from civilized savages. In Darling's opinion, they are "a *brave* and *patriotic* people" (999; his emphases; in *Descent*, 157, Darwin considers these important elements in human societies). What is interesting is that Darling clearly identifies from whence derives this constant characterization of so-called savages as bloodthirsty. It is pure racism: "all these acts of cruelty towards them, have no doubt been looked upon by the perpetrators, as acts of *necessity* or at all events *justifiable*, as being practised upon *ignorant blacks* while their's [the natives'] towards us have been attributed to a delight in bloodshed; that such is very far from being their disposition I have had full opportunity of judging" (999; his emphases). Racism (i.e., their presumed ignorance and inferiority) is used to justify violence towards black natives and it is used to misjudge them as vicious practitioners of violence. (Recall the letter to Hooker, quoted in §6 of previous chapter, in which Darwin states his conviction that the natives in Morocco are bloodthirsty, though he admits he knows nothing about them; and even when he met some, as in New Zealand, the twinkling in their eye indicated to him only "cunning & ferocity" [*Diary*, 384].)

To top it off, I could do no better than to present Charles Napier's *Colonization: Particularly in Southern Australia*, published in 1835, which gives us a sustained critique of racism for its misjudgment of natives. Napier demonstrates an abhorrence of genocide as well. If John Haller thought that critical thinking about racial inferiority was impossible in the 19th century (quoted at the end of the previous chapter), Napier alone proves him wrong (and if I had to add a second, I would remind everyone of the previously cited 1868 book by Georg Gerland who used the word *Hochmuth*, arrogance, and particularly *starren Raçenhochmuth*, rigid racial arrogance, to describe racism). Napier's book and Gerland's should be required reading for anyone who believes that racism is an anachronistic concept for the 19th century or for

those who, like Stephen Gould, believe that "All [the policymakers of Darwin's day] were racists by modern standards" (*Mismeasure*, 422). They were not all racists back then.

Napier was a famous British military hero. He had been offered the position of Governor of a new colony to be established in southern Australia. In the introduction to *Colonization*, he explains why he turned it down (basically, they would not meet his requirements for money and soldiers to insure against any early troubles the colony might run into). About half of Napier's book is one long passionate outcry over the cruelties and injustices committed against Aborigines and the racist misportrayal of their character. There is not just one sentence or two made in passing. He hammers his points home again and again. Some of his information he obtained from reading the accounts of many travelers.

As to their character, Napier tells his readers that natives are "by nature, equal to all other men ... as good as ourselves" (94). "[C]ruelty, and kindness ... exist, pretty nearly in the same proportions, in all states of society; only taking different forms" (180). He praises one traveler for understanding that "... whether the parties are black or white, wear clothes or go naked ... though there may be no clothes like ours, or even none at all, *over* the skin, there are feelings, exactly like ours, *under* it!" (176; his emphases). Many of his comments are about Australian Aborigines of whom he says "they are as highly gifted by the Creator, both in body and mind, as we are ourselves" (169). The "Creator has cursed no particular nation, or tribe, with intrinsic inferiority of body, or mind" (151). Isn't that anti-racist?

The last chapter of his book contains extracts from authors who have given us some idea of the true characteristics of natives. The following heading introduces these extracts (all caps in his text): "... To prove that the finest qualities of the heart, and mind, are to be found among the aborigines of Australia" (125). These "anecdotes disprove the irrational assertion of those who condemn the natives of Australia as a race degraded by nature, and incapable of civilization" (ibid.) It is "stupidity ... [to] pretend, that these people are below the rest of the world in the scale of intellect" (154). It wasn't stupidity to Darwin who offered the Australian Aborigines as a candidate for the lowest race on earth.

What incenses Napier is this intellectual game that so many people played to the point of obnoxiousness---including Darwin who would publish his travel journal in a few years and do the same thing---of trying to determine which human race is the lowest. Napier is particularly outraged by the suggestion that the natives of Australia are "a race which forms the link between men and monkeys" (94; cf. 146). This may serve as a reminder to us

that the controversy of the biological relationship between humans and monkeys was going on well before 1859. Only individuals, Napier vehemently argues, can be graded, not races or nations. No man can prove, he says, that "the Aborigines of this country [Australia] occupy the lowest place in the gradatory scale of the human species" (as one writer he quotes claimed) and which we must never "take for an admitted fact" because "the Creator has cursed no particular nation, or tribe with intrinsic inferiority ... this 'gradatory scale' is one composed of individuals; not of nations" (151). Tell me that is not an ardent anti-racist statement---made in 1835!

Equally anti-racist is Rafinesque a year later in his poem *The World*. He deserves some space here as well. In Note 48, he writes, "Nature only acknowledges individuals, and vary them constantly." In the body of the poem, he says,

... these colors stain
The skin, but hardly penetrate beyond.
They form no test, and only split mankind
Into slight varieties, that change and blend
With easy mood ...
[lines 2834-38]

Further on, he compares racial differences to the differences we meet in any family. "This is the human physical display,/ Of changeful nature ..." (2863-64). The very first line of the poem is "I wish to sing the changeful ample world." The woolly hair of Negroes, Rafinesque tells us, is no more significant than the woolly fleece of sheep (2866-67). Though he does not spell this out, the implication is that intellect and morality are spread equally throughout all the so-called races of mankind. Ironically, Rafinesque, this man who opposed racism, died in a garret on a street called Race Street, between Third and Fourth Streets, in Philadelphia (see Fitzpatrick, 55; I would guess that the name of the street had something to do with horse-racing, but it is still striking).

Does this mean Rafinesque was also an anti-colonialist or at least anti-colonial abuses? Probably, though I cannot say for certain. "Upon all conquerors my virtuous scorn/ I throw, and all their dreadful deeds despise" (3333-34). Would he have been on the side of indigenous people? Probably. "None but defenders claim our thankful praise" (3300). In some verses added at the end of the book, Rafinesque declared, "Columbus found a world, but to enslave!" (in the addition for the section on "Angels and Devils" around line 2520). He goes on to praise several figures who were known for their tolerance and kindness towards the natives---Las Casas, Roger Williams, and

William Penn.

The religious mission to the natives did not thrill Rafinesque. He was always in favor of tolerance and hated the idea of forcing anyone to worship a certain way. In his essay *The Pleasures and Duties of Wealth* (1840), he was exasperated by the "millions [spent] in Missions to the Heathen" with the result that we have bestowed on them "the gift of our corrupt, sinful and warring Sects, training millions of Soldiers to kill and be killed by turns, in the name of the *Religion of Peace*; or else to poison them with Opium, Rum and Tobacco ..." (§79). While Rafinesque was thrilled by civilization and its good benefits, such as agriculture---"Blest be the man who did invent the plough,/ Was first to till the ground, increasing food/ And wealth ..." (*World*, lines 3028-30)---he could also say, "Curst be the man who first enclos'd a field, And said this is my own ..." (3933-34). He links enclosures or fence-building to greed and inequality in wealth, and even to murder by identifying Cain as the first to seize land like this and the first to murder (3939-40). It would be hard to extract a positive attitude towards colonialism from Rafinesque's writings.

Napier was certainly dead set on exposing the abuses of colonial governments and settlers. Those who assert that Australian Aborigines are the lowest in intellect Napier compares to a "sack" or "a sort of *human bag*" (his emphasis) that eats and "performs various animal functions" and "gives opinions, as if ... it had brains" (Napier, 155). They repeat their absurdity so often that many have come to believe it (156). It is repetition, not sound argument, that has established this truism. Among these sacks, one may find "sometimes a colonial secretary---sometimes a colonial governor---sometimes a colonist" (155). Too bad he did not add "and sometimes a scientist or philosopher." They form their opinions of savages based on how well the savages serve the needs of the invaders of their country. Napier is so true to his principle of judging only individuals, not larger groups, that he will also apply it to these human sacks: "There *are* sacks, but they are *individual sacks*, not *races of sacks*, not *nations of sacks*" (156; his emphases).

Napier does more than denounce the bad opinions of racists. He wonders what has created this blindness in so many Europeans to the virtues of savages. Why do they fail to see that these people are human beings just like us with the same degree of intelligence? I detect four reasons uncovered by Napier, though he only offers one as a reason *per se*. As a soldier, Napier is especially alert to the virtues in savages he admires most: courage, loyalty, patriotism, and humane treatment of the enemy and the ability to limit one's own violence (kill only when you really have to); in short, heroic actions. He is ecstatic when he comes across these in anecdotes about savages. But so

many take note only of the bloodthirstiness of savages, while "the good, and heroic actions are very rarely recorded" (180; cf. to Darling's comments quoted above). Why rarely recorded? Because these heroic deeds of savages "are, generally, done to oppose our injustice, and cruelty; and, of course, we do not proclaim our own villainy" (ibid.). We would have to admit our misdeeds in order to see the heroism of savages which is exercised against our cruelties, and this we are reluctant to do. Racism is a cover-up of our injustice.

A second reason I have already mentioned two paragraphs above. As Napier puts it, the human sack's "whole idea of intellect in others is confined to its estimate of their [the savages'] capacity to supply its wants" and therefore the sack "settles that any savages, who will not patiently endure its amiable practices, and administer to its refined appetites, are below the rest of God's creation" (155). What seems to underlie this reason for making low judgments of savages is that savages will not amiably go along with their own dispossession and being treated as inferior, and thus they must be exceptionally unintelligent. The third reason is that "They received us kindly, when we first invaded their country; we took their women ... we tortured them, and they only made partial resistance to our cruelties; we then took their infants ... [and finally] they declared war for ever against the 'CIVILIZED' whites" (95; his emphases). Forbearance at first, as he says, and then unqualified vengeance (94). Either it is our reaction against the eventual Aboriginal response to white aggression or it is our guilt over the fact of their original kind treatment, while we went on to take advantage of their kindness--either way, we've turned their humanity into inferiority to escape our own guilt.

The fourth reason which I think can reasonably be drawn from Napier's musings is the compulsion to put national wealth ahead of everything else. We make a god of it (96), and it blinds us to everything that does not contribute to national wealth. That would include many savage virtues. We do not value anything in savages that does not serve us, that does not "supply [our] wants ... [and] refined appetites" (155). Racism is essentially about greed. National wealth blinds us as well to our own happiness which depends on religion and justice, not national wealth (101). (I am so glad he put justice before wealth in the scheme of things; he complains, "we treat the natives as it suits our convenience; not according to the dictates of justice," 171.) There you go!--national wealth makes us both self-destructive and destructive of others. "I see no reason why the savage should not choose his own way, as well as other people" (99). But national wealth won't allow any other way. It is all-consuming---consuming our appetites and our vision and scientific inquiry ("science ... is a very pretty pastime; makes men rich ... it increases

'national wealth'" [100]). Napier is "aware of the ineffable contempt with which all that I have said will be received by men of science, and political economists" (101).

Napier's book is a great one and if we had any sense at all, we would have a university course on the history of humanitarianism in which Napier would be given pride of place. But the book does have an internal contradiction which all the humanitarians of his time suffered from (and perhaps still do). While half the book is a vigorous critique of racism and a rotten system of colonialism, the other half offers advice on how to found a successful colony, which Napier considers a good thing: "... it is glorious to people a new continent, and spread the language, and renown of England in distant regions" (45). Given all he says about how we have robbed the Aborigines, what does a successful colony mean except to make secure and lasting our outright theft?

Make no mistake about it. Napier's is a book in which one can find a marvelous paean to colonization:

in a colony all is new, all is interesting; we rise, filled with curiosity, we half shave, half wash, half dress, and then half mad, with high and joyous spirits, we jump on our horses, (our breakfast half swallowed), and away we go, the beast as wild as ourselves, *crossing the country as we please* [my emphasis]; all is new, all is animating ... New beasts, new birds, new fishes, are hunted, shot, and caught; we mount a new hill, and a new country spreads far and wide before us ... my pilgrimage through many countries; all crying aloud for *people* [his emphasis]: every where regions without people! [78-79]

(At the very end of the book, however, he will call it a lie to claim that this land was uninhabited.) And on the other hand, we get this heartfelt outcry against the injustice of it all:

We rob the natives of their land, we rob them of *their* food, (the kangaroo,) we then shoot them to protect *our* food (the sheep), and we not only shoot, but torture them for our diversion; and finally, we say, that they are incapable of civilization, because their stupidity does not find out, that we are a delightful people ... We call them *savages*, because they 'shrink under our courtesy,' and we denominate ourselves a *civilized* people, because we set up what we term 'national wealth,' as our God ... In short, we torture and shoot "*savages*," and call ourselves the most *moral*,

and the most *religious*, and the most *civilized* people, in the world! ... if *I* am [appointed Governor of this new colony in Australia], I will not leave England without laws, that shall give the same protection to the savage as to myself, and those who go with me ... we must not then have a *monopoly of justice*. [96; all his emphases]

The contradiction in Napier is forgivable considering how unrelenting he is in his criticisms, especially his insistence that injustices against Aborigines must be punished, that violence and theft are out of the question as a means of dealing with the natives, that "making savage and civilized equal in the eye of the law" (103) should be a main objective, that we must revoke "downright robbery" (103), and that "peaceful intercourse" and the interests of the natives (103-05) should be the primary concerns.

Gerland was equally magnificent when he pointed out that colonized primitive peoples will continue to be in trouble "as long as civilized peoples imagine themselves to be made of completely different material than those 'savages' to whom are surely accorded the form but by no means the rights of being human" (Gerland, 141; *so lange wenigstens sicher als die Kulturvölker sich von ganz anderem Stoff dünken, als jene »Wilden«, denen man wohl Gestalt, aber keineswegs die Rechte eines Menschen zugesteht*). The essence of his anti-racism here is that he identifies the problem as one group believing that it is made of completely different material, thus leading directly to a denial of human rights. This is the fundamental assertion of racism that the human races are disconnected from one another, which Granville Sharp saw as early as 1769.

Rafinesque too made equality before the law a primary concern. At the end of *The World, or Instability*, he added some verses for the section on "Equality" around line 3116. He acknowledges that human beings are not created equally. They vary so much in size, strength, temper, complexion, and many other qualities. One result is that the strong have made sure that laws "Enacted are to suit the powerful/ And rich ..." But Rafinesque proposes, "If men are not of equal frame and mind,/ Yet they are brothers claiming social care,/ And equal laws demanding to obey." The goal, or "constant wish" as he says, is that "equal they become before the law."

All three are committed to an anti-racist anthropology; and if you really adopt that, all three argue, then you must surely acknowledge equality before the law as a consequence. In contrast, justice and rights never enter Darwin's anthropology.

As for Napier, significantly, in my opinion, he never uses the word

'melancholy' to describe the devastation inflicted on Aborigines. A man who is concerned with *justice*, rectifying wrongs, equality under the law, and *punishing the aggressors* is not likely to resort to melancholy or tragedy as the explanation of anything. Weeping would have been a waste of time for him and much too self-gratifying.

~ 4 ~

Darwin's generally low opinion of savages may have caused him to often look the other way when they were mistreated, but this was by no means a uniform reaction on his part. He was not a stupid man or an insensitive one. It is unimaginable that he would never notice any of the injustices committed by the colonialist adventure. But this is almost exclusively true of the younger Darwin. There are isolated instances of his spotting something amiss in the colonial enterprise. The problem is that they are indeed *isolated* insights (never becoming part of his system of thought) and that they are confined to his youth. The older Darwin seems to have become indifferent to imperialist abuses and sometimes hostile to any criticisms of colonialism.

In the *Diary*, there are several examples of his recognition that colonial power could be unjust. The town of Rio Negro, or the land it was built on, "was purchased from the native chief of the place.---The settlers at Baia [Bahia] Blanca did not follow this just example, & in consequence ever since a barbarous & cruel warfare has been carried on" (99; Sept. 6, 1832). (This is the war of extermination carried out by General Rosas, which I brought up in the second chapter. In the *Diary*, Darwin describes this cruel war a little more at 100 and 179-82.) Two years later, he reports from the island of Chiloe that Indian families who had cleared away some land have been forced off and that the land was seized by the government. "The Chilean authorities are now performing an act of justice by making retribution to these poor Indians ..." (267; on the same page he also notes that some Indians have been turned into slaves for their Christian teachers and in the margin mentions Humboldt as his source for this; he has no further comment). If retribution in this one case of displaced Indians is justice, then what is all the dispossession that British colonists have engaged in? Darwin never confronts this.

One thing that characterizes the humanitarians as a whole is their insistence that dispossession of the natives has been a system of outright robbery. The system of conquest, as Bannister said in 1838, is "for the most part ... little better than marauding on a large scale" (*Colonization*, 192).

Darwin will also comment from time to time on the bad behavior of some English colonists, especially the transported convicts (e.g., *Diary*, 407, 408; he accepts what British authorities have reported that white colonists started

the hostilities in Van Diemen's Land). There is too the brief mention of the Hottentots as "the ill treated aboriginals of the country" (424), but no details are offered. None of this adds up to a consistent vision of humanitarianism. We end up with a mass of contradictions. Darwin understands that some Indians have been turned into slaves, but is matter of fact about Indian children being sold into slavery and remarks "there is little to complain of" in this (*Diary*, 180; *Voyage*, 85). The British colonists in Van Diemen's Land started all the troubles, but the "cruel step" of removing all the natives has been necessary (*Diary*, 408) and now this country "enjoys the great advantage of being free from a native population" (*Voyage*, 385; *Narrative*, 533).

The injustice and cruelty of a war of extermination might seem self-evident, and he will certainly comment that this is an atrocity (*Diary*, 180), but Darwin also has no trouble noting that the war is popular and considered a just war because it is against barbarians (*Diary*, 180, 190), without raising any criticisms of this point of view, and then goes on to observe that great economic benefits will accrue to the colonists as a result of this extermination (*Diary*, 172, 181). In this context, it almost seems perverse that he would take the trouble to note one instance of Chilean authorities making retribution to some Indian families. All these examples, the good and the bad, come from one source, his *Beagle Diary* or the expanded published versions.

We cannot conclude that there is a wholeness to his few and far between observations of injustice against native populations. The overall tendency of Darwin is to accept colonialism and its cruelties as yielding great benefits to the English. What is consistent about Darwin is his commitment to colonialism and its inevitable consequences (inevitable as so many of the time saw it), the white man "predestined to inherit the country" of the Aborigines (*Diary*, 402) and the natives predestined to expire (with no melancholy reflection over this reported in the original *Diary*), as I have reviewed a number of times already. As this book progresses, we will meet more humanitarians who accepted the inevitability of colonialism but not its worst aspects---its marauding, its creation of inequality of rights, its exterminating actions.

~ 5 ~

The one thing I don't see Napier doing is giving any thought to the possibility that natives might reject all peaceable offers. Napier assumed that if we approached them with peace and friendliness only, they would see many of the benefits of western civilization. It was the ugly side they sensibly rejected. This is very similar to British officials being unable to perceive that ex-slaves might not want what was being offered to them---a life of wage-slavery.

Napier remained hopeful that colonialism could change for the better: "our invasion, *as it has been hitherto carried on*, is destruction to their happiness, their property, their freedom, and their lives" (148; emphasis added). The assumption is that it could change. Was his hope naive? In hindsight, certainly. But it is difficult to project ourselves back into another time and say whether a particular hope was realistic or not. I still think Napier was not sensitive enough to the possibility that even with all the best intentions, the natives might not accept westerners or accept them for a time and then change their mind. There is a potential contradiction in any form of colonialism, and his and everyone else's failure to consider that is something we should not forget or suppress.

I do not know whether Darwin read Napier or not, though it is likely that some of his friends or relatives did and told him about the book, as Napier was a very well-known and admired military figure of the day. What we do know is that Darwin took issue with anyone who tried to present Aborigines in a better light. In *The Descent of Man* (143-44), after summing up his reasons for believing in the low intellect and morality of savages, and having convinced himself of their utter immorality, Darwin rejects any authors who have a favorable opinion of the moral nature of savages: "some authors have recently taken a high view of their moral nature ... [because they have considered only] those virtues which are serviceable, or even necessary, for the existence of the family and of the tribe" (144) which Darwin acknowledges they do possess. He implies but does not state outright that he disagrees with these authors. He himself is convinced that "Most savages are utterly indifferent to the sufferings of strangers, or even delight in witnessing them ... humanity is an unknown virtue ... Many instances could be given of the noble fidelity of savages towards each other, but not to strangers" (142; cf. 134). He believes wholeheartedly in the Spanish maxim "Never, never trust an Indian" (142).

What makes this last opinion all the more shocking is that Darwin well knew there was another point of view. Georg Gerland (whose 1868 book I introduced in Ch. 2, §6) advised that caution should be exercised when reading texts that claimed natives were "extremely treacherous" (Gerland, 140n; *höchst verrätherisch*). In that note, Gerland points to the bias resulting from the mercantile interests of the colonizing trader and the failure to consider the viewpoint of natives who had suffered injustice, theft, and brutal violence. When there are two different points of view, be wary of those who promote only one. Darwin relates none of this to his readers.

We should also take a look at how Robert Chambers addressed this: "when a people are oppressed ... they invariably contract habits of lying, for the

purpose of deceiving and outwitting their superiors, falsehood being a refuge of the weak under difficulties" (*Vestiges*, 357). Chambers could see that what was deception from our point of view was a survival tactic to an oppressed people. Darwin, the supposed expert on survival of species, sometimes could not see the various stratagems a people employ to survive. He had no sympathy for their dilemma. More importantly, he refused to see their positive virtues, even when others pointed them out.

It seems that Darwin never heard of the Maori idea of *aroha* (care beyond what obligation requires) or any examples of American Indians helping English colonists to survive (more on this below). Aborigines also helped strangers in Australia. George Robinson pointed out in an 1847 report, as Henry Reynolds sums it up, that Aborigines "were the parties who first guided the white men 'through the intricacies of the forest' and led them to their runs, their springs and rich pastures" (Reynolds, *Whispering*, 51). The editorial writer of the 1880 Australian series *The Way We Civilize* in the *Queenslander* wrote, "As a rule the blacks have been friendly at first, and the longer they have endured provocation without retaliating the worse they have fared, for the more ferocious savages have inspired some fear, and have therefore been comparatively unmolested" (110). In an 1833 letter to the Colonial Office, Robert Lyon said that the natives "showed us every kindness in their power ... we were invaders of their country ... these noble minded people shared with us their scanty & precarious meal; lodged us for the night and in the morning directed us on our way" (71). Napier too wrote, "They received us kindly, when we first invaded their country" (Napier, 95). This is kindness not only to the stranger but the invading stranger!! I doubt many Europeans could have boasted they would have done the same.

Saxe Bannister was making the point as early as 1822 in his *Remarks on the Indians of North America*. In this, his first published writing (I believe), he was anxious to counter the myths and lies that were spreading about indigenous peoples. These 1822 *Remarks* were in response to an article in the *Edinburgh Review* which claimed that Indians were incapable of advancing and were doomed to disappear as a consequence. Bannister first wants to correct the notion that Indians are rude barbarians. He points out that "The first reception of Europeans in America was kind beyond hope" and that if the Indians came to act in a contrary disposition, it was because of European violence (*Remarks*, 6). He goes on to quote from a number of journals and memoirs of the earliest explorers, settlers, and traders, to prove his point, but even before he gets to that, he notes that these journals "abound in statements advantageous to the character of natives, and deeply disgraceful to us." And still while on this same page (6), he is telling us about a Moravian named

Heckewelder who lived among the Indians for thirty years and repeatedly heard them reminisce about "the hard returns they have ever received for their utmost unbounded kindness."

I have no way of knowing how much of the material Bannister refers to Darwin would have been familiar with or had the opportunity to acquaint himself with, but even if he was ignorant of all that Bannister brought to the attention of his readers, the point remains that this material was there, it was there in abundance, and if Darwin and many other anthropologists or ethnographers of the day were unaware, it was because their academic society was busy ignoring and suppressing it. Darwin and others were forming a society that was creating a one-sided view of indigenes by erasing any evidence that spoke to their good attributes. As it happens, mainstream academia could not get rid of all the voices that were telling scientists what they did not want to hear. Some voices slipped passed the locked gate or got in through a backdoor. There was Gerland and Chambers and Wallace (all of whom Darwin read), and Saxe Bannister (accused of suffering from mental aberration by an undersecretary) and of course James Bonwick.

In Bonwick's *The Last of the Tasmanians*, Darwin would have read of natives helping a white farmer put out a fire threatening his crops (67), a young white girl lost in the bush and helped by natives (39), and other reports of the friendliness of natives to invading strangers (e.g., 36, 49). But Darwin saw only what he wanted to see when it came to savages. The objection that this is only anecdotal evidence which would not have interested Darwin is way off the mark. Darwin loved anecdotes about nature and people. In *Descent*, he is delighted to relate observations about animals that give a favorable impression of them (e.g., 126, the heroic monkey who saved the life of a zookeeper attacked by a baboon, which Darwin liked so much he referred to it at least two more times, 134, 689). But there is not one comparable example in *Descent* of savages doing something noble or marvelous for strangers. Darwin provided no relief from his relentless negative depiction of their character. He never sees a heroic savage, whereas Napier, for example, loved anecdotes of their "nobleness and courage" (Napier, 94; cf. 180). Darwin saw what he wanted to see and did not see what he didn't want to see.

If Darwin had bothered to re-read his *Diary*, he would have seen that he himself had supplied evidence of what savages could be like when it came to strangers. In the entry for June 1, 1834 (*Diary*, 240), Darwin recounts that his ship picked up two (European) seamen running along the shore, the day before the *Beagle* reached Port Famine in South America. They had run away from a sealer and had joined some Patagonian Indians from whom they had just been separated by accident. "They had been treated by these Indians with

their usual disinterested noble hospitality." Note the use of 'usual'. Darwin knew what some savages were capable of in the way of helping strangers. This passage is not in the first published version of the *Diary* (i.e., in *Narrative*, where June 1, 1834 can be found on 264), but it was restored for the next two editions (*Journal*, 233, and *Voyage*, 197). Curiously, the word 'noble' was dropped for these published editions. Maybe he thought 'noble' was overdoing it, but it is there in the original *Diary*. At least the published editions retained the mention of their hospitality.

Darwin describes the Patagonians as half-civilized, in part because they spoke "a good deal of Spanish & some English" and despite their wild appearance, "At tea they behaved quite like gentlemen, used a knife & fork & helped themselves with a spoon" (*Diary*, 217; Jan. 29, 1834). But he never imputes their hospitality to their adopting some European ways. He leaves the impression that this is how they were as Indians. Most interestingly, Darwin does not limit this good side of their nature to this one instance. The way Darwin tells it, he is recognizing that the Patagonians are known for their hospitality. Yet he forgot it by the time he got to *Descent*. This confirms rather than refutes that, when it came to savages, the older Darwin saw only what he wanted to see. He adopted an ideology about savages.

A second example, previously mentioned, from Darwin's *Diary* of natives helping Europeans is in New Zealand where he reported that missionaries "complain far more of the conduct of their countrymen than of the natives. It is strange ... the only protection which they need & on which they rely is from the native Chiefs against Englishmen!" (384; Dec. 22, 1835). This too was forgotten by the time Darwin wrote of savages in *The Descent of Man*. If he would not remember his own examples of the hospitality and generosity of savages, why would he remember anyone else's?

Darwin also recorded an incident of an Indian (he does not say of what tribe) saving the lives of a shipwrecked crew of English sailors on the island of Chiloe: "the crew ... was beginning to fail in provisions: it is not probable [that] without the aid of this [Indian] man, they would have been able to extricate themselves" (*Diary*, 281; first bracketed insertion is by editor Keynes). Captain FitzRoy in his account of their voyage also described the Patagonians as "almost always friendly" with white men (*Narrative*, 2.168). More noteworthy, FitzRoy was told by one old Spaniard in the town of Carmen that he remembered that when they first came as explorers in 1786, "the natives were not only inoffensive, but gave them assistance" (2.299). FitzRoy adds, "How different from the present day! when if a Christian is seen by the natives, he is immediately hunted, and his safety depends upon the fleetness of his horse."

What neither FitzRoy nor Darwin thought about was how much of the hostile behavior they observed in natives was due to decades of abuse by white invaders. There is always some exception to such a general statement, but basically, they give this little to no thought. One exception is that in New Zealand and the islands of the South Seas, FitzRoy does acknowledge that escaped British convicts from Australia have done much harm by abusing the hospitality of the natives; "can one then wonder at the natives of some South Sea Islands taking an aversion to white people ..." (2.612.). Here again, FitzRoy is acknowledging that the natives were originally hospitable. Whether or not Darwin read FitzRoy's volume (he probably did), he certainly would have had many conversations with him about this. Darwin however seems not to have given this much thought at all, certainly not in *Descent*. He never considered that what he witnessed or, more usually, heard about savage immorality, might have been a reaction to decades of European immorality. This was a major scientific error on his part.

Darwin was always willing to admit that savages were virtuous towards family and friends, but he limited his thinking about this. Even if we confined ourselves to the virtues that savages practice with each other, Darwin does not consider that such virtues begin at home before they can be extended to others. One might even argue that altruistic virtues are difficult to keep confined to home, family, and tribe, and have a natural tendency to expand beyond these borders. Darwin did not pay attention to accounts like that of John Savage who describes his Maori companion, Moyhanger, as being "a most affectionate kind-hearted creature" (Savage, 38) apparently not only with his family but with Savage as well, or the accounts in Bonwick describing Aborigines as peaceful and kind, or to his own account of Patagonians in his *Diary*. Also note well that both Grey and Savage described the natives as very intelligent and I doubt very much that this was a quality that was restricted to their families. Intelligence even more than morality will spill over, but it's not something Darwin paid much attention to.

So why did so many have a low opinion of the morality and intelligence of savages? Was it merely ignorance? I don't think it was. A hundred years before the Nazis appeared, some people realized that degrading a people was a helpful, perhaps necessary, first step before inflicting further harm and stealing their resources from them. Degradation makes it easier to carry out oppression and destruction. It was also useful in reducing guilt if one intended to destroy a people. If they are inferior, then their disappearance was inevitable anyway. This is not my judgment made in hindsight. Some humanitarians of the time realized that this is exactly what was going on. Inferiority was an invention to justify and ease the path of destruction. In the

case of savages, part of the dehumanizing process was to deny that they had a history, which was probably one reason why colonizers avoided learning their languages from which they would have learned they did have memories and a history. "The whole tribe are bards," as R.M. Lyon said in one case (Reynolds, *Whispering*, 74). It is a lot harder to kill sophisticated bards than ignorant savages.

Reynolds gives a number of examples of this awareness of the purpose of denigrating a people (*Whispering*, 12-13, 63-64, 72). Missionaries like John Saunders and Lawrence Threlkeld tried to make people aware of the insidious reasoning. So too James Dredge, Assistant Protector of Aborigines at Port Phillip. According to Reynolds, "Threlkeld argued that it was a time-honoured tactic of those who wished 'determinately to carry a point' first to brand with obloquy their intended victim 'and then destroy him'. So the murderers of the blacks 'boldly maintained that the blacks were only a specie of baboon, that might be shot down with impunity, like an Ourang Outang [sic]!" (63-64). Vilification precedes genocide. Lyon argued in *An Appeal* that in order to justify hostility towards the natives, the oppressors had "to render them odious to the public at home, by representing them in the worst light" (quoted at 72). Darwin contributed to this odium. As of this writing, I cannot say whether Darwin consciously did so to further the interests of colonialism, but his writing fit in with the conscious plans of others.

Darwin may not have read these authors, but he did read Georg Gerland and Gerland reminded his readers that we should be very, very careful when listening to negative portraits of savages. Many factors have to be considered. That it might be true is yes, of course, one possibility. But there are other possibilities. Another is that "the frequently made claim of their savage bloodthirstiness is nothing but a fable" (*Ihre vielfach behauptete wilde Blutgier ist nichts als Fabel*) which was "doubtless concocted for an obvious reason [or, motivation], indeed for the purpose of treating them callously [or, recklessly, ruthlessly]. This has happened many times" (*wohl aus dem naheliegenden Grund erfunden, um nun gegen sie desto rücksichtsloser zu verfahren. Und das ist reichlich geschehen*"; Gerland, 113). Gerland was a sharper anthropologist than Darwin. He knew how self-serving the European estimation of native peoples could be. Compared to most contemporary anthropologists, he was in a class by himself.

Darwin was not attuned to the profounder humanitarians of the age. He preferred writers who embraced or were sympathetic to his ideas about natural selection, competition, domination, survival of the fittest, and more--- someone like Walter Bagehot, a journalist and editor of the *Economist*. In *Physics and Politics* (1872, but first appearing as a series of articles from

1867 to 1869), Bagehot regurgitated Darwin's ideas on natural selection, etc. (the subtitle of the book is *Thoughts on the Application of the Principles of "Natural Selection" and "Inheritance" to Political Society*). Darwin approvingly cites him five times in *The Descent of Man* and at one point calls *Physics* "a remarkable series of articles" (155 n5). Bagehot gave one of the bluntest defenses of imperialism ever made (it was Tony Barta's article on Darwin that first brought part of this quote to my attention; I am using the 1873 New York edition of Bagehot's book):

Let us consider in what a village of English colonists is superior to a tribe of Australian natives who roam about them. Indisputably in one, and that a main sense, they are superior. *They can beat the Australians in war when they like; they can take from them anything they like, and kill any of them they choose ... the aboriginal native lies at the mercy of the intruding European.* Nor is this all ... [The English] have a greater command over the powers of nature upon the whole ... twenty Englishmen with their implements and skill can change the material world immeasurably more than twenty Australians and their machines. [207-08; emphasis added]

On the next page, in answer to an aged savage who reportedly said that he had tried civilization and "it was not worth the trouble," Bagehot replies "we need not take account of the mistaken ideas of unfit men and beaten races," which is certainly Darwin's vocabulary.

Though Darwin does not cite this passage, he does not disown this kind of thinking either, whereas he does disagree with those who have a high opinion of savages. One point in Bagehot's book he does openly approve of is where Bagehot points out that savages in classical times held their own against civilization, but they are in danger of extermination when they face modern Europe. For Bagehot, this proves the superiority of our society to both the ancient Greeks and Romans, and to savages. Part of Bagehot's argument is that "There is no lament in any classical writer for the barbarians ... If anything like this [the vanishing of native peoples] had happened in antiquity, the classical moralists would have been sure to muse over it; for it is just the large solemn kind of fact that suited them" (Bagehot, 47). Since there is no record of such musing, then obviously the savage tribes were not on the verge of extinction back then.

Bagehot uses this as evidence that our civilization is far superior to savage cultures and ancient classical civilization. We are better at eradicating inferior peoples than the Greeks and Romans were. Our ability to exterminate proves

our superiority (see *Descent*, 212-13, for Darwin's approving use of Bagehot's argument; he does not use quotation marks, but repeats Bagehot almost verbatim; and see here, four paragraphs below, for the same thought as expressed in *Origin*). Bagehot and Darwin were saying that the more we kill, the more superior we are. Darwin saw the good news for Europeans in disappearing savages, while humanitarians only saw the horror in it.

Rafinesque, whom I have quoted in the second chapter and earlier in this chapter, mocked this kind of thinking when he wrote "him who kills the most ... often is/ Deemed the very best of men: Alas!/ 'Tis murder, even so, the worst of crimes" (*World*, 3225-29). "Curst be the bards who sing the deeds of war" (3325). "Instead of praising conquerors," it would be better "to stain with infamy their deeds" (3329). Darwin would never have agreed with any of these lines.

Charles Napier, being an old soldier who did his military bit for his country, certainly agreed that western man was better at war, but that was just a small piece of the story for him. "... we fight better: Savages cannot cast cannon; but in point of humanity, I confess, I have great doubts of our superiority. We talk of it a great deal; boast of it ... [but in fact] we *dilute* our cruelty; we don't dabble in blood, quite so openly" (Napier, 180-81; his emphasis). We can boast of our humanity because we hide our cruelties. Neither Darwin nor Bagehot would write sentences like that.

Even before *The Descent of Man*, this kind of thinking about the superiority of being better at killing---this worldview of destruction---pervades *The Origin of Species*. The word 'compete' and its various derivatives appear some 70 times (I did not count one occurrence of 'competition' in the Contents). In the topic headings for Chapter III, Darwin offers us "Competition universal." His intention is clear. This is a worldview that is meant to explain everything. He often refers to competition as severe (e.g., twice on 134) and once as fatal (at the end of Chapter IV), and 'competitors' is sometimes accompanied by 'or enemies'. In Darwin's world, competition is almost always lethal (a word that oddly enough does not appear once in *Origin*, though of course extermination and extinction do). It is all or nothing. There is no such thing as compromise or negotiation in Darwin's worldview to temper the competition. In the last chapter of *Origin*, he tells us, "natural selection acts by competition" (517). Competition is key to the whole scheme. Just to be clear: In all these examples and in the following, Darwin is referring to what happens when species, not just individuals, and other forms of life encounter one another.

'Beat' or 'beaten' is used 15 times and usually in reference to groups, as in "the more dominant groups beat the less dominant" (516). There are 42

occurrences of 'dominant' and one of 'dominating' (I did not count a couple of appearances of 'dominant' in the description at the top of some pages in Ch. II in the original British edition). In one section of Chapter X, in the space of just over two pages (from mid-363 to mid-365; this is 325-327 in the original British edition), dominant appears ten times; in these same pages, severe competition is also mentioned as is invaded, beaten, extinction, 'disappear from the world', and 'existence would cease'. Near the end of Chapter XI, we are told that natural selection and competition lead to "a higher stage of perfection or dominating power" and this enables the dominating power "to beat the less powerful" (420). It is lethal domination that Darwin considers perfection. This is comparable to the point Bagehot made that our ability to exterminate (to do it to others rather than others doing it to us) is what makes us superior; or as Darwin says here in more scientifically polished language, beating others is a higher stage of perfection. But as Rafinesque might have said, "'Tis murder, even so" (see above).

A year after the second edition of *Descent*, Darwin expressed regret for quoting Bagehot on that business about the modern west being superior to classical civilization. It is not very clear exactly what he regretted, but when we sort it all out, a fairly clear picture of what he was *not* regretting emerges and it only reinforces my points. Darwin was responding to a letter he had received from George Rolleston, a professor of anatomy who also served as a doctor in Smyrna at the end of the Crimean War. Rolleston had sent Darwin a copy of a paper he had delivered, "Address on Anthropology" (1875) in which he disputed Bagehot's view of savages not disappearing before classical civilization and also the idea that savages were now on the verge of elimination due to mysterious causes. (This paper can be found in a collection of his papers and addresses which is available at hathitrust.org. A blessing on the heads of those who started and maintain this website and on the heads of all the interns who do the hard work of scanning these old books page by precious page into their system.)

From Rolleston's note alone to Darwin (ML 2.46), it is difficult to determine what he disputed. He tantalizingly mentions "certain anti-sanitarian transactions and malfeasance of which I had had a painful experience." From his paper, we can see that he is referring to his experience with the mismanagement of a smallpox epidemic in England: "what we saw then in England renders it a little superfluous to search for recondite causes to account for depopulation in countries [i.e., savage nations] without Local Boards" (Rolleston, 2.886). It is not all that mysterious why populations sometimes decline dramatically. "And what is the mystery to me is not how an epidemic can, when introduced amongst helpless Polynesians, work havoc,

but how it is that epidemics should be allowed to do so here in England from time to time" (ibid.). Even in our advanced society we do stupid things that could, for example, make an epidemic worse; so from this, Rolleston has no trouble imagining that primitive societies could suffer just as much.

The more interesting part of his paper has to do with Bagehot's point about savage tribes disappearing before modern civilization but apparently not before ancient Greco-Roman civilization. Rolleston was at first impressed with the idea that savages did not face elimination when confronted with classical civilization, but upon reconsidering it, he realized that Bagehot was concluding too much from silence: "it is exceedingly unsafe to argue from the silence of any writer, ancient or modern, to the non-existence of the non-mentioned thing" (2.885). Rolleston does not raise any objection (nor does Darwin) to Bagehot's claim that European civilization is superior to savage cultures and that our greater ability to kill and dispossess is a significant factor in this superiority. He objects only to drawing conclusions about the inferiority of classical civilization just because no ancient writer recorded signs of barbarians being eliminated. For all we know, he argues, savage tribes in ancient times may have disappeared in an earlier bronze age and at a time when "these races had neither a contemporary Homer to sing their history, nor an Evans [an anthropologist] to interpret their weapons after their extinction" (2.885-86). He also believes the Book of Job describes a people perishing from famine. Bagehot's argument from silence is insufficient, Rolleston concludes.

In response, Darwin said he agrees with Rolleston's criticism of "Mr. Bagehot's striking remark, and wish I had not quoted it" (ML 2.47). But he gets into no specifics. The subject of declining savage populations interests him very much and he offers this as his summary of what he has written in the second edition of *Descent*: "The facts have convinced me that lessened fertility and the poor constitution of the children is one chief cause of such decrease; and that the case is strictly parallel to the sterility of many wild animals when made captive, the civilisation of savages and the captivity of wild animals leading to the same result."

Whatever the precise reasons for Darwin wishing he had not quoted this part of Bagehot (perhaps he agreed with Rolleston about the weakness of conclusions drawn from silence), four things remain true: 1) the mature Darwin (in his sixties) found Bagehot's thoughts on the superiority of the civilized over savages appealing and supportive of his own views, and included it in both the first and second editions of *Descent*; 2) there are no instances in *Descent*, or anywhere else for that matter, where he finds humanitarian thinking about savages appealing; 3) neither Darwin nor

Rolleston say anything to dispute Bagehot's rhapsody about western superiority or his use of killing as a measure of this superiority; nor do they raise any humanitarian concerns to challenge or modify Bagehot's views about our superiority over savages (it was apparently only Bagehot's idea of superiority to classical civilization that bothered them); and 4) the reasons Darwin gives Rolleston for the decrease in savage populations (comparing it to what happens to captive animals) just so happen to steer clear of imputing any moral culpability to the west for what is happening to these indigenous cultures.

I am inclined to think that it was Bagehot's *open boast* that modern, western civilization was superior in its killing power and making this the primary cause of the demise of savages that caused Darwin to have second thoughts about incorporating it into *The Descent of Man*. But I admit that I am just guessing. Darwin hides more than he reveals here, so we are all reduced to guessing. Although Bagehot may not have realized he was doing this, there is no denying that his way of putting it imputes a good deal of moral responsibility to the west. That is quite a contrast to Darwin's usual tactics. If Darwin realized the immorality of Bagehot's open declaration, he saw the implication only in retrospect (and that is if he saw it at all). Darwin himself preferred causes that reduced or eliminated the visibility of this culpability. Harping on the west's superior killing abilities was not to his liking.

In January 1873, Darwin wrote to his cousin Francis Galton about an article in which Galton ventured that nature had no regard for individuals but merely used them to create improved races. Darwin was able to express himself almost as bluntly as Bagehot: "surely Nature does not more carefully regard races than individuals, as ... evidenced by the multitude of races and species which have become extinct. Would it not be truer to say that Nature cares only for the superior individuals and then makes her new and better races?" (ML 2.44). He then offers a caveat about personifying Nature. That does not change his clear commitment to the idea of superior races and individuals. In his published writings, he said the same but preferred more polished language.

Though scholars often deny this, Darwin found purpose in his system of nature: To make new and better races, which, as we know, means more dominant races (in the language of *Origin*). Almost everywhere you look in Darwin's writings, he gives the lie to any notion that there is no teleology in his system. There most definitely is, which Bagehot caught the meaning of very well, and it spells doom for all the weaker races.

Whether Darwin used what he saw in nature as a model for colonialism or whether he used colonialism as his model for understanding, or even just seeing, nature, the end result was the same. Darwin made the language of human activity a part of nature's competitive scheme, as he saw it. He never criticized anyone for injecting too much competition into human affairs or nature. I don't think 'too much' was a possibility for him. All competition was good and natural and led to the appropriate domination by certain species over weaker ones. *Origin* might be the most imperialist work of science ever written.

And anything that appeared to decrease competition was bad. Darwin disapproved of trade unions and cooperative societies because they seemed to him to oppose competition. He disliked unions for their insistence that "all workmen,---the good & bad, the strong and weak,---sh^d all work for the same number of hours & receive the same wages. The unions are also opposed to piece-work,---in short to all competition. I fear that Cooperative Societies ... likewise exclude competition. This seems to me a great evil for the future progress of mankind" (CCD 20. 323-24). In a letter to Hooker, Darwin used the expression "competitive highness" (CCD 7.229; Dec. 31, 1858; I will return to this in Ch. 6, §2). We previously saw that in his *Diary*, he held the view that class differences were necessary for an advanced society (see Ch. 2, §6). For Darwin, competition would create winners and losers, stronger and weaker, high and low---in short, inequality, which he believed was necessary for progress.

To find a very different point of view, you would have to travel to the other side of the world, mentally speaking---that is, to the true (though imperfect) humanitarians who believed in another approach to human affairs. In an essay entitled "Exceptional Laws in Favour of the Natives of New Zealand" (which appears as Appendix A in an 1837 book by Edward Wakefield and is attributed to an unnamed author), the Rev. Montagu Hawtrey was highly critical of competition (Hawtrey is identified as the author in Ward, A., 34). The heading for section 1 of the essay is: "It is possible to oppress and destroy under a show of justice" (giving us the title of Alan Ward's history of New Zealand). And a little further on: "[W]here one of the parties is immeasurably inferior to the other, the only consequence of establishing the same rights and the same obligations for both will be to destroy the weaker under a show of justice" (Hawtrey, 400).

For Hawtrey, rectifying this is not simply a matter of attending more to guaranteed rights for the weaker party. If you instituted perfect legal justice, the group inferior in power would still suffer and lose. Why? In a word: Competition. Britain, he says, has become a highly competitive society where

"every individual is more or less in a state of competition with every other individual" (400). This is Darwin's cultural context, lest we forget. As Malthus put it, in the sixth edition (1826) of his essay, "... competition in every kind of business is so great, that it is not possible that all should be successful" (1.399). Some will fail. Competition destroys. Darwin would agree, or as Malthus would say, it creates a preventive check to population growth, as workers who do not do well in this competitive world will be forced to limit their family size; in the above letter (CCD 20.324), Darwin believes that "temperate & frugal workmen will ... leave more offspring than the drunken & reckless."

Hawtreys points out that competition destroys *unconsciously*, for the most part; none of the participants may even be aware of what is happening:

... it may safely be inferred that were a colony of British to plant themselves in New Zealand ... [with the natives] on a footing of perfect equality with British subjects, though no cruelty were inflicted, though strict and impartial justice were administered, though posts of honour and emolument were offered equally to all, a species of social attrition would at once begin and never cease till it ended in the degradation and destruction of the New Zealanders [i.e., the Maoris].

In the mean time, neither the New Zealanders nor the British might be conscious of the process ... [400]

Hawtreys and Bagehot are agreeing on what happens. They disagree on the value of it. Bagehot believes this proves our superiority, Hawtreys does not. There is a good deal of paternalism in the rest of Hawtreys's essay, but his chief solution is to honor and respect as many of the native laws and customs as we can, to adapt our laws to them, and not to impose ourselves as much as we do. Remarkable as all this is and rare as it might have been to think such thoughts, these were thoughts that were sometimes echoed by others.

Almost thirty years after Hawtreys's essay, in 1865, Alfred Wallace published an article, "On the Progress of Civilisation in Northern Celebes" (S104), in which he praised the Dutch for running their colonies in a much more humane manner than the British. He accepted the fact of colonization, as did Hawtreys and most humanitarians of the time. But listen to the subtlety of his argument in the last paragraph. After commenting that "Competition and free trade are excellent things of themselves ...," he goes on to say that they cannot be imposed on a people not prepared for them:

It appears to me, however, that we do an equally unwise and

unjust thing when, having obtained power over a country inhabited by a savage people, we expose them at once to the full tide of competition with our highly elaborated civilisation, and expect them to thrive under it ... we have brought them into direct contact with English wealth and energy, vigorously developing itself for its own ends, and the result must inevitably be, sooner or later, the extermination of the native race ... we should hesitate in applying the principles of free competition to the relations between ourselves and savage races, if we ever expect them to advance in civilisation or even to maintain their existence upon the earth. [S104, 69]

Wallace recognized that you did not necessarily need violence to exterminate a people. You could compete them to death---and that is very similar to 'civilized off the face of the earth' which I referenced earlier in this chapter. His response to this injustice is: Do not drown the natives with our overwhelming advantages; it is not a fair fight; let us scale down our competitive drive. He makes essentially the same points in *Malay* (1.256-57), but there his focus is on free trade---the merchants get rich, but the people "relapse into poverty and barbarism."

Wallace was a thoughtful man, always putting justice ahead of "pure scientific" thought. A little earlier in the same essay (S104, 67), he comments (my emphasis): "We know, or *think we know*, that the education and industry, and the common usages of civilised man, are superior to those of savage life ..." (also in *Malay*, 1.254-55). I love that he added that qualification of we "think we know." He was always willing to entertain doubts about so much, including who is superior and inferior. It was his concern for justice that brought on such doubts.

Wallace certainly and Hawtrey probably were not completely opposed to competition. It was competition between unequal parties that they objected to as unjust. In his 1869 travel book, *The Malay Archipelago*, Wallace pointed out two evils produced by "The free competition of European traders." These were "Spirits or opium" and "goods on credit" (1.95). The consequence of the latter is that the native "accumulates debt upon debt, and often remains for years, or for life, a debtor and almost a slave. This is a state of things which occurs very largely in every part of the world in which men of a superior race freely trade with men of a lower race ... it demoralizes the native, checks true civilization ..." (1.96). When the debt rises high enough, the merchant will take the debtor to court and secure his services as liquidation for the debt, creating slave debtors (2.95). "The lower classes are almost all in a chronic

state of debt" (ibid.). It is true that Wallace goes on to say he believes this system is better than the British one of putting debtors in prison, but all the same it creates a kind of slavery.

I have read many writers on the problems besetting indigenous people under colonialism and I have never come across anyone who mentioned receiving goods on credit as another major way of taking advantage of them and enslaving them. I would not put Wallace's perceptive powers in second place behind anyone else's. Other examples of his perspicacity: "There is in fact almost as much difference between the various races of savage as of civilized peoples ..." (*Malay*, 2.56) and when civilized man goes exploring, "we may be sure that he will so disturb the nicely-balanced relations of organic and inorganic nature as to cause the disappearance, and finally the extinction" of much of the wonderful beings he finds (2.133). He was an astute environmentalist before there was even such a thing. Perhaps it is all the more remarkable that Wallace believed in natural selection, but it is not what you believe that counts---it is how you carry out your beliefs that matters. He was unwilling to apply natural selection in such a way that it would support the injustices practiced by European peoples.

Constantine Rafinesque, one of the early evolutionists with a more holistic sense of evolution than Darwin, took perhaps an even more absolute position against competition. In *The Pleasures and Duties of Wealth* (1840), Rafinesque would write, "Competition is the great obstacle to unobstructed production of food, and every other commodity ... There is a constant rivalry among laborers, producers, teachers, authors, & c." (§14). He advocates something he calls the Mutual System (§§19, 20). In his more or less socialist vision of the future, "Competition is also to be abolished and the hardest work the best paid" (§43). Whether Rafinesque's solution was too extreme or not, he is another example of one who regarded competition as problematic.

Bagehot, who, as we have seen, celebrated the superior lethal abilities of the west, knew that it came down to a question of outcompeting the natives. All nations, he argued, have at some time in their history made progress, even the lowest savages, like those of Tierra del Fuego, have "got some way" (Bagehot, 42). Generally, the strongest prevail over the weakest, both among nations and individuals. In "the most influential part of the world," these "competitions ... are so intensified" (43). "The progress of the military art is ... the most *showy*, fact in human history" (44). It is, in other words, just one sign of superiority in competition. In any case, "real and effective military power" is now confined to Europe. "The barbarians are no longer so much as vanquished competitors; they have ceased to compete at all" (46).

Critics like Wallace and Hawtrey did not have to go as far as Rafinesque to

make their point. If Rafinesque was an absolutist in his anti-competition position, the promoters of free trade and pure competition were his counterpart. They did not distinguish different modes of or situations for competition. They saw it as a monolithic entity that held good for all times, all conditions, all places, all professions, and throughout nature. Thoughtful critics wanted to think more precisely about competition, where it applies and does good, where it does not apply and causes harm. Let us use it wisely and not let it use us. But the ideologues of competition did not see it that way. The truth is that the ideologues did not really believe in competition *per se*. They believed in their greed and satisfying it to the fullest. Competition was just a sophisticated excuse to do that, a polished ploy that would give a pleasing sheen to the greed.

Not everyone in Darwin's time thought that competition was an ideology that had to be bowed down to and worshiped all the time. Not everyone was buying that competition was a universal law that ruled in all our economic relationships, in all of nature, and in all our dealings with natives less technologically advanced than western civilization. Competition was an *ideology*, one we *chose*, but not an inevitable law; therefore, there could be other choices. Darwin conformed to the majority culture (certainly the majority in academia) and *chose* an ideology which he convinced himself was not a choice. Whether competition is a law of nature is open to question, but not for Darwin and so many others who saw no open question here. They convinced themselves that a law had been thrust upon them and that they had no choice in the matter.

Wallace was always the one more willing to question any prevailing ideology. He was critical when "men conclude that what seems a necessary and unalterable state of things must be good---that its benefits must be greater than its evils. This was the feeling of the American advocates of slavery; they could not see an easy, comfortable way out of it" (*Malay*, 2.165). So too, the proponents of imperialism could not see a comfortable way out of a progress that seeks worldwide domination. Wallace's feeling was that we are less than truly civilized if we fail to question any system that produces mixed results and to ask if it could be done better.

The following analogy best captures what Hawtrey and Wallace were on about. If a heavyweight boxer stepped into the ring against a lightweight contender and demolished him, would that be something to be proud of or ashamed of? And if the heavyweight boasted of his *great* victory, again, would that be a shameless or proud thing to do? And if he then went on to write a treatise to justify and celebrate as inevitable his great victory, that certainly would be a very polished thing to do, but would it be all the more

base and disgusting? To the 19th century European humanitarians, Europe as a colonial power was just like that imaginary (I hope) heavyweight boxer. 'Pick on someone your own size' could have been their slogan. Darwin seems to have made no such distinctions. Victory in any shape or form was good. And writing a treatise about it was a worthy thing to do.

All of this goes to show that what you see in the world depends very much on your agenda, your ideology, your worldview. All human objectivity or attempts at it, even in science, are riddled with subjectivity and choices. That doesn't mean objectivity is impossible. What it means is that there is a way to get closer to it and a way to suppress it. Scholars in many academic fields keep their biases hidden, which is the key to success in enforcing a prejudiced point of view. They offer a pretended or polished objectivity as cover. What it covers is that the scholar is living in a tunnel. The only way to get out of it (to see life as if you've just come out of a tunnel, as Jefferson Smith, Jimmy Stewart's character in *Mr. Smith Goes To Washington*, explains) and to approach a purer objective outlook is to make our subjective concerns as open, honest, and explicit as possible. It may get messy, but a little messiness can only help improve objectivity. Subjectivity does not have to interfere with objective truth. It does that only when it is made surreptitious and kept in the dark.

As remarked above, even though Darwin believed we were all evolved or descended from a common ancestor, this did not confer any kind of equality in his view. Some people may proclaim that all men are brothers, but Darwin could not help noticing "yet differences carried a long way" (Notebook C 217; quoted in Ch. 2, §6). Natural selection may proceed from shared origins, but it goes in the direction of deviations and variety in which there are very real and significant differences. Apes and human beings were related too, but Darwin in no way believed they had the same degree of intelligence (he thought apes would become extinct too; see two paragraphs below). Natural selection has the further consequence of tending to wipe out or reduce diversity, when the superior forms beat the lower in the struggle for existence ('beat' as we saw was one of Darwin's favorite words, not as much as 'competition' and 'improved', but he spoke often enough of one group beating another).

There is a fascinating moment in *Descent* (150-51), the first paragraph of the summary of the two Chapters 3 and 4, in which Darwin imagines what an ape would say, if he could communicate with human beings and if he could be objective ("a dispassionate view of his own case"), about the differences between itself and humans. The ape would admit that it was inferior in so many ways. Though Darwin never uses the word 'inferior', it is clearly what he means. The last difference is that the apes "would be forced to

acknowledge that disinterested love for all living creatures, the most noble attribute of man, was quite beyond their comprehension." It is fascinating not least because it is a sign of Darwin's class consciousness that he could only imagine that an inferior species would gladly admit (actually, "forced to acknowledge") its inferiority. It never occurs to him that this inferior species might have a few choice words about the human proclivity for lying and dissembling, for employing double standards, and for indulging in greed and bloodthirstiness. If Darwin had ever taken seriously criticism of Europeans for their savage behavior, by his mature years he had put it far behind him.

Darwin's larger point in this paragraph is that while "the difference between the mind of the lowest man and that of the highest animal is immense" (150), the difference "is one of degree and not of kind" (151). Despite that last point, he is emphasizing that there are many, many degrees between apes and humans. Inferiority is precisely one of the major points he wants to make.

Darwin in fact tied together the fate of savages and apes. I quoted the first sentence of the following at the beginning of this chapter, and here is the full passage:

At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilised races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace, the savage races throughout the world. At the same time the anthropomorphous apes, as Professor Schaaffhausen has remarked, will no doubt be exterminated. The break between man and his nearest allies [i.e., the apes] will be wider, for it will intervene between man in a more civilised state, as we may hope, even than the Caucasian, and some ape as low as a baboon, instead of as now between the negro or Australian and the gorilla. [*Descent*, 183-84; cf. 689]

This is how Darwin ranks them from highest to lowest: civilized, savage (like Negroes and Australian Aborigines), gorilla, baboon. The savage is on a grade in between civilized man and the gorilla; he helps to complete the continuum. When the savages and the gorillas are gone, the gap between higher human beings and baboons will appear very wide. Although Darwin believed there was a gap in intelligence between savages and apes (as in the 1859 letter to Lyell, just before *Origin* was published, see Ch. 1, §1; also in *Descent*, 85, 110), he sees a continuous gradation in mental abilities. Savages and gorillas fill in an even wider gap between civilized man and baboon. Most shocking is his cavalier acceptance of the elimination of savage races, which he believes reinforces his view that, mentally, they were just not up to the task of

competing with Europeans---and as we just saw, natural selection for Darwin was about competing if it was about anything.

Russell McGregor spots an interesting inconsistency in Darwin's scheme (McGregor, 31). Among human beings, Darwin sees the lower races going extinct, but among the apes, it is the higher ones, not the lower ones, that face this fate. I don't know whether Darwin was trying to manufacture an explanation for why there are big gaps in the historical record of fossils or whether he was hinting that European man is the agency of both extinctions, and thereby exempting Europe from such a destiny, but it is in Darwinian moments like this that you can see a fair degree of subjectivity in a field that is supposedly objective.

This passage from Darwin is a famous one and has been quoted by many writers with varying degrees of honest attention to what it means. Everyone realizes that it does not reflect well on Darwin, but some try to soften it or just avoid stating the obvious. A few (e.g., Adam Gopnik) won't quote it at all. On the same page that Russell McGregor quotes it and just before he does, he calls Darwin "a man of liberal humanitarian outlook, who was dismayed by the racial views" of certain others (30), but McGregor cannot bring himself to say that Darwin's racial views were just as bad. (For most, it is always Darwin's opposition to legal slavery that earns him the label 'liberal humanitarian' without any consideration of where he stood on a host of other issues, including illegal slavery and the rights of Aborigines.) McGregor does admit that the evolutionary science of Darwin and others "demanded a savage of brutal propensities" and required savages to "perforce fulfill this role" of missing link between modern man and anthropoid ancestors (30). They gave human evolution a direction and meaning that they did not give to organic evolution (31). McGregor makes many interesting points, but he cannot say it outright: This talk of the civilized inevitably exterminating all the savage races was one hell of a racist thing to say.

In the introduction to their edition of *The Descent of Man*, Desmond and Moore can acknowledge that Darwin "was pushing savages down towards the apes," but then turn around and say that for Darwin "the supreme virtue [was]: 'humanity' towards all other peoples and species ... It was a humanitarianism that Darwin and his family prided themselves on" (xxxix). How is handing savages over to extermination humanitarian? There continues to be a need to glorify Darwin beyond anything justified by the evidence.

Stephen Gould has his own way of avoiding the full truth. After quoting the above passage from *Descent* (in *Mismeasure*, 417), he admits that the "impression of Darwin's egalitarianism" is false and "arises largely from selective quotation." He actually has little to say about the passage itself. It

seems that the significant part of it for him is that savages are below Europeans. That there is an active extermination going on makes little impression on him. Ultimately, what he sees in Darwin is prejudice and paternalism, but not severe racism. Gould defends him with these more or less rhetorical questions: "What did Darwin do with his racial attitudes, and how do his actions stack up against the mores of his contemporaries?" (419). His conclusion is that "Darwin merits our admiration" (ibid.). Well, for one thing, Darwin used his racial attitudes to condone genocide of so-called inferior peoples.

I fail to see what is admirable in Darwin's condemning savages to extermination. Gould claims Darwin believed savages were improvable. That is Gould engaging in selective quotation. It is not supportable from Darwin's writings as a whole. Darwin rather insists that there are genuine and deep intellectual and moral differences between the races which evolved from the struggle for survival. Of the differences between the races, there are "some of slight and some of considerable importance" and among the important ones are "mental characteristics," including emotional and intellectual faculties (*Descent*, 196). Gould contrasts what he believes is Darwin's meliorism "in the paternalistic tradition" to the biological determinists who believed in "unalterable biological inferiority" and as a result "what social policy must then follow in an era of colonial expansion: elimination, slavery, permanent domination?" (*Mismeasure*, 419). Darwin certainly endorsed the expansion, the elimination, the domination, and as for slavery, I see no major signs that he protested illegal slavery or forced labor, or that he realized, as many humanitarians did, that colonialism was another form of slavery. Based on Gould's own standards, this puts Darwin more in the biological determinist camp. It does not stack up well against the mores of some of his humanitarian contemporaries who were quite different. And it is all there in that long passage in *Descent* which Gould refused to see for what it was, even though he quoted it.

Perhaps it takes a member of an Aboriginal group to really get it. Robert Williams, Jr., whom I have quoted before, is a professor of law and just by the way a Native American. In an essay for an Australian audience, he quotes this Darwin passage in full and sees exactly what is there: a "racist and dehumanising language of negative stereotypes and denigrating cultural markers" ("Mabo", 29). Further on, Williams comments, "We also can recognise that the language of savagery used by Darwin and those English speaking colonisers to describe Australia's Indigenous tribal peoples is the same exact racist language that was used to justify treating Australia as 'terra nullius' [empty or un-owned land], and therefore appropriate as vacant waste

lands under the European colonial era Doctrine of Discovery" (32). Say no more.

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Darwin may have believed in gradations of intellect, but this does not mean he had a high opinion of what animals and savages were capable of. He was intrigued by animals, but nonetheless, maintained a low valuation of them. In some of his letters and in his *Autobiography*, he liked to joke (more serious than joking) that since we are all descended from lower life forms, perhaps none of our convictions can be trusted, as who would trust the ideas of a low form of life, if it had any. In that same letter to Graham where he spoke about Caucasians beating the Turks hollow, and after telling his correspondent that it was his inward conviction that the universe was not the result of chance, he dismissed his own conviction by noting that "man's mind ... developed from the mind of lower animals" and then asked, "Would any one trust in the convictions of a monkey's mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?" (LL 1.316; the same thought is repeated in the *Autobiography*, 77.)

He was in many ways an amazing and sensitive man---exhibiting what Gillian Beer calls "His extreme openness to sense-experience" (*Fields*, 16)---but we should not overstate what his actual opinions were. For all his openness to experiencing the world without judgment, he never lost sight of differences between organisms and even the idea of one being superior to another. That is certainly true of the older Darwin. Beer seems to prefer the younger Darwin (very understandable) but without telling us that Darwin changed. When he was reading the sixth edition (1847) of Robert Chambers's *Vestiges*, he reminded himself in a marginal note not to use 'higher' and 'lower' but only 'more complicated'. Ten years earlier, not yet thirty years old, he had written: "It is absurd to talk of one animal being higher than another" (Notebook B 74). But even idealizing this younger Darwin is a stretch. Not only did the older Darwin not remain true to this, his younger self had trouble staying true.

The young Darwin (say, up to 40 years) was stating an ideal to be lived up to, but not one he actually operated by. He could not remain consistent in this. When comparing the songs of birds from different nations, Darwin writes, "Their soft-billed birds are inferior to ours, & our lark ranks very high" (Notebook C 256). He could have said the notes of some birdsongs are more complicated and some more simple, but he did not. Do not forget that when he gets to savages, he regards their music as hideous (*Descent*, 116; cf. 636).

In a set of notes which he labeled "Old and Useless Notes" (from 1838 to 1840), he used the expression "production of higher animals" (OUN 37),

which also appears at the very end of *Origin of Species* and at the end of the 1842 and 1844 essays, and he put man "at head of series in which special instincts decrease" (OUN 49). In another Notebook, he refers to "highness in scale" (D 156) and "lowest tribes" (D 157).

He also referred to "superiority of Christian over Heathen race" (OUN 38). He seems to be doing the same when he contrasts "The difference between civilized man & savage" (OUN 30ⁿ), though he does not use the words 'superior' or 'higher' here. He describes civilized man as "endeavoring to change that part of the moral sense which experience ... shows does not tend to greatest good ... The change our moral sense, is strictly analogous to change of instinct amongst animals." He does not go on to explain savages, but by implication, he seems to be saying that savages are like animals in that they live by a morality which is more like an unchangeable instinct, whereas civilized people use reason and experience to make necessary adjustments. Without using words of judgment, he nonetheless manages to make savages appear inferior and more animal-like. In Notebook C 196, he reminds himself that "Mans mind, in different races, being unequally developed." He similarly ranked religious views, as did most people in his time. He noted "how faint [love of deity or thought of eternity] in a Fuegian or Australian! why not gradation" (C 244). He saw savages stuck in "wildest imagination & superstitions" (ibid.).

Most famously perhaps, as I related earlier in this chapter (§3), the young Darwin could wonder in his journal, as so many scientists of his day did, which was the lowest human culture on earth. For him, it was a toss-up between Fuegians and Australian Aborigines (*Narrative*, 235ⁿ; *Voyage*, 194). In the original *Diary* (125), he seems to have tilted more towards the Fuegians of whom he says, "I believe if the world was searched, no lower grade of man could be found." Darwin never, not even in his youth, eschewed notions of higher and lower.

He begins one discussion of man in the published journal by dragging animals into it. Certain animals are superior, or more capable of improvement than others: "As we see those animals, whose instinct compels them to live in society and obey a chief, are most capable of improvement, so is it with the races of mankind" (*Voyage*, 193). The "perfect equality," as he calls it (i.e., social equality) among Fuegians, "must for a long time retard their civilization" (ibid.; in the *Diary*, 141, it is "prevent their civilization"). They need a chief who will "manifest his superiority and increase his power" (*Voyage*, 194). Civilization for Darwin included "complex formalities ... between the different grades [i.e., classes] of life" (*Diary*, 388; in all the published editions, e.g., *Narrative*, 505 and *Voyage*, 365, it is 'society' instead

of 'life'). He also noted "the vast superiority of civilized over uncivilized habits" (*Diary*, 143). The young Darwin was committed to ideas of higher and lower, and disdained notions of equality, even as the naturalist in him was telling himself not to do it.

The point we should not forget is that he brought all this with him into his version of the theory of evolution. Evolutionary theory did not force him to make distinctions of grades between organisms. That was something he imposed on evolution.

He made this obvious by declaring that intellect could be used as a measure of higher in animals: "When we talk of higher orders, we should always say, intellectually higher" (Notebook B 252). But then what was nobler and humbler in Darwin immediately cast doubt on what he just said: "But who with the face of the earth covered with the most beautiful savannahs & forests dare to say that intellectuality is only aim in this world" (*ibid.*). That was one of his best moments, but he did not remain faithful to it. In those discarded notes (OUN), the young Darwin could reason that if everything in man, the good and the bad, can be explained by material causes, "This view should teach one profound humility, one deserves no credit for anything ... nor ought one to blame others" (OUN 27; this will not cause any harm to our moral life because, as he says, "no one can be really *fully* convinced of its truth ..."; so it is a harmful idea, but it won't cause harm because no one really believes it). In his youth, Darwin *sometimes* reached for a more objective view of nature, with no higher and lower, or praise and blame, or any ranking, in it, but that humbler viewpoint constantly lost ground with him. His general tendency was to abandon this view, and he certainly did not work it into his mature ideas.

Chambers did hold on to this humility, unlike the young Darwin of the Notebooks, who said he believed "we may be all netted together" (B 232) but then he gave this up for ranking all things. For Chambers, all things really, truly are netted, and their place or rank in the system is not nearly as important as their connectedness to all other beings and the net (the whole) in which all are embedded. I reviewed some of the similarities and differences between Darwin and Chambers in the last section of the first chapter. It is remarkable that they could have so much in common and yet have such different senses of humility. Both believed in the continuity between animals and man, while believing man occupied the highest rung. But unlike Darwin, Chambers emphasized that any position, even the highest, was just a place in the whole and that we ought to respect our dependence on the whole, and cherish and protect our fellow organisms.

Both believed that man was descended from lower life forms and that false

human pride kept people from accepting this. But they embraced such different solutions. Darwin felt the way to appease that pride was to remember that low life forms are really pretty great because they are higher than inorganic dust. He constantly sought to reestablish rank. Chambers believed the best riposte to false vanity was to remind ourselves of the wholeness that holds us all. There is only one rank for Chambers and that is the whole. In the system of evolution championed by Chambers, organic beings are so connected to each other that every act of cruelty or injustice will come back to haunt the evildoer. The whole makes sure that what goes round comes round.

I don't know whether the South African feminist Olive Schreiner (see below, §8) was influenced by Chambers (one of her characters in *The Story of an African Farm*, Lyndall, uses the term 'vestige' when she talks about fossils and extinction [285]) or by someone else who got it from Chambers, but Schreiner captures very well the holistic approach to evolution in her novel (published 1883, a year after Darwin died). She notes how a number of diverse things resemble each other in form (the blood vessels in a dissected gander, a thorn-tree seen against the midwinter sky, metallic veins in a rock, the flow of water through some furrows, and the antlers on a horned beetle), and then ponders:

How are these things related that such deep union should exist between them all? Is it chance? Or, are they not all the fine branches of one trunk, whose sap flows through us all? That would explain it ... the earth ceases for us to be a weltering chaos ... Nothing is despicable---all is meaningful; nothing is small---all is part of a whole, whose beginning and end we know not. [*African Farm*, 176-77]

I would add to her last words that nothing is fated to become extinct and lose its place in the whole, not as long as human beings inhabit the planet. We have choices. It is arrogant to think we don't.

Are these outward similarities of form, which Schreiner pointed to, a 'deep union,' as she claimed? Most scientists would say no, but the proper scientific response to this is not to dismiss it as mere poetry, but to recognize that this is an interesting theory and to ask whether deeper evidence can be found to justify it. Schreiner was feeling her way to a vision that could be given more scientific support, if one knows where to look. While she may not have presented the best assortment of facts, sometimes the vision must come first, before we can see the evidence. Those who aren't busy being born every day, looking at things with fresh eyes, are busy dying. Or as Darwin said in a letter to Lyell, "without the making of theories, I am convinced there would be no

observation" (CCD 8.233; June 1, 1860) and later in the same year, to H.W. Bates, "I have an old belief that a good observer really means a good theorist" (CCD 8.484-85). The thinkers and writers who tried out holism were trying to see the world through another theory. They deserve great credit for that instead of ridicule.

As far as influences go, it should be remembered that through most of the 19th century, more copies of Chambers's *Vestiges* had been published than had Darwin's *Origin*. Of course, *Vestiges* had a fifteen year and ten edition head start, but it took much more than fifteen years for *Origin* to catch up. As James Secord points out, "The *Origin* did not decisively overtake *Vestiges* until the twentieth century" (Secord, 526). From the chart Secord provides there, *Origin* pulled slightly ahead for the first time in 1883 (that's 24 years after *Origin* came out), then fell behind again the next year when the 12th edition of *Vestiges* appeared. There was another spike for *Vestiges* in 1887 which lasted through 1888, and by the 1890s, *Origin* was inching ahead. Chambers was selling well long after 1859 had come and gone. People did not stop reading Chambers's take on evolution just because it had supposedly been superseded. But mainstream scientists made sure it would be treated with disrespect in the professional halls of science.

What all this means is that Chambers's style of holistic thinking likely continued to have an influence on people, probably unconsciously for the most part. Whatever effect *Vestiges* was having, it was happening underground. Aboveground, it was all Darwin. Darwinism had become the prevailing ideology of the day. It is true that natural selection was still in dispute and would not become more firmly established until sometime after the discovery of genes. But ideologically Darwin had been victorious much earlier. Thinking in terms of survival of the fittest had caught everyone's fancy and reinforced the western idea that we were the best civilization the earth had ever seen. By nature's edict, we deserved to live, savages did not. Justice did not enter into it.

Darwin was in vogue. One Spanish writer, Luis Pérez Minguez, complained in 1880 that Europe suffered "so dense an atmosphere of Darwinism that one can scarcely inhale anything else" (quoted in Glick, *Comparative*, 337). A Dutch professor, Abraham Kuyper, wrote in 1899, "Our nineteenth century fades away under the hypnotic spell of the dogma of Evolution" (quoted by Ilse Bulhof in Glick, 269), and it was Darwin's version that dominated. In the Netherlands, "In the sixties most professors in natural history were Darwinists" (284), which appropriately enough is what natural selection is supposed to do. It is supposed to take over. I believe Darwin succeeded not because his theory of natural selection was regarded as true (up

until the 1930s, it was contested) but because it was in tune with the spirit of the age of imperialism and capitalism, whereas Chambers's holistic sense was decidedly not. Here is what Ilse Bulhof has to say in the conclusion of her essay in Glick's book:

Darwin's progress in the Netherlands was easy ... the country was preparing itself, under the leadership of the liberal bourgeoisie, for its take-off into the age of industrial capitalism. Darwin served in this situation as a catalyst for the liberals ... one cannot but notice that the professional opinions of the scientists coincided to a remarkable degree with their social position and their attitudes toward society. And Darwinist biology would not have been so generously supported in the universities if it had worked against the liberal establishment. [305]

Truth has little to do with the appeal of anything. Fitting into the worldview of the majority or the dominant class is much more important. Chambers, being working class, had little chance of being heard or getting a fair hearing.

~ 8 ~

The study of history is not as full as it should be. We have left out a lot. Right now most academics make history a stage play with everyone playing a fixed role and leading to an inexorable conclusion---progress, victory after victory, with perhaps some slight setbacks, but the overall trend going basically in one direction. That was how Olive Schreiner, a 19th century South African writer-feminist-activist, more or less described one, only one, sort of storytelling of human life in the preface to the second edition of *The Story of an African Farm*. The book is in a sense a song to the powerless to tell them that some of us know what you are going through. You are not alone. You are part of the wholeness of life. (In the novel, she demonstrates an acute awareness of the powerlessness of women. Lyndall, the girl/woman who represents Schreiner's views, tells a child who has recently been whipped, "we will not be children always; we shall have the power too, some day" [142].) Her remarks about storytelling apply just as well to the study of history. Continual progress is how we want history to go in the stage version of human life, as she called it, with everything happening with "an immutable certainty" and everyone taking their bows. There is another kind of storytelling, she said, one in which:

There is a strange coming and going of feet. Men appear, act and re-act upon each other, and pass away. When the crisis comes the man who would fit it does not return. When the curtain falls no

one is ready. When the footlights are brightest they are blown out; and what the name of the play is no one knows. If there sits a spectator who knows, he sits so high that the players in the gaslight cannot hear his breathing. [8]

Real history is rarely neat or tidy. None of us know what's coming next and we won't be prepared for it, whatever it is. You can force history to be tidy only by sweeping a lot of things off the stage. Heroes don't always appear to save the day. Just the opposite. Great accomplishments turn out to have been not so great, if you take a closer look. Other genuine accomplishments get erased.

For those academics who would like certain parts of the past, including how professional historians have interpreted history, to remain dead and buried, they should remember the words of Schreiner: "All that is buried is not dead" (146). Or as the medical examiner, played by CCH Pounder, on *NCIS: New Orleans*, said on one episode in the first season, "When the dead have something to say, not even time will shut them up."

As I said in the first chapter (§4), we are just a continuation of the 19th century. It has been the longest century ever (cf. Holt, 3)---a long running play, you could say. The 21st century so far is nothing but the third installment of the 19th. We are living out their dreams, their hopes, their values---their issues and ideas---enthralled (mired?) to the very end. They gave us our belief in continual material progress, free enterprise, and never-ending new inventions. If our devotion to the free market and technology did not begin in the 19th century, it reached a culmination then and has never abated. Material progress and the market will solve all our problems and can never go wrong. The desire for luxuries is the driving force of progress (this belief is actually older than the 19th century). The modern theory of advertising---get them to desire what they don't need---emerged full-blown at the end of that century.

We are still using the same keyboard they devised on our computers. A limited version of the Internet sprang into being among telegraph operators, a third of whom were women, and it included "Internet romances". We would not have the cellphone without the telephone having come first. We're just improving all their dreams. They were dreaming of moving pictures, even if they did not know how to make them yet. If 19th century novels are still popular, it's because they make sense to us. Their world is ours. And their unresolved problems are ours. We accept living with the danger to the environment as a result of our material progress. And we accept that the conflict between racism (in some form or other) and humanitarianism should not be pushed too hard or resolved in favor of humanitarianism, or else it

might slow up progress. This was all in place in the 19th century.

Despite all this, we don't know what name to give to the play that is western civilization, though many think they know it. Some are sure it is "Civilization Ever Advancing" or maybe "The Progress of Science". A more prosaic title might be "Things Are Getting Better and Better" or "Science Improves Our Lives." Then there are the alternative titles: "Imperialism on the March", "Western Imperialism Takes No Prisoners", and "Science in Lust with Power."

It has been the longest century with a strange coming and going of feet and yet its most serious crises are with us still. One that never got resolved was this: Between racism and humanitarianism, which shall be regarded as normal and which as extremism? Unfortunately, the choice the majority culture in Darwin's time opted for was that racism shall be the comfortable norm and humanitarians will be considered extremists for interfering with progress. There were some who tried to get on stage to resolve the crisis another way. Sometimes they got on just past the wings, but they were not allowed to get very far or stay very long. Nonetheless they were there. They did exist. The curtain came down on the official end of the 19th century, the footlights were blown out, and no one was ready for what came next.

Some of the outsider voices were able to penetrate, to a very limited extent, the consciences of those who had the power to make political and economic policy. They made human rights an issue and we can thank them for that. The book in which the above-cited essay by Montagu Hawtrey appeared was actually a report on the British colonization of New Zealand to the New Zealand Association, soon to be renamed the New Zealand Company, the preeminent colonizing agent in that country, bent on acquiring much land but wanting to do it as fairly as possible (see Heartfield, 129-30). In one of its later reports, the Company acknowledged that "if the advantage of the natives alone were consulted, it would be better perhaps that they should remain forever the savages they are" (quoted in Heartfield, 130). That amounts to an admission that colonialism in and of itself was bad for the natives and that perhaps we should stay away---a lesson that was never fully absorbed by anyone, not even by the Aborigines' Protection Society of which Hawtrey was a member.

Some efforts were made to ameliorate the harmful effects of imperialism. In the end, it did not come to much. In New Zealand, efforts were made to carry out the idea of Hawtrey and others to adapt laws to Maori customs (see Ward, A., 65-67; e.g., the Maori found the English custom of imprisoning people for every offense to be ridiculous, offensive, and disrespectful; they much preferred their own custom of making offenders pay compensation to

the victim, and so laws like the Native Exemption Ordinance were passed to accommodate that). Some of these laws were passed under the governorship of Robert FitzRoy (1843-45), formerly Captain of the *Beagle* for Darwin's voyage. The response of the white settlers was extremely hostile. They considered FitzRoy guilty of "pandering to Maori 'bounce'" (Ward, 70). They did not hesitate to express their dissatisfaction in writing to the Colonial Office and in other ways. Magistrates felt intimidated if they tried to carry out the new ordinances (67).

James Stephen, one of the most humanitarian officials in that Office (and the one who said Saxe Bannister, proposer of generous schemes for the natives, was suffering from a mental aberration), expressed skepticism that laws in favor of the weaker party were a good idea, though his first reaction to these laws had been favorable (Ward, 71). In some 1840 instructions to a naval officer in New Zealand, he had expressed a defeatism about the efficacy of humanitarian ideas: "... neither penalties, nor regulations, nor the teachings of Christianity would restrain settlers from oppressing the Maoris" (quoted in Ward, 37; also see Reynolds, *Indelible*, 88-91, for Stephen's very deep pessimism that anything could be done to prevent the extermination of the indigenous). The general tendency was to cave in to settler hostility and to respond to native antagonism with armed force. Stephen believed that the only way natives could be saved from total destruction would be to supply them with weapons and ammunition, "an act of suicidal generosity which of course cannot be practised" (in Reynolds, 89). FitzRoy ultimately lost his position because he did not react effectively enough to native hostility (Ward, 70). As Ward says, "The fate of FitzRoy, who did make some attempt to accommodate Maori viewpoints was a stark warning" (160).

Similarly, though emancipation of slaves ultimately failed in making the freed slaves an equal part of society, some British officials (like Stephen) did make sincere efforts to combat the racism that would undo emancipation. The problem was that every time someone made an effort to push against racism or colonialism, the push-back was so strong and severe that the humanitarian program had to be reduced or abandoned altogether. Humanitarians (the philanthropists of that time) were deemed to be extremists or sometimes unrealists, which really came to the same thing. That is one of the ongoing legacies of the 19th century. Darwin, subtly or not so subtly, favored the so-called realist position: Material progress is good for all, including the natives, and humanitarian concerns are ill-conceived at best, hogwash at worst. Chambers represented another kind of realist thinking which said: Be very careful of what you choose to do in the world because some of it may come back to bite you in the ass. The legacy of colonialism in the so-called Third

World has justified the wisdom of his thought.

In these first few chapters, we have already heard some of the alternative voices: Wallace, Chambers, Hawtreys, Napier, Bannister, Sharp, Rafinesque, Hodgkin, Humboldt, Bonwick, Gerland, Savage. They were not perfect humanitarians. No one is. But they had a different reaction to the crisis than someone like Darwin. His theory did not just happen to support the answer that made racism appear normal. He brought cultural preconceptions to the work that shaped the theory a certain way. Evolutionary theory before him had not been going in that direction. The theory as first developed by others had gone against the grain of the dominant social convention instead of flowing with it. Chambers almost never talked about competition and domination. He was thrilled by the unity of life, the intertwining of all its parts, and had respect for the various pieces of the puzzle. Nothing was too small, too weak; all had meaning.

As Olive Schreiner said, "Nothing is despicable---all is meaningful; nothing is small---all is part of a whole, whose beginning and end we know not" (*African Farm*, 176-77). That is a perfect summary of holistic thinking with an emphasis on humility and our ultimate ignorance ("we know not" where the whole is going).

This may not have occurred clearly to people like Chambers, Wallace, Rafinesque, Schreiner, Emma Martin, another 19th century feminist influenced by Chambers (see Ch. 9, §6), and to some ex-slaves, along with assorted others, but they had a glimmering notion of the following: All that a world of free competition (and nothing is free) will accomplish is that the rich in power will become more rich, the poor will become poorer, the abused more abused, and the underprivileged will fall further and sink more deeply under the weight of it all. No one could accuse Darwin of trying to understand nature from the point of view of the weak, the powerless, the exterminated. His theory of nature is strictly from the vantage point of the dominating powers, as if life had been created for them only. Sometimes the alternative, holistic thinkers may have thought for a moment of gaining more power for those who didn't have it, but in the end, all they knew was that one had to give comfort to the powerless, give them an awareness that we know you exist and your lives are not meaningless, but a complete solution to your problems will have to await another day.

In touching on this theme now, I am just trying to correct the historical record and create a fuller stage. A strange coming and going of feet when you take it all in.

It is clear that Darwin's anthropology never really changed from his earliest years to his later work. (Stephen Gould holds the same opinion in *Mismeasure*, 416, though we differ on how severe his prejudice was.)

Here is one example of how little his anthropological views changed. In 1838 (Notebook C 79), he describes savages like this: "roasting his parent, naked, artless, not improving yet improvable." And here is this, thirty-three years later, from the last page of *Descent*: "delights to torture his enemies, offers up bloody sacrifices, practises infanticide without remorse, treats his wives like slaves, knows no decency, and is haunted by the grossest superstitions." On the same page, concerning the Fuegians, he says that they are like wild animals living only on what they can catch and that they have no government. Really? Do any people on earth have no government? In 1781, in *Plain Facts*, Samuel Wharton, who was arguing how unjust it was to dispossess the natives of their lands, would quote Lord Bolingbroke rhetorically asking: From the fact that "the *Aborigines*,, had neither *written* laws, nor civil magistrates, will it follow, *that they had no customs*, which were among them, *equivalent* to laws ... *no forms of government*, because they had not those of civil government" (Wharton, 7-8; emphases in original).

Here is the testimony of one Lieutenant-Colonel Colebrook in March 1837 before the House Select Committee: "In my experience of various tribes ... among the Arabs, the Malays, the Indians and the Africans, I have had occasion to observe that some rude form of municipal organization has generally subsisted among them all" (*Report*, "Minutes", 25).

In *Humane Policy* (1830), Saxe Bannister noted that natives in South Africa have a strong sense of legal procedure in their own customs (45-46), which is indicative of some form of government, and he further suggests that their knowledge of law is one reason for "the acuteness with which flagrant injustice is likely to be felt by them" (48). One gets the feeling that Bannister thought this was true for many native peoples around the world. In fact, in *British Colonization and Coloured Tribes* (1838), he writes that our voyages and discoveries around the world (and throughout this book, he cites voyages from previous centuries) have shown that "the wildest savages have some signs and shadow of law and polity" (129).

Darwin makes a few other choice comments about savages in *Descent*. In both Notebook C 79 and *Descent*, it was his rhetorical purpose to make animals like orangutans look better by comparison. He may be exaggerating a bit for effect, but if anything, it looks like his opinion of savage human beings has sunk even lower, as he got older. Most of what he believed about these people was based on what he read in the accounts of other travelers, but he chose to rely only on the negative assessments and ignored positive comments

about savages.

In Notebook M 153 (1838), he compares behaviors and expressions in man and animals and notes that many will object that there is still an "immense difference" between man and animals, then counters that if we put aside language and "judge only by what you see. compare the Fuegian & Orang & outang, & dare to say differences so great ..." (his ellipsis). In Notebook C 79 (earlier part of 1838), he unfavorably compares some savages and orangutans (quoted in part several paragraphs above, "roasting his parent", etc.) and adds this comment: "not understanding language of Fuegian, puts on par with Monkeys." His main point in these passages, and in his later writings, is to remind himself (and the imaginary audience any author writes for) of man's lowly origins (whether it is animal or savage ancestors). Thus in C 79, he adds, "let him [man, i.e., us] dare to boast of his proud preeminence." But these *lowly* origins do include the savage human beings who exist in a stage of development preceding western civilization. He is not spitefully belittling savages. He takes their inferiority for granted. Despite this, I have to point out that while Darwin thought savages and apes were not all that different in many ways, it was his general opinion that savages were intellectually superior to animals (e.g., in the letter to Lyell, previously quoted in Ch. 1; also see *Descent*, 85).

Darwin can be so direct in his Notebooks and letters, while he resorts to circumlocution in his published works. At the end of *The Descent of Man*, he makes his low opinion of savages exceptionally clear, but describes his first sighting of Fuegians in somewhat muted terms compared to his description in a letter I am about to quote from. In *Descent*, he writes, "The astonishment which I felt on first seeing a party of Fuegians on a wild and broken shore will never be forgotten by me ..." Then he tells us of their naked, painted bodies with long tangled hair and frothing mouths. In a roundabout way, he implies that savages generally are lower than monkeys as "I would as soon be descended from that heroic little monkey [described earlier in the book] ... as from a savage ..."

That he was horrified by his first encounter with these savages is more strongly stated in the previously quoted letter to Charles Kingsley (in which he states that humanity as a whole will rise in rank when all the lower races are gone). In the letter, he adverts to the same incident and tells Kingsley that when the idea of being related to or descended from a "naked painted, shivering hideous savage" occurred to him, "I declare the thought ... was at that time as revolting to me, nay more revolting than my present belief that an incomparably more remote ancestor was a hairy beast" (CCD 10.71). He got used to the idea of being related to a monkey, but he was having a hard time

with the same idea for savages. What he expresses so bluntly in his private correspondence is useful at times for bringing out the full implications in his published works.

Darwin deserves a lot of credit for his honesty and perception. While everyone else was going on, and is still to this day carrying on, about descent from monkeys, Darwin knew the real problem was our relation to other human beings who were so different from us. Not just different in skin color, but in their cultural practices and level of technological achievement. Could we stand the idea that we are related to such different branches of humanity? Will we ever get over that? Darwin admitted that he found this hard to get used to. All his life, in fact. This was so from the beginning to almost the end of his work. It's there late in his work in *Descent* and it was there early on in Notebook C 154: "look at common ancestor, scarcely conceivable in savages" (I have omitted a misplaced open parentheses mark). What makes this comment so interesting is that it is immediately preceded by an argument that man has much in common with animals (therefore implying common descent and some sympathetic relationship to animals) and immediately followed by a comment that "the white Man ... has debased his Nature" by enslaving "his fellow black" and treating him as an animal. Humanitarianism of a sort for lower animals and for black slaves, but "scarcely conceivable" for savages.

And why should this be so difficult to conceive, given that savages have at least as much in common with European man as animals do and that savages were dehumanized (often compared to monkeys) as much as slaves were? Yet savages were a category apart for Darwin. They were the great stumbling block for him and he was very conscious of it. With prejudices this strong, it is scarcely conceivable that Darwin could have anything accurate to say about savages. I mean that quite seriously. The strength of feeling about the inferiority of indigenous peoples was so intense among men of science in the 19th century that it is a wonder they could get anything right. These highly educated and professional men functioned more as political lackeys of an imperial system than as scientists.

This is all the more remarkable as there were plenty of humanitarians in Darwin's time, albeit still a minority, who complained about the treatment of Aborigines as animals. As I reported earlier in this chapter, when discussing Napier's anti-racist views, Napier complained bitterly in his 1835 book about the natives of Australia being treated as "a race which forms the link between men and monkeys" (94; cf. 146). John Lort Stokes (Darwin's cabin mate) in his 1846 book was equally incensed at the mistreatment of Aborigines, "this national crime" in which we "have sternly and systematically trampled on the fallen," remarking that this was based on "an erroneous theory ... That the

aborigines were not men, but brutes ... and what cruelties flowed from such a doctrine" (Stokes, 2.464). He understood that racist ideas lead to cruelties. Darwin had read proofs of this book and sent Stokes a note to "congratulate you heartily on the great success of your Book" after it was published (CCD 3.373), but he wasn't listening to this anti-racist argument. As for white people debasing themselves by enslaving others (his comment in Notebook C 154; see above), the same debasement occurred when white people mistreated Aborigines, but he refused to take this in. Darwin certainly read Colonial Secretary George Murray's November 1830 letter to the Governor of Van Diemen's Land in which he said that if we exterminate the native population of that land, it "could not fail to leave an indelible stain upon the character of the British government," as this was included in the Appendix to James Bischoff's 1832 history of the country (233). In *Narrative* (533), Darwin said he found the correspondence in this Appendix "very interesting." But again, he wasn't really listening.

The unfortunate fact is that common origin never implied for Darwin brotherhood much less equality. That inscription "Am I Not A Man And A Brother?" on his grandfather Josiah Wedgwood's slave medallion was meaningful to Charles Darwin, but the same sentiment for savages he had a hard time accepting: "Two savages, two species ... civilized Man, May exclaim with Christian we are all Brothers in spirit---all children of one father.---yet differences carried a long way" (Notebook C 217; which I quoted a little while back). We may all be brothers in spirit, but look at those differences! Scholars who proclaim that Darwin believed in a brotherhood of man (e.g., Gruber, 182) can do so only by ignoring evidence like this and the massive evidence I will present in Chapter 5. These Notebooks were written at a time when Darwin's anti-slavery feelings were very strong (not that they were any less strong during the American Civil War) and he hears the call of some Christians and some civilized men that all men are brothers, yet he cannot convince himself to fully embrace this for savages whose immense differences he cannot put out of his mind.

Common ancestor and genetic relatedness, while truths of evolutionary theory for Darwin, were not nearly so significant for him in the case of savages as that other great truth of evolutionary theory: Descendants diverge and develop enormously important differences. He said so again and again in his Notebooks, letters, and published works. He knew exactly where he stood on this and it was not with the humanitarians. "Of One Blood", the motto of the Aborigines' Protection Society, was a way of saying we are all connected. Darwin was objecting that disconnections loomed larger for him.

We should all be that honest. But it isn't Darwin's feelings of prejudice that

are the issue. This is not about making a judgment on a man's temperament a century and a half after the fact. It is how he used them in science that is the more serious issue and how mainstream science tolerated and even encouraged this kind of thing. To this very day, science cannot bring itself to remember the evidence of what this great scientist said about a large class of human beings.

What is so troubling about Darwin is that he formulated an anthropology of savages based on first impressions and never varied from it. He took exception when "some authors have recently taken a high view of their moral nature ..." (*Descent*, 144). Darwin never spent a lot of time living with any native people. He never took the trouble to learn their languages. His entire attitude can be summed up by his reaction to their music. It is hideous, he declared (see previously in §7 of this chapter), without even considering that it might take time to appreciate a foreign art form, as a few anthropologists of his time were capable of doing (see Fabian, *Out of*, 116-20). Note well: It is not Darwin's opinion that native music is hideous which is significant. It is *how* he arrived at that opinion---that is, by the briefest sort of contact.

Explorer Joseph Thomson understood that quickly formed opinions of native peoples were based on prejudice more than anything else (I owe my awareness of Thomson to Johannes Fabian). After disputing a previous explorer's opinion of the Wahehe people in Africa (Thomson found them *not* to be thieves, rude, disagreeable, and filled with superstitions), he makes the following general comments which deserve to be quoted in full (this was published in 1881, a year before Darwin died; it is based on Thomson's travels in Central Africa from 1878-80; Fabian, *Out of*, 180-81 quotes the same passage):

It is seldom, however, that the geographical explorer can form just conceptions of the manners or customs of a native tribe, or of their moral character, travelling as he generally does straight through the country, and meeting the natives but a short time, when under the influence of fear or suspicion of the great man. It can only be by a prolonged residence in the district and a thorough command of the language that a person is entitled to speak with the confidence of certain knowledge. The Central Africans have not had this justice done to them, and till such justice is done, we have little right to draw very definite conclusions about the negro mind. To me it seems that most travellers under the influence of fevers and the thousand troubles attendant on African travelling, have much maligned and unjustly

abused the natives, and that few people have studied them with unprejudiced and unbiassed minds. [Thomson, 1.238; his spellings]

This is good, even great, science, and the sad thing is that the mainstream science of Darwin's day did not even come close to it. Thomson is honest enough to admit, "Many people will be astonished to learn, that during the fourteen months I was in the interior I never once saw an African marriage, or the burial of a native, or the ceremonies on such occasions as the birth of a child," that most of the time he was just "passing through the country," and so apologizes for "the comparative scantiness of anthropological details" (1.viii-ix). (The photograph of him at the front of Volume 2 seems to be of a sweet, kindly young man; he was 23 when this was published and died in 1895 at the age of 37.)

Though he acquired a reputation as an excellent humanitarian, Thomson never quite lived up to it. According to his biographer Robert Rotberg, perhaps his main claim to a humane character was his commitment to shun violence. "Thomson had a rare gift for pacifism and a gentleness of spirit unusual for the time, for explorers, and for white men in nineteenth-century Africa ... [and] proved able, to resolve situations of conflict without resort to violence" (Rotberg, 10). Yet he never followed his own prescriptions for good anthropological study (as above). Rotberg describes him as "everywhere in a hurry," and "capable of brilliant insights, but ordinarily remained content to assume and not to probe ... Rarely given to introspection" (302). As he grew older, his views of Africans hardened into contempt and outright racism. He believed their minds were "low undeveloped" and "that Africans in general had neither the capacity nor the desire to become civilized" (229). His later articles gave "evidence that Thomson had come firmly to share many of the prejudices of his more rough-minded contemporaries" (258). Rotberg conjectures this was due to peer pressure, "the acceptance of the racial mores and mottoes of his peers rather than any independent analysis," particularly from "the white businessmen and administrators resident in Africa" (258).

Thomson did maintain an awareness of the evils of imperialism (the previous slave trade and the ongoing trade in guns and intoxicating spirits) and the only reason he thought that imperialism should not be ended is that Britain had a moral obligation to repair the immense harm it had inflicted on these people (261). His criticisms angered many missionaries and anthropologists, whom Thomson enjoyed upsetting (228, 230). His insight basically ended there. His only solution was that Africans needed a paternal government which would force them to work and learn some essential things

(229). He could also be uncritical of some of the perpetrators in this imperial system (210). Some of his insights, as in the above blocked quote, were indeed brilliant and should be remembered, but he also stands as a lesson in how difficult it is to resist the views of the majority. One of those influential peers was Darwin. Thomson was a fan and went to this funeral (129). "Like so many of his contemporaries during an age influenced by Darwin, Thomson assumed that peoples and races could be placed along a continuum of cultural superiority" (175).

To repeat what I said near the beginning of this chapter: Scientific racism has little to do with science. The racism precedes the science. Racist assumptions are made (e.g., about a hierarchy of human cultures) and then people look for something "scientific" to back it up. The science is irrelevant and bogus, but the racist feelings guiding it, or rather its misuse, are very real--relatedness to savages being "as revolting to me, nay more revolting," as Darwin said in the letter to Kingsley (above).

Gillian Beer, always ready to see the positive in Darwin, describes him as struggling to comprehend the strangeness of the Other, as having "heartfelt difficulties in tracking kinship," communicating "a sense of fascinated helplessness at finding himself unable to interpret the profound difference of the other man" (*Open Fields*, 25). She has him recoiling from and leaning towards the people he describes (126). There is some truth to that. You can see it in early writings like his *Diary* or its last published version *The Voyage of the Beagle*.

What Beer does not tell her readers is that Darwin lost this struggle for objectivity and comprehension. The older he got, the more hardened he became towards the savage Other and the more exclusively he identified this savagery with unfamiliar Others. The young Darwin was capable of calling Gauchos in Argentina white savages and some of his fellow Englishmen polished savages (see previously in the second chapter). The older Darwin would never do that, and even his younger self deleted these the first time his *Diary* was published. It is like that other youthful ideal he had (mentioned earlier in connection with a marginal note on Robert Chambers's *Vestiges* and another remark in his Notebook B)---never to speak of higher and lower species but only more complicated---which he also abandoned.

Margaret Hodgen reminds us in *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (510), in which she sometimes takes a look backward and forward from the time period of her book, that Darwin lived in a time when scholars wondered which people on the planet were the lowest, nearest the brutes. As discussed previously in this chapter (§3), Darwin, like many others, opted for the Fuegians, but considered it a toss-up between them and

the Australian Aborigines. One might almost say that evolutionary theory demands this kind of thinking. There have to be gradations of development. Everyone in Darwin's time, and even today, would have agreed that European civilization and ancient classical civilization were far advanced above anything in the animal world. It is quite a leap. But nature makes no leaps. Darwin was extremely fond of quoting this saying in Latin, *Natura non facit saltum*, in *Origin* (e.g., in the heading of Chapter VI). There have to be grades in between.

For Darwin and so many others, savages provided those intermediary gradations between the highest human beings and the animals. He firmly believed in ordering the world into groups and sub-groups, a hierarchy of divisions. When you do that, some groups are going to be at the top and some at the bottom. There was no question in Darwin's mind where savages belonged. Hodgen is one of the few people, maybe the only one, to understand that nothing much ever changes in European thinking (*Early*, 511): "... in all of these undated, logical, ideal, evolutionary, and conjectural philosophies of history there are unmistakable overtones and reminders of the medieval chain of being, of the medieval conceptual inventory and schematization of things." That's not what most writers will tell you (McGregor, 30, is an exception, as he too sees something reminiscent of the great chain of being in Darwin's thought). They prefer to see advances in science, particularly by Darwin, which they claim overthrew the chain of being. But Hodgen, as I pointed out in Chapter 1, recognized that what Darwin did was to temporalize the biological hierarchy (*Early*, 470); he thus remained a medieval thinker, reaffirming the chain of being:

The multiplicity of things, or the variegated world of nature, was held together by a golden chain, so scaled that the more remote a thing might be from its original source, the lower its grade of perfection. Indeed, at a later date, the same organizing principle, already accepted by the theologians, was ratified in modern biological inquiry by Charles Darwin. [*Early*, 397]

Darwin was, as I said before, a biological theologian. His theology was that groups are subordinate to groups---throughout the universe and throughout time. This makes his science equal parts science and conquest.

It is ironic when you compare this hubris with some degree of humility inherent in natural selection itself. As Gould frequently reminded us, natural selection acts locally. But that has never been enough for European man whose reach was to conquer as much as possible, the universe, if he could. Europe builds theoretical systems so that it can take over in spirit. This

follows the pattern of what Christian theology did. Do it in thought first---conquer in theory, ideology, worldview---and successful action is more easily achieved. One might call this the golden rule of western civilization. This fight for the dominant ideology continues in the ways we study history.

Ranking organic beings became more important to Darwin than the possibility of being netted together, as he had put it in Notebook B 232. If you took out all references to dominant species in *Origin*, it would be an entirely different book. 'Dominance' completely colors *Origin* and made it the book it is.

Already in *Origin*, Darwin was laying the groundwork for the subordination of human beings in groups under groups, and even before *Origin* in his Notebooks. We will see this kind of thinking confirmed in *The Descent of Man*. It goes back to the Notebooks and letters too. He was raised in this intellectual atmosphere. And because Darwin introduced the element of time, that means extinction of species will play a role in the ordering within the hierarchy. Extinction will take place according to fixed principles that cannot be challenged. In Notebook E 64, after noting that it is chiefly intellect which makes the difference in which human groups will "gain the day", Darwin wrote, "intellect in Australia to the white.---The peculiar skulls of the men on the plains of Bolivia---strictly fossil <<& in Van Diemen's land [Tasmania]>>--- they have been exterminated on *principles*. strictly applicable to the universe." (Emphasis is Darwin's; the editors' double angled brackets indicate Darwin's insertion; square brackets my insertion.) In a way, Darwin is very consistent from beginning to end. (Immediately after this note, he makes his remark that he agrees with Lyell that man is not an intruder, thus justifying imperialism.)

Darwin at times knew better. When writing to someone about another author who implied that Darwin's views explain the whole universe, Darwin calls this "a most monstrous exaggeration" (to Lord Farrer, Aug. 28, 1881; ML 1.394). Despite this and a statement at the very end of the Introduction to *Origin* that "Natural Selection has been the main but not exclusive means of modification," there is a definite push in *Origin* to make *everything* fall under the order of natural selection. Looking back at *Origin* in *Descent* (82), he admitted that it is probable that he had "exaggerated its power." His friend Joseph Hooker (in letter of Dec. 20, 1859; CCD 7.437) had told him that the theory "at first-sight seems overstrained; ie to account for *too much*." Hooker also said, "You ... probably ride it too hard---that is a necessity of your case." Interesting that Hooker would add that last comment. Is it really a necessity? It is a necessity only if you adopt imperialism as a point of view: We must rule everywhere over everything.

When Darwin makes some comments in *Origin* (143, 376) on the superiority of European and British life forms to those in Australia and New Zealand (to be discussed in detail in Ch. 6, §2), he makes it very clear where he was headed. Humans are just another life form. His readers would have understood him to include British human beings in the hierarchy. What he says in *Descent* was no departure from what came before.

It is not inevitable that evolutionary ideas should lead to racial assumptions and categorizing, but it seems that in Darwin's case it did. This will become inescapably clear in *The Descent of Man*. I should add one other thing here. In *Origin*, Darwin would often stop to consider what sorts of things could undo his theory (e.g., 222, 232, 234, 271, 274, 339). He was open to objections and would acknowledge that if such and such were true, it would be fatal to my theory, or my theory would have to be abandoned, or some such expression. Thus, if it could be demonstrated that there is a complex organ that could not possibly have developed by numerous, slight modifications, "my theory would absolutely break down" (222) or if any modification in one species could be shown to have taken place exclusively for the benefit of another species, "it would annihilate my theory" (234). This is partly why Hooker thought the theory seemed overstrained and accounted for too much. This was not a mere tic on Darwin's part. He had been thinking like this for a long time.

He approached it this way in his first two essays. In 1842 (25, 27), he would say that if such and such is the case, "my theory must be given up." In 1844 (130, 138, 139, 142, 145 [text and n2]), his theory must be abandoned or is false or is overthrown or some such thing. In only one place (1844, 151n) does he use the word 'fatal' which he would later become so fond of. Also, in a letter to Hooker (July 13, 1856; CCD 6.178), he said, "as I am writing my Book, I try to take as much pains as possible to give the strongest cases opposed to me, and often such conjectures as occur to me."

You won't find him doing this in *Descent*. There, Darwin has no interest in anything that might be fatal to his theory (of the inferiority and inevitable extermination of savage races). He avoids it---assiduously, I might add. He *never* says, for example, that it would be fatal to my theory of why native peoples are becoming extinct, if someone could demonstrate that their disappearance is due to injustice and not to natural selection. Or, it would be fatal to my theory, if someone demonstrated that savages are not intellectually inferior. He had to have been aware (from Bonwick, Gerland, and others) that some people did raise such objections, but it does not concern him in *Descent*. In that book, he will allow nothing to interfere with the program. In his

anthropological book, he was not out to prove a theory of man so much as to enforce a point of view, an imperialist worldview. If that does not make you suck in your breath, I don't know what else would.

Many in Darwin's time regarded the dispossession of native peoples to be equivalent to slavery (a number of examples will be given in the next chapter, §2, including James Bonwick and his own grandfather Erasmus, both of whom Darwin read). Darwin never acknowledges such arguments---in contrast to what he does in *Origin* where he gladly considers objections to his theory (Wallace had to tell him that he was "*overstating* the difficulties & objections," thus giving his critics ammunition against him; CCD 10.217; his emphasis). One reason why any scientist would take on objections is because they have a confidence in how right their own theory is. They are eager to take on all critics. Objections can only clarify and help to strengthen a good theory. Doubts are not a bad thing. As Darwin said in a letter, "Yet I fear that a man is most apt to fall into error exactly where from his ignorance he feels no doubts" (CCD 20.261).

In the case of his negative assessments of savages and his failure to take into account the injustices practiced against them, Darwin banished all doubt. He did not just understate objections to his approach, he erased them from consciousness. When you suspect or feel ill at ease that your position on an issue is not well-founded, objections are not welcome. That is what I see happening when Darwin is silent on the possibility, expressed by many of his contemporaries, that colonialism has been enslaving native peoples. I think he had an unconscious sensation that he might be wrong about treating colonialism as a natural event.

~ 11 ~

At bottom, this is not about Darwin. He was a part of mainstream science. Everything he said about savages, everything which he made seem scientifically proper, was fully accepted by most of his colleagues. The mainstream has tremendous capacity to tolerate bias in the work of its members. This is about how easy it is to pass off prejudiced assumptions as reasonable science and how hard it is to get anyone to admit it when this has happened. We have trouble admitting there is a difference between science in the ideal and the profession of science. Too often, we think the two are identical. We don't like confessing that there are times when the profession fails science and we fail to encourage the academic freedom to discuss this.

This isn't even about ferreting out another racist from a suppressed history. This is not fundamentally about racists, but about racism and the ways racism can affect good people and good scientists like Darwin. The world isn't

divided between racists and non-racists. The dividing line runs through every human heart and gives each one of us the potential to succumb to bad notions. The great accomplishment of racism is that it can get even non-racists to see the world through a racist lens and it can get scientists to ruin their science. How did the top-notch scientists in Darwin's day (these were not fringe lunatics) not see that they were practicing such bad science when they argued that savage peoples are inferior and would soon be extinct? How did they not see that their devotion to European conquest blinded them to an objective view of the evidence? And why is this still so hard to discuss?

Any racism that can be identified in Darwin's work is bigger than Darwin. If we make a saint or god out of him, then we are agreeing that there are cases of racism which can legitimately remain hidden because reputations are more important than finding out how racism has the potential to damage even good people. If racism can get to Darwin, it can get to anyone. Darwin's work gives us an opportunity to see how racism works its ill magic. And racism does work. It very effectively aligns itself with love of conquest and material gain, regardless of where or on whom the consequences fall. It works very well unless we are willing to expose all its manifestations.

Racist teaching, or rather the racist activity of humiliating peoples, has long-lasting effects. It takes counter-activity to challenge that. It does not disappear just by pretending it never happened. If we pretend it isn't there in Darwin, we lose a great chance to see how racism can infect science.

This is also about the way we assume scientists are as capable of objectively applying a theory to human beings as to nature in general. They are not. Nobody has this capacity. Everything about being human affects us personally. Applying natural selection to human life, culture, morality, and social concerns is not easy, nor does it lend itself to objectivity. We are bound to make just about every possible kind of mistake there is to make. We can deny it, we can cover it up, or try to, but the mistakes will still be there and they will have repercussions, like it or not. I take Darwin as a representative of mainstream science. This is about science as it works in practice, not about his personal views. If the tolerance of professional science for bad ideas does not make you suck in your breath, I don't know what would.

4

SLAVERY, EMANCIPATION, AND CONTINUING RACISM

What kind of free this? This the free them gee we. This Free worse than slave, a man cant put up with it.

---Ex-slave (c. 1848?) (quoted in Holt, 174)

~ 1 ~

It is a good idea, I think, to take a moment to put to its eternal rest one of the worst ideas that so many scholars have promoted as a misdirection. That is the idea that racism is an anachronism for the 19th century---the claim that no one in that time saw racism for what it was, that is, as a significant social problem that had to be resisted with anti-racist efforts. Someone like Gould believed that racism is an inapplicable judgmental category for that time because everyone shared in it, or at least he used this to defend Darwin. To more fully quote what I offered from him in the previous chapter: "The egalitarian end did not exist for the policymakers of Darwin's day. All were racists by modern standards" (*Mismeasure*, 422).

Not all. Racism did exist in the 19th century and a minority opposed it; this minority did exist. Gould conveniently forgot this. He asks, "How can we castigate someone for repeating a standard assumption of his age, however much we may legitimately deplore that attitude today?" (418). But it was deplored in Darwin's time. Gould even says that if we parcel out blame like this for racist ideas, "there will be no one left to like" (419). That is just too much. He has erased too many people from history. And when he argues that "I cannot excoriate individuals who acquiesced passively in a standard societal judgment" (419), he has forgotten that Darwin's racism was much more than passive and that there were others who did not acquiesce. Those people who stood head and shoulders above Darwin's limited humanitarianism deserve to be remembered.

Adam Gopnik says, "We should judge the past by the standards of the best voices that were heard within it" (Gopnik, 157). Okay, so let's do that. Let's take a brief look at some of the best voices that the emancipation of slaves brought to the fore. Most of the following, with some slight changes and additions, was originally written for an Appendix on slavery and emancipation, but I decided to make it more concise and present it here.

Britain abolished the slave trade in 1807. It was hoped that this would lead to the gradual end of slavery, but it did not work out that way. Between then and 1833, Parliament passed a number of Amelioration Acts to improve the conditions of slaves. Finally in 1833, the Great Reform Parliament abolished slavery. Abolition became effective in August 1834. It was decided that in many of the colonies there would be an apprenticeship period until full freedom was attained in 1838. As apprentices, the partially freed slaves would spend about half their time continuing to work as slaves and during the other half, they could sell their labor, or not work at all, if they chose. Many argued that the apprenticeship period was not true freedom and lobbied for complete emancipation to arrive sooner; for this and other reasons, it was moved up from the originally planned date of 1840 to 1838.

It is very important to remember that before emancipation of slaves was achieved, there was a growing population of free people of color, especially in Jamaica, who had been fighting for their civil rights for a long time and were largely successful by the time the slaves were freed, although enforcing the rights they gained was more difficult. The growing economic power of free coloreds was a primary reason why their rights had been curtailed in the late 18th century (Heuman, 6). The fact that there was such a population in the first place was due mainly to white slave owners having children by their black mistresses. They often gave these children freedom and land when they died. Some of the rights the free colored people demanded in Jamaica (at various times and over several decades) were the right to give legal testimony in court, removing the limit on the amount of property they could inherit, the right to serve on juries and work in public offices, the right to vote and serve in the legislature. They achieved full civil rights in December 1830, three years before the abolition of slavery.

Richard Hill, one of the Jamaican leaders of the free coloreds, clearly saw the connection between gaining their rights and ameliorating and finally ending slavery. Helping free coloreds was "the first step towards any effectual remedy for the evils incidental to a system of slavery," he wrote in 1823 (Heuman, 34-35). As Heuman notes, "For Hill, there was little likelihood that the whites would willingly alter a system that preserved their superiority" (35), so that the system of suppressing free colored people had to be changed

even before emancipation of the slaves. It would mean nothing if slaves were freed into an un-free world. Hill was more right about that than many at the time realized. He clearly saw that racism existed and would pose a severe obstacle to progress *after* emancipation.

Britain should get credit for at least trying to solve the slave problem in a rational way. Government officials did not wait for an extended bloody civil war to push them into it. How rational were they? Rational enough to realize that racism would be a major obstacle to the creation of a free society of equal blacks and whites. Lord Glenelg was Colonial Secretary at the time. He wanted to eliminate all racism from colonial laws, even the covert racial references---all laws, as he said, that made "innumerable distinctions of the most invidious nature in favor of Europeans and their descendants, and to the prejudice of persons of African birth or origin" (in Holt, 71). He was very serious that black Jamaicans should enjoy equal protection of the law (179) and supported education for the newly created class of apprentices (72). I think it is fair to say that these insights of Lord Glenelg demonstrate an awareness of the existence of racism.

In order to remove racially oppressive features in the laws, "Glenelg invited representatives of abolitionist societies to the Colonial Office to scan West Indian laws, an invitation readily taken up by many of them" (184). James Stephen in the Colonial Office also closely examined legislation for this purpose. The fear that discord could lead to "a war of the Races" was on the minds of some (Holt finds two uses of this expression; one in 1860 by Benjamin Vickers in his observations on Jamaica, see 261; and the other by a Member of Parliament in 1849 in response to the frictions between English and French Canadians; this MP called a war of races "the most formidable of all wars," see 447 n. 58).

Secretary Glenelg understood that racism infected the laws and that it was used to keep black people down. If he and a few others were making a conscious effort to get rid of racism, it was not a chimera they were battling. Recognizing the existence of racism in laws was not a new insight. As early as 1773, Benjamin Rush in his anti-slavery pamphlet urged, "... let not the Journals of our Assemblies be disgraced with the records of laws, which allow exclusive privileges to men of one color in preference to another" (*An Address*, 25). In a note on this, Rush said legal equality should be reached by gradual alterations in the law, but some things, like trial by jury, should be immediately extended to Negroes. Such longstanding humanitarian concerns obviously influenced colonial officials in their combat against racism. As we will see, they even occasionally used terminology to identify this racism.

The marquis of Sligo (Peter Howe Brown), Governor of Jamaica (1834-36)

during the first years of the apprenticeship period, was particularly active doing his bit to end racism. He had the reputation of being an impulsive man and had once harbored seventeen British deserters on his private ship, for which he spent four months in prison in 1811-12 (Holt, 97). His predecessor as governor, Lord Mulgrave, had begun appointing free men of color to public office (Holt, 99) and was the first governor to invite people of color to dinners and other public events at the governor's residence (Heuman, 75). Sligo continued both these practices. He did not warm to the idea at first, but once he got going, he appointed many coloreds as stipendiary magistrates and to other positions, and encouraged them as well to run for the Assembly (Heuman, 99). Richard Hill was the first colored stipendiary magistrate in Jamaica. Governor Sligo appointed him Secretary of that department.

In his enthusiasm to promote people of color, Governor Sligo anticipated too much, too soon, and eagerly imagined, as he said in a letter to the Colonial Secretary, "on *the part of the whites* all feelings of complexional distinctions had been done away [with] and except in two instances, the Browns seemed disposed to accede, and meet them half way" (in Heuman, 75; emphasis in original). That he was wrong about these feelings disappearing is less important than the fact that he was certainly aware that racism ('complexional distinctions') existed and held back the progress of blacks and browns. It is important to remember that they had their own words for racism. An even more evocative expression was used earlier in 1823 by Richard Hill to describe what we would call racists. He called them 'complexional misanthropes' (Heuman, 35). "The complexional misanthropes ... sap the vitals of the Country raised into a sort of Complexional aristocracy" and "endeavour to perpetuate our misery and degradation by joining the cry for the perpetuity of that policy, which having excluded the people from all political importance, makes themselves rich and powerful, and keeps us poor and wretched."

In 1816, when free coloreds petitioned the Jamaican House of Assembly to further extend their rights, John Campbell submitted a memorandum in support to the Colonial Secretary and described the situation of the browns: "... although they have sprung from the Whites, are they exposed to every indignity, to every illiberality; so much so, that the White Parents in public, will scarce notice his coloured Son or Daughter, which, in private are perhaps his only care and companion" (Heuman, 30). Even a white parent would keep his or her distance in public from their colored offspring so as not to share in the humiliation their children suffered. Degradation was a part of racism and at least some were quite conscious of that.

All this goes to show that racism was a recognizable phenomenon in the

19th century. It also shows how lively language can be before terms like racism become standardized and ossified. 'Complexional misanthropes' is about the best expression I have ever heard used to designate racists. Like Hill, Goldwin Smith, an Oxford professor of history, understood that emancipated slaves would have a terrible time of it, if racism continued after freedom. In 1865, he wrote to an American friend, pondering the future of freed American slaves: "How can there be real political equality without social fusion; and how can there be social fusion while the difference of colour and the physical antipathy remain?" (quoted in Semmel, 63). Georg Gerland, the German anthropologist whom I have brought up before, also saw it. In North America, emancipation was made "infinitely more difficult" (*unendlich erschwert*), he observed, by white society "strictly [or, rigidly] shutting itself off from" (*strenge verschliesst*) people of color for whom it felt "the most bitter contempt" (Gerland, 134; *die bitterste Verachtung*). He sometimes referred to racism as "racial arrogance" (*Raŕenhochmuth*; 112, 130).

Though Smith expressed his thought in a private letter, it shows that at least some people at that time were capable of thinking like this. As for Gerland, he of course was writing publicly and many writers on anthropology had read his 1868 book (see Rolleston, 2.883); that would include Darwin. These are two shining examples that it was possible to see that emancipation was not a great act in itself, but could only be great, if we confronted the racism ('the physical antipathy' as Smith said; 'the most bitter contempt' as Gerland said) that was definitely there and would continue to haunt the lives of the ex-slaves by preventing social harmony. We can add Saxe Bannister as a third. He wrote in 1838, "Oppressions ... still bend the best energies of the free coloured man down to the earth, and paralyze his most earnest desire of a superior social state" (*Colonization*, 4). He compared the situation of "the emancipated negroes" to that of the Aborigines and recommended for both that there be an agency which would be exclusively concerned with their interests (284). He implicitly recognized the need to counter racism when he proposed that white and colored children should be educated together (289) and that white and native soldiers should serve together and be equally eligible for promotion (292). Smith, Gerland, and Bannister are in addition to Hill who also recognized racism as a distinct problem that would undermine emancipation. And do not forget the officials in the Colonial Office who endeavored to remove prejudicial laws from the West Indies.

A sixth example can be found in an 1836 biography of British abolitionist Granville Sharp. It is by an American author, Charles Stuart, who was concerned not only about slavery in the United States but also about the

situation of free blacks. Actually, the public would have had two chances to catch this. Once in Stuart's 1836 book and earlier in an 1820 biography of Sharp by Prince Hoare who collected some of Sharp's correspondence. Stuart was quoting from one of those letters, dated January 15, 1789, from Samuel Hopkins, anti-slavery advocate and pastor at a church in Rhode Island, to Sharp. Hopkins in part says this about blacks in Massachusetts, which had freed its slaves:

But the circumstances of the Freed Blacks are in many respects unhappy, while they live here among the Whites; as the latter look down upon the former, and are disposed to treat them as *underlings*, and deny them the advantages of education and employment, &c. which tends to depress their minds, and prevent their obtaining a comfortable living, and involves them in many other disadvantages. [Hoare, 341; Stuart, 70]

And the cause of all this to which Stuart wished to bring attention? Racism, or as Stuart put it, *color-phobia*. It is a term he uses quite a lot in this section of the book (about 6 times, and further on, at 91, he uses *color-phobiasts*). The United States, he says, is "Full of color-phobia! The land is full of it. It is exhibited in legislation, in custom and in feeling. The man is deemed a fool or villain, who is free from it" (76). Stuart quotes a kindly white couple with whom he is boarding, who express their color-phobia in their outrage at the idea that a colored person could be considered equal to themselves. He also calls it "the insane and cruel prejudice against color in the United States" (81). He considers it worse in America than in any other country in the world: "This color-phobia; this *distinguishing characteristic* of the United States, from which *all other civilized people* are free ..." (77; on the next page, he notes that we treat colored people well only when we need them in emergencies; one could say that he almost foresaw that during World War II, a federal equal opportunity employment act would be passed because they needed everyone to work in factories). Stuart also calls color hatred *mother-hatred* (74; I could not quite grasp why he says this, but I think it had something to do with blaming people for being born of a mother who was oppressed; also see 76).

While he describes color-phobia as being culturally widespread, he also considers it a minority problem. Only one-tenth of the planet is white, he believes, and only one-tenth of this one-tenth "is afflicted with the *color-phobia* ... and *then, he*, in his hallucinations, dreams that *his* feelings are the law of *nature!*" (78). Whether his numbers are right or not, he correctly sees that racism is hubris on the part of what is really a small part of mankind.

Keep in mind that Stuart is writing all this about three decades before the Emancipation Proclamation, as if he were already warning his country that freeing the slaves will not be enough, as the experience in Massachusetts had already demonstrated.

Some humanitarians saw that there was a deeper problem of racism which would deny equality to colored people even after slavery was at an end. If one person had expressed this view, he might be an oddball, completely out of touch with the possibilities of his time. When six or seven express it, I think that is enough to say we have an emerging pattern. I have no doubt that further investigation would reveal many more examples indicating that such thinking was not out of line for the times. The majority, on the other hand, did not concern themselves with racism and accepted the way racism contributed to the failure of emancipation to accomplish its ostensible goal.

Andrew Bank spots exactly this kind of problem in South Africa. "After the emancipation of the Khoikhoi and slaves (1828-38), local liberals showed remarkably little interest in the meaning of freedom for the coloured underclass, evidently viewing it in narrowly legal terms as a *fait accompli*. It is striking that the liberal press expressed far greater enthusiasm for compensation payments to ex-slave-owners than for the freedom of ex-slaves" (Bank, 368).

To put it another way: The most important sign of any real success of emancipation was not what the people were being freed from, but *what they were being freed into*. The emancipated slaves understood this better than anyone else. A few white people also saw that if the society slaves were being released into was still racist, then emancipation was a failure. If they did not succeed in getting the attention of more people, that was hardly their fault. The majority of white abolitionists were focused on the slavery that preceded emancipation. They used slavery and putting an end to it as the measure of the final success of emancipation, a *fait accompli* (as Bank says), over and done with, to be forgotten. A handful knew that the success was partial or even illusory as long as society itself did not change. They may have been few in number but they did exist.

Achieving social harmony seems to have been the keynote for so many who had deeper concerns about ending racism. Because the Colonial Office was responsible for the whole empire, it was not just in Jamaica where the obstructions of racism concerned them. For example, during the same period of time in New Zealand, James Stephen and others in the Colonial Office were eager to see that harmony should be achieved between the Maori and the white settlers. They wanted some Maori customs to be tolerated as a matter of law while the two races would gradually learn to live together, but local

officials were stalling in passing such an ordinance of toleration. Years later in 1846, Stephen pondered what was preventing this law from being passed. He thought it was hindered "by the spirit of legal pedantry from which no English society is ever emancipated, and by the contempt and aversion with which the European race everywhere regard the Black races" (quoted in Ward, A., 62). It is not that hard to find evidence that some 19th century policymakers and assorted intellectuals were very aware of racism and the need to combat it. How good a job they did against a very strong and numerous opposition is of course open to debate.

Lionel Smith succeeded Sligo as governor in Jamaica. He complained to the Colonial Office that Sligo's policies towards people of color were ruining Jamaica: "It requires no prophecy to shew Your Lordship [Lord Glenelg], what a few Years more would have produced, under the old Laws [of Sligo's administration]---Every White Gentleman and White man of property would have been turned out of the House [of Assembly]" (in Heuman, 104). Numbers alone demonstrated that in a democratic society the browns and blacks would soon rule in the legislature. Glenelg's private response to Smith was that Sligo's appointment of coloreds reflected a "just and enlightened view of the subject" (in Heuman, 105). The home Colonial Office thought Sligo had done a good job, specifically with his policies to end race as a bar to holding official positions.

Emancipation of slaves had added hundreds of thousands to the number of colored people who were already free and had actually come to slightly outnumber the whites by 1833. The white planters in the Jamaican Assembly were fighting back, as they did over the years, by attempting to increase financial and/or property requirements for voting and holding office. James Stephen recommended that such legislation be disallowed (the Colonial Office retained a kind of veto power over local Assembly legislation). "Stephen was afraid that the attempt to maintain white supremacy would lead to racial war" (Heuman, 105). Add this to the two references Holt found to a war of the races (see above) and you can see how severe some people of the time thought racism was.

They recognized racism. They identified it and used comprehensible language to describe it. As it turns out, there was not much they could do about it. But they tried. If terms like complexional distinctions, complexional misanthropes, and color-phobia did not catch on, it was not their fault. They did not catch on because the general public and academia did not want them to catch on. They did not want these terms and the reality behind them to have an impact on their consciousness, and, consequently, on public debate. Debate on this would be stifled. If the anti-racists failed to ignite a wider discussion,

it was not for want of trying. When the general mood and agenda are against you, there is not much you can do about it.

Racism was undoubtedly the dominant force. It caused emancipation to fail. It failed almost at the start because it was ill-conceived from the beginning with not enough attention paid to what would happen afterwards.

Measured against the goal of bringing self-determination, justice, and dignity to former slaves, emancipation had failed. What successes it did enjoy must be credited to the unrelenting struggles of freed people themselves rather than to the determined policies of governments ... Something was amiss in the very project of emancipation, in the very premises on which it was founded. And those premises appeared to be linked to its outcomes and to the extreme racism that followed in its wake in the late nineteenth century. [Holt, xix]

Racism also quashed Aboriginal rights and gave colonialism the impetus to steal everything from Aborigines. But one thing racism was not able to do. It did not succeed in silencing every voice that objected. It did not succeed in establishing itself as a monolithic entity that throttled all other voices. We are liars if we promote that idea. An anti-racist view did express itself in the 19th century, demonstrating that it was possible. It just made little headway with the public and with most intellectuals and professional men of science.

Admittedly, it is hard to find any scientists who were determinedly anti-racist. Mainstream science was almost a complete failure in this regard, and it did not matter if you were an evolutionist or not. Stephen Gould acknowledged this: "Evolution and quantification formed an unholy alliance; in a sense, their union forged the first powerful theory of 'scientific' racism ... They believe[d] in their own objectivity, and fail[ed] to discern the prejudice that leads them to one interpretation among many consistent with their numbers" (*Mismeasure*, 106). Alfred Wallace was of course one exception whom even Gould had to admit "is justly hailed as an antiracist" (70). Georg Gerland was another, but then he has never been translated into English which effectively keeps him hidden.

The anti-racism of some British officials and the ultimate failure of emancipation is a complicated story. In one sense, the officials in the Colonial Office had an ulterior motive for their anti-racist position. They wanted emancipation to create a larger, free working class that would stimulate the capitalist economy. Racism would inhibit that, so they fought it. British policymakers primarily wanted to create a class of free laborers, wage slaves in fact, who would be available to plantation owners for work where and

when they needed it. To encourage this, they needed the former slaves to conform to their value system and to learn to desire luxuries which, they believed, was the driving force of the economy. "British authorities defined civilization in their own terms ... [with a value system in part] shaped by a capitalist political economy. Civilized men and women aspired to material goods; their aspirations were unlimited and indefinite, thus spurring unlimited economic growth" (Holt, 76-77). One of a succession of governors in Jamaica, Lord Elgin, who arrived in 1842, said that "civilization, the spread of knowledge, habits of greater expense in respect of living, dress and dwellings, will conspire to render a relapse to a former and lower condition distasteful and I trust improbable" (in Holt, 191).

Planters wanted a continuous labor supply: "what they required," Holt points out, "was, not simply labor, but *laborers* under their complete control to work when, where, at the price, and under the conditions they determined" (174; his emphasis). At an 1847 parliamentary committee hearing, one of the planters quite agreed when a committee member summed up his need as "at any moment when it suits your convenience you may be able to put your hand upon the labourer" (174). That's not what freedom meant to the former slaves. One was reported in 1848 to have said, "What kind of free this? This the free them gee we. This Free worse than slave, a man cant put up with it" (ibid.). Bernard Semmel observes that "... the core of what the emancipated Negro understood by freedom was the right to give or withhold labour as he pleased. Signing a labour contract for continuous work seemed too much like the days before emancipation" (Semmel, 44-45). What planters and many government officials did not want for freed slaves was independence and democracy, the two things the slaves wanted most.

The freed slaves and the officials who freed them did not see things the same way. They had different aspirations. Right away in the apprenticeship period, the half-way free slaves in Jamaica made it clear that they did not want to be wage-slaves. They wanted independence above all by owning their own land and then better working conditions if they had to work for someone else. In the roughly forty hour period that belonged to them, many chose not to work. Some chose to work on estates that paid less but had better conditions. And they would not work for anyone who cheated them (Holt, 65). The dose of freedom they got as apprentices was heady enough that they could start making their own choices. A better life for them was not essentially about luxuries, though there is evidence that they acquired some of these. They wanted better working conditions for themselves and their whole family. Emancipators expected that children would work or be apprenticed to planters, but the emancipated did not want that for their children and would

send them to live with relatives in the towns to be far from the plantations (66, 151). Women too dropped out of the labor force (151, 163). "They valued most the very things persistently denied them as slaves---a home and control of their family's labor" (173). As Holt also puts it, they wanted "not just a free labor economy but a free society" (176).

Working on their own plots of land was high on their list of aspirations. A system had grown up under slavery in Jamaica allowing slaves to have small plots to grow their own food and even to sell any excess in the markets and keep the money. They did not own the land, it just became a custom. This was suitable to the planters who were too cheap to provide maintenance for their slaves, if they could avoid it. They much preferred it if the slaves managed their own sustenance needs. With emancipation, the ex-slaves came to think of these plots as their own and went into acquiring more land in a big way. That is what independence meant to them. Most of it was small holdings of three to five acres. They would use estate wage labor to supplement their income, but very few wanted that to be their main source of income. Women did some of this work on these small holdings and did much of the work of taking the produce to market and selling it, which is why they had left working in the sugar cane fields (Holt, 163).

White abolitionists had anticipated none of this. For them, emancipation, if it was successful, would bring one thing: The new workers would sell their labor to the highest bidder among the plantation owners, no matter what the working conditions were like, and women and children would be included in the labor force; working for yourself on your own land would not be a serious option because the big sugar plantations would come first (the government regarded them as too big to fail). The perception of many abolitionists was that emancipation was a failure and that this was the result of Negroes being too damn lazy to work.

Not perceiving the industriousness of the ex-slaves was part of the problem of racism. Some people may find it hard to conceive this, but in the 19th century, it was entirely possible to be pro-emancipation of slaves and yet thoroughly racist at the same time. Darwin's friends Huxley and Hooker are examples of this (I will get to them further on), but here I offer Anthony Trollope as one such. Like many other abolitionists, Trollope hoped that the end of slavery would bring economic benefits to Britain. He was disappointed and he was not alone. "There were many Britons who came to think that the ex-slaves in the West Indies had let them down," writes James Walvin (282). It was "easy and convincing to blame the former slaves" (283) and thus "the old plantocratic ideas about race were blooming again, this time in the conditions of black freedom" (282).

In 1859, in *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* (I am using the 1860 fourth edition) Trollope wrote, "The negro's idea of emancipation was and is emancipation not from slavery but from work" (90). Trollope continued: "To lie in the sun and eat breadfruit and yams is his idea of being free ... Jamaica, as it now exists, is still under a devil's ordinance." In a later chapter on Costa Rica, Trollope at one point addresses the general problem of slavery and its abolition:

It seems to be the fact that in all countries in which slavery has existed and has been abolished this subject of labour offers the great difficulty in the way of improvement. Labour becomes unpopular, and is regarded as being in some sort degrading. Men will not reconcile it with their idea of freedom. They wish to work on their own land if they work at all; and to be their own masters; to grow their own crops, be they ever so small; and to sit beneath their own vine, be the shade ever so limited. There are those who will delight to think that such has been the effect of emancipation; who will argue,---and they have strong arguments on their side,---that God's will with reference to his creatures is best carried out by such an order of things. I can only say that the material result has not hitherto been good. As far as we at present see, the struggle has produced idleness and sensuality, rather than prosperity and civilization. [264]

There it all is in concise form. The hints of racism are there (like sensuality and idleness; but for a stronger taste of his racism, just read his Chapter IV on the black men of Jamaica). He *sees* the industriousness of the freed slaves and he belittles it as too small. He *sees* their wish for independence and dismisses it as trivial. (In contrast to this, William Sewell, an American reporter, visited the West Indies in 1861 and observed that the former slaves "prefer independence to labor for hire. Why should they be blamed?" [quoted in Holt, 148].)

Trollope is dismissive of their efforts ("if they work at all," "be they ever so small") and of their desire for independence ("to be their own masters"). Startlingly, he admits that some people think this is a good result of emancipation and that these people have good arguments. But it does not satisfy Trollope or apparently those in the Colonial Office who took over in the 1850s. If work does not fuel the big capitalist machine that makes men wealthy (the opposite of "the shade ever so limited" of the ex-slaves), then it's not really work as far as Trollope is concerned. It is mere idleness. He insisted that "emancipation was clearly right; but I think that we expected far too great

and far too quick a result from emancipation" (Trollope, 62).

What is remarkable to me about the above paragraph is that Trollope recognizes that there are different interpretations of emancipation. He knows the slaves (and perhaps some of their supporters) have different notions of freedom and independence and he *rejects* their ideas. If emancipation does not bring us prosperity and civilization---and here a strong note of dishonesty intrudes because he uses abstract nouns, when he really means *our* white prosperity and *our* white civilization and not so much the prosperity of the blacks---then it is a failure. You can almost hear him cry out that emancipation was supposed to make us white people rich, more rich, and it did not.

Trollope was probably speaking for many abolitionists who had expected more benefits for British society from the emancipation of slaves. The big sugar cane industry in Jamaica basically collapsed after emancipation. They had not anticipated this. A wealthier society for the white population did not materialize. They blamed the ex-slaves, not the whites who were still in power. "More and more, black workers, or rather nonworkers, became the villains of the piece ... Working when, where, and as they chose became 'They will not work.' The defect was racial. Blacks somehow were missing that drive for material self-improvement innate in Europeans" (Holt, 280). Trollope put it this way: "To recede from civilization and become again savage---as savage as the laws of the community will permit---has been to his [the Negro's] taste. I believe that he would altogether retrograde if left to himself" (Trollope, 62; on the next page, he calls them "a servile race, fitted by nature for the hardest physical work").

Although British officials did achieve some anti-racist insights, they did not follow up all the way. They could not or would not see things from the point of view of the blacks. Their anti-racism was not entirely founded on what blacks wanted. They refused to look at what freedom meant to the slaves and ex-slaves. They would have the same trouble with Aborigines. Some good intentions but little follow-up because they could not bring themselves to fully honor what the Aborigines needed and wanted. Like the freed slaves, Aborigines placed a high value on independence and keeping their own land. Officials knew that, but did little to ensure it.

In a sense, it does not matter if their anti-racism was imperfect. It does not matter if it was selfish and founded on the hope that emancipation and equality between black and white would create a more economically prosperous society. Once you adopt an anti-racist stance, for whatever reasons, it means you are capable of seeing the Other as a human being like yourself with needs to live their own lives as they see fit. The anti-racism of

officials was genuine but the racism of the larger society kept it from being fully developed. Aborigines, on the other hand, did not even have the selfishness of certain white advocates going for them. No one saw that treating Aborigines with respect and regard for their rights would contribute to economic prosperity. (One exception to this last was the 1837 *Report* of the Select Committee on Aborigines. A number of times they pointed out that treating Aborigines badly does harm to the economy; see 44, 51, 73-74, 75.) Equality for Aborigines under the law and allowing them to live their own way of life was seen as retarding progress by a majority of whites. In some ways, Aborigines would have a more difficult time of it than freed slaves.

Some humanitarians were always there to remind officials and colonists of what a truly humane and just system would require. If the public and the majority of intellectuals and academics turned their backs on this, that is on them, not on the so-called failed humanitarians. Critique of racism was well within the grasp of intellectuals and scientists. They just chose to distance themselves from it when such criticism was voiced. They did not want to hear it anymore than Darwin wanted to hear that savages were as moral and as intelligent as white Europeans. But they did have opponents, quite a few, though always a minority, who tried to make a breakthrough and change mainstream thinking.

~ 2 ~

Was Darwin a great humanitarian when it came to slavery? Even in regard to this issue, it is open to question how far Darwin's humanitarianism went. Being anti-slavery did not necessarily mean you were a humanitarian. Many people who favored the emancipation of slaves were ardent racists nonetheless. Trollope is one such example. This was also true of Darwin's friends Joseph Hooker and Thomas Huxley, as we will see. Where Darwin falls in is hard to tell. What should be said here is this: 1) it seems that Darwin was only against legalized slavery; 2) like many others, he showed no concern about the continuation of *de facto* slavery, that is, illegal forced labor, after emancipation in both the United States and the British empire; 3) he did not favor social or economic equality (as I pointed out in Ch. 2, §6, for Darwin, slaves should know their social place); and 4) if he ever heard natives complaining that colonialism was just slavery under another name, it had no effect on him. The actual fact of being dispossessed of land and culture, not to mention family---typical of both colonialism and slavery---never released any deep humanitarian feelings in him for the natives. One form of dispossession was apparently acceptable to him, the other not.

Some people will object that this amounts to a judgment in hindsight on

Darwin, as if a fuller humanitarianism was only possible many generations later. It should be pretty clear by now that the sort of humanitarianism I am concerned with did exist in the 19th century. We previously saw that Stephen Gould's exposition of Darwin in this regard is quite wrong. But it also needs to be said that Darwin himself was sensitive to such contradictions in others. I am not imposing standards on him that he himself did not recognize. His reaction to some comments by Charles Lyell on slavery is a case in point.

Lyell did not share Darwin's strong anti-slavery sentiments. It cost Darwin "some sleepless most uncomfortable hours," as he told Lyell in a letter of July 30 -- August 2, 1845 (CCD 3.233). Darwin was giving Lyell his first impression of Lyell's book *Travels in North America* (1845), but was reluctant to say anything about the discussion of slavery in America (in the first volume of *Travels*, 1.181-95). He believed they could not have a decent conversation about it. Just a few weeks later (Aug. 25), however, Darwin brings it up again. At first, he says he will not discuss the subject as they will both get annoyed, and then, spontaneously it seems, a criticism bursts out of him.

In the book, Lyell had related his conversation with a planter in North Carolina on the custom of sometimes letting slaves get married (he had just attended one such wedding in Charleston). The planter assured him these marriages were more for show than anything else and had no real legal validity because what remained true was that, marriage or no, "... the right of sale could separate parent and child, husband and wife. Such separations, he [the planter] said, could not always be prevented, when slaves multiplied fast, though they were avoided by the masters as far as possible ... far more humane not to cherish domestic ties among slaves" (1.184). Lyell describes it very matter-of-factly without judgment. (He accepted a little too readily every humane spin the slave owners put on their system and was too quick to see the slaves as "remarkably cheerful and light-hearted", "talkative and chatty as children", and "good-humoured", all at 1.182; he even says, at 1.185, "They never appear to be overworked ... They are not in a state of discomfort, oppression, and misery"---come to think of it, much like Darwin accepted it when he saw "so many merry, happy faces" among the Tahitians and was critical of writers who saw natives living in fear; see Ch. 2, §6.) Darwin marked this passage on family separations with an exclamation point. On the next page, Lyell astutely observes that slavery has been bad for poor whites and here he injects a little feeling: "The effect of the institution [of slavery] on the progress of the whites is most injurious ... it is most depressing to the spirits. There appears to be no place in society for poor whites." Darwin underlined this part.

This was Darwin's complaint in his letter to Lyell: "How could you relate

so placidly that atrocious sentiment about separating children from their parents; & in the next page, speak of being distressed at the Whites not having prospered; I assure you the contrast made me exclaim out" (CCD 3.242; Aug. 25, 1845), and then he promised Lyell "no more on this odious deadly subject." Darwin seems to have forgotten that he too had written placidly about Indian children being sold and even remarking that there was little to complain of in the treatment of these slave children (see Ch. 2, §5).

To be completely fair to Lyell, it should be said that he was not a fully committed advocate for slavery. He muses in these pages (1.186) about what he would do if he inherited an estate with slaves. He decides he would liberate them, but first "begin with education as a preliminary step." (Darwin would likely have approved of this. In Brazil, he observed, "where the greater parts are in a state of slavery, & where this system is maintained by an entire stop to education, the mainspring of human actions, what can be expected; but that the whole would be polluted by its part" [*Diary*, 46].) Lyell adds that he would have to "endeavour to persuade my fellow slave-holders to repeal these laws [making it a crime to teach slaves to read and write]." It is not clear but it seems he may have actually had such conversations with planters. In any event, I admire Darwin for confronting Lyell on this as he very much needed him as a mentor and supporter. He took a risk. The strength of his feeling on this is very clear. He felt it very right to note the contradiction between being very sensitive to one kind of suffering (that of poor whites, in this case) and quite accepting of another (the slaves who lost their families).

It is never anachronistic to ask of any historical figure how he or she would fare when viewed through the lens of their own standards. The contrast between Darwin's attitude towards slaves and his relative indifference to the suffering inflicted on indigenous peoples by imperialism and their impending extinction is just as strong as the one he spots in Lyell. More shocking to me is how we let scientists and academics get away with creating a fictional Darwin as an exemplary humanitarian. Darwin should not be glamorized or demonized. The goal is simply to understand, a goal that has been abandoned by academics. The real Darwin certainly should get credit for being a limited humanitarian for his concern about the inhumanity of legalized slavery and cruelty towards animals, but he did not extend these feelings as far as some others in his time did.

There is no hindsight here and no question of imposing later standards on Darwin. About eight years before this letter to Lyell, Thomas Fowell Buxton, MP for Weymouth, was Chairman of the House of Commons Select Committee on Aborigines (1835-37). He had been the prime mover of the anti-slavery bill through Parliament in 1833 (taking over from William

Wilberforce who had stood down in 1826 due to illness) and the following year called for that Select Committee. His correspondence with various activist missionaries and officials throughout the British empire had taught him a few things. In the Conclusion of the *Report of the Select Committee* (1837), he (assuming he was the primary author of the *Report*) reminded everyone of how Britain had recently "made some atonement" for slavery (Darwin made the same point about expiating our sin in the 1845 edition of his diary, *Narrative*, 500; also in *Voyage*, 431). Some apology could be made for the evils of slavery and the slave trade, Buxton argued, chiefly in that "they were evils of an ancient date." He continues in the Conclusion by comparing the treatment of slaves and Aborigines: "An evil remains very similar in character, and not altogether unfit to be compared with them in the amount of misery it produces. The oppression of the natives of barbarous countries is a practice which pleads no claim to indulgence" (*Report*, 75).

How can we *indulge* one evil (mistreatment of Aborigines) which is very much like another (slavery) which we just did something about, the *Report* pleaded, just as Darwin would reprove Lyell for being *placid* about slavery's cruelty. In 1881, Scottish Roman Catholic priest Duncan McNab also argued that dispossessed Aborigines in Australia were very much like slaves and worse off in some ways (Reynolds, *Whispering*, 105). Interestingly, one of the reasons the *Report* gave for the long continuance of slavery, besides its "ancient date", was that "great interests were entwined" with it (*Report*, 75). The same could be said of the relatively new evil of greedy colonialism, though the *Report* here chose to argue that unjust treatment of natives was against the national interest of Britain.

In 1838, when British emancipation of slaves went into full effect (after an apprenticeship period that had begun in 1834), Saxe Bannister considered "the abolition of slavery, a mighty branch of the aborigines' question" (*Colonization*, 85). He expressed "a confident hope that the energy which has effected so much for the slave will now be directed with equal effect to the improvement of the coloured people ... [in] all our own colonies" (97). Combating racism against colored people *after* slaves were emancipated was crucial to Bannister. He even says that when Buxton and others were fighting to achieve the emancipation of slaves, they had always had in mind justice for both the free and enslaved colored people (the former being mainly the Aborigines in each colony), "a common cause aiming at universal elevation of the oppressed" (240). Freeing slaves was not the end of the matter, it was part of a more basic quest. There was so much more to do.

Bannister was one of the founders of the Aborigines' Protection Society, along with others who either served on the Select Committee, like Chairman

Thomas Fowell Buxton, or testified before it, so that the APS was a direct outgrowth of the Committee. All of them hoped and hoped and hoped that, as Bannister put it, after the emancipation of slaves, "it may be expected that the undivided force of public sympathy will henceforth be diverted towards the suffering free coloured tribes ... and it can only be excited by men of letters" (225). As it turned out, there weren't enough prominent writers to take up the cause and public interest never caught up.

Had Bannister paid attention, he might have noticed that concern for the rights of Aborigines was there at the beginning of the abolitionist cause as part of the matter of justice. In his 1769 anti-slavery pamphlet, Granville Sharp was already making such connections. When, in order to explain that a Negro slave can avail himself of English courts, he writes (all emphases are his), "NO MAN of *what estate or condition* that he be [Sharp comments there can be no exceptions whatsoever to this] shall be put out of land or tenement ... without being brought in answer *by due process of the law*" (*Representation*, 25), this could have applied just as well to Aborigines. Further on, he mentions "the tyrannical constitution of the British colonies (to the indelible disgrace of the British name)" (48), reviews a number of unjust colonial laws concerning Negroes, Mulattoes, and Indians (using such strong language as the "shameful depravity of mind" [47n*] of legislators in Virginia; some of these laws applied to slaves, but Sharp also further on reviews cruelties and injustices against free servants), and finally expounds:

Thus our American provincials (though they pretend to be very zealous in the cause of liberty, yet) make no scruple to deprive the poor Indians of their just rights, who are as much intitled to an equitable and reasonable freedom as themselves. It is a shame to this nation, and may in time prove very dangerous to it, that the *British* constitution and liberties should be excluded from any part of the *British dominions* ... it is the grossest infringement on the *King's Prerogative*, that ... [the protection of the King's laws and courts] should not be extended "*to all his Majesty's subjects*" of every denomination (Slaves as well as others) even in the remotest parts of the *British empire*. [51; his emphases]

Sharp and other humanitarians knew exactly what the implications of their principles were. He would extend the English Common Law to the whole empire (71-72) and the King's protection under these laws to "black as well as white, bond as well as free" in all the British colonies (72). As for laws protecting aliens in England, he specifically includes savages in this (35). Linking the causes of slaves and Aborigines was an idea that came very early,

decades before the APS was formed.

It should be noted that it was not just the 1837 *Report's* conclusion that drove home this point that slavery and colonialism were comparable evils. It was also in the testimony of Dr. Thomas Hodgkin and many others. Alexander Maconochie, who served in the Royal Navy and was later the first professor of geography at the University of London, was an early humanitarian who was deeply impressed by all this testimony before the Select Committee and wrote his own report on better treatment of Aborigines which he sent to the Colonial Secretary in 1837 and which was printed in *Murray's Review* in January 1838. He summed up what he got from the Committee's hearings: "it has been seriously and in truth, rationally and justly represented ... that even the slave trade, with all its horrors has not been such a scourge to humanity as the English colonizing system" (P, W, 1003). Sad to say that Darwin did not add his weight to this effort to unveil the evils of colonization at a time when additional help was much needed.

More than a century before this debate was taking place, John Locke had already declared that dispossessing a people of all their land was in effect to turn them into slaves. In his *Second Treatise of Government*, he argued that even in a just and lawful war, never mind an unjust one, the victor had no right to do that to a people; the children in a conquered land have a right to inherit their fathers' possessions. All those humanitarians in the 19th century who took this position had a strong philosophical predecessor they could lean on. I have reserved a full discussion of Locke's views for Chapter 11, §4.

Besides the close similarity between colonialism and slavery in their destruction of original cultures and the way they rob a people of labor and land (of major concern to Maconochie, Napier, Bannister, and many others), there is also the plain simple fact that colonialism often made use of *de facto* slavery. In the Pacific South Seas, forced labor was known as blackbirding (Heartfield, 51, 62, 159-64 *passim*, 194; reports on this were made at least as early as 1849 and there was one investigation into this in 1869). In Australia, natives were forced to sign indenture agreements, which they did not understand, to work as pearl divers for little or no pay, and children were often kidnapped and pressed into such service. (In the United States too, *de facto* slavery continued after emancipation and was known as the peonage system; it did not end until the 1940s, but my knowledge of this is scanty at best.)

In 1886, Australian David Carley wrote to the APS, "Forty eight years ago I lived in New Orleans and I have seen American Slavery which is White as Snow when compared with the Murders and Cruelty done in this country Under the British Flag" (in Reynolds, *Whispering*, 169) and then to the

Secretary of State that the natives "are despoiled of all their land their women and children their liberty and their lives" (170). Also in 1886, John Gribble wrote a letter to the Melbourne *Daily Telegraph* detailing many atrocities he had personal knowledge of, including "I saw ... no less than twenty-four natives handcuffed together ... detained until they were required for pearl diving, their only food being a little flour ... I have seen hundreds of children brought into Cossack who have been torn away from their mothers, and yet it is said that where the British flag flies slavery cannot exist" (164-65). The information provided by Carley and Gribble led to questions being raised by W. Channing in the House of Commons about "the practical enslavement of the Natives in Western Australia" and their being "compelled by fraudulent indentures to sign agreements" and "frequently kidnapped" (170-71). But the problem continued. There was never a mass movement to end forced labor as there was to end slavery.

New Zealand is a particularly interesting case concerning this issue, in part because one of Darwin's associates, Robert FitzRoy, Captain of the *Beagle* voyage and later Governor of New Zealand (1843-45), recognized that a comparison could be made between colonial dispossession of natives and slavery. When Maori tribes debated whether to sign the Treaty of Waitangi (1840) with Britain, and for a long time thereafter, they feared that the treaty would have the effect of turning them into slaves. They were encouraged to believe this by many white settlers who did not want the home government interfering in their affairs. These white people did not want Britain telling them how much land they could acquire and at what price, and they certainly did not want Britain giving Maoris any rights. Settlers preferred to deal, or misdeal, with Maori on their own without a treaty to guide them.

Losing land and becoming slaves came to be seen as equivalent, as a quote from one of FitzRoy's letters reveals. Claudia Orange explains, "as long as they were unable to dispose freely of their own lands, this article [in the treaty which granted the Maori the rights and privileges of British subjects] was not effective---they were 'no better than slaves (taurekareka) taken in war, who have not the disposal of their own lands, while occupied by their conquerors'" (Orange, 103; this last part is a quote from an 1844 letter from FitzRoy to Colonial Secretary Lord Stanley; cf. 51, 57, 81, 94). This is not to say that FitzRoy agreed with this assessment, but it does show he was cognizant that a parallel could be drawn between colonial dispossession and slavery. The Maori were also very aware of what was happening to Aborigines in Australia (Orange, 61, 64, 94, 135). They saw their Australian counterparts being degraded into slaves and wanted to avoid the same fate. The dispossessed Tasmanians on Flinders Island also frequently complained that they were

treated like slaves (see first chapter of Henry Reynolds, *Fate of a Free People*).

Had Darwin listened more carefully, he would have heard more than just a lament for the loss of their land. He would have heard something about the fear of becoming slaves for all practical purposes. He would have heard how both conditions, slavery and colonialism, dispossess people of what they hold most dear.

It is remarkable that Darwin could fail to perceive that colonialism's dispossession of natives was very like slavery, or at the very least, to notice that this was a common opinion of many writers. I have seen it expressed over and over again by 19th century commentators. In the second chapter, I referenced James Bonwick's *The Last of the Tasmanians* several times, a book Darwin cites more than once in the second edition of *The Descent of Man*. On the first page of Chapter II, Bonwick reports that white men "came not to share the soil with the dark men, but to appropriate it." He continues: "The wild men had two courses before them. They could prostrate themselves beneath the feet of the usurpers, and *quietly submit to slavery*; or they could refuse to sell their birthright of freedom and take the consequences" (emphasis added). Darwin has nothing to say about turning natives of other countries into slaves.

Another source concerning Tasmania or Van Diemen's Land which Darwin was familiar with was James Bischoff's *Sketch of the History of Van Diemen's Land* (1832), especially the Appendix (185-260), containing lengthy extracts from letters between Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur and Secretary of State George Murray of the Colonial Office in London (the letters date from Jan. 10, 1828 to April 14, 1831). Darwin says he found it "very interesting" to read this (*Narrative*, 533). (I will have much more to say about the information in these letters in Chapter 11.) In the first letter, Darwin would have read Arthur telling Murray, "They [the natives] already complain that the white people have taken possession of their country, encroached upon their hunting grounds, and destroyed their natural food, the kangaroo; and they doubtless would be exasperated to the last degree to be banished altogether from their favourite haunts" (Bischoff, 187). As far as I know, learning about these things had no impact on Darwin.

George Robinson was particularly appalled by the treatment of Aboriginal women and children in Van Diemen's Land; white sealers not only took women for cohabitation, they also forced them to do much work. In a journal entry for March 17, 1831 (P, F, 324), he wrote, "That these miscreants not only subjected them to hard labour but cohabited with them is a species of depravity only known to these wretched individuals, for the slave proprietors

of the West Indies scarcely ever is known to be guilty of this depravity." He made it part of his mission to get the sealers to surrender these Aborigines. On March 30 of the same year (332), he wrote, "Years had elapsed during which time the unfortunate aborigines had been subjected to the most cruel and galling slavery and no attempt made to ameliorate their condition." He was proud to be the one "to emancipate them from bondage."

Darwin would not have read this journal (not published until 1966), but Robinson did include some general comments on this in an official report in January 1832 in which he says the Aboriginal chiefs explained that the reason they had committed outrages on the whites was "that they and their forefathers had been cruelly abused, that their country had been taken from them, their wives and daughters had been violated and taken away, and that they had experienced a multitude of wrongs from a variety of sources" (P, F, 571). Much the same was said in the letters in the Appendix in Bischoff's book, which also frequently mentioned the kidnapping of Aboriginal women and children, and the same was reported by James Bonwick in his book.

Darwin would also have read in Bonwick the following quotation from the journal of a Quaker, George Washington Walker, who commented on the treatment of Tasmanian women by white men:

... we cannot regard the situation of the aboriginal females amongst that class of men [the sealers] as differing materially from slavery ... The object of these men in retaining the women, most of whom, it is asserted, were originally kidnapped, is obviously for the gratification of their lust, and for the sake of the labour they can exact from them. In resorting to coercion in order to extort the services of these poor defenceless women, great cruelty appears to have been used by their unfeeling masters, with a few exceptions. [Bonwick, *Last*, 304]

Walker got this information by speaking directly with the women, one of whom described in detail the beatings she received. Darwin was thus made aware that their situation did not differ materially from slavery.

Too many sources were making this comparison between the evils and abuses of colonialism and that of slavery for Darwin to have been unaware of this argument. Another one who drew such parallels was his own grandfather Erasmus Darwin who could link together the injustices of colonialism and slavery in his own inimitable style in his epic poetry. Because this is a poem, the link is strongly implied simply by juxtaposing them, rather than stated outright.

In *The Economy of Vegetation* (1791), Erasmus begins by describing the

precious minerals and metals that drew Spain to the new world: copper, zinc, quartz, "long threads of netted gold, and silvery darts ... And hapless Mexico was paved with gold" (II, 409-12). He then excoriates Spain's empire (II, 413-16):

Heavens! on my sight what sanguine colours blaze!
Spain's deathless shame! The crimes of modern days!
When avarice, shrouded in religion's robe,
Sail'd to the west, and slaughter'd half the globe.

If Erasmus did not address British colonialism, it is only because British imperialism was still in its early stages, when its cruelties were not yet fully manifest. Captain James Cook was sent to explore the South Pacific in 1768 with instructions not to conquer the natives but to obtain their consent in all matters. By 1787, when Arthur Philip became governor of New South Wales, the first colony in Australia, things had changed when they realized that Aborigines were not a formidable force, but it was still too early to see how bad things would get.

I have no doubt that had Erasmus Darwin been writing in the mid-19th century, he would have been just as horrified by the cruelties of the British empire. Bonwick often makes a similar link by commenting on the atrocities of the Spanish empire (*Last*, 56-57, 68, 252, 339, 371). Spain had become an emblem of the worst that western Europe could do. Bonwick notes that at least the Indians of Spain's empire had a Las Casas to defend them, and laments that there was no comparable British Las Casas. "Who ever heard of the English missionary to the poor Tasmanians? We threw him a crust, or sent him a bullet ... Entrenched in the pride of their spiritual citadel, Christians had no sympathy for the dark, opossum-rug clad wanderer ..." (372). I think Erasmus Darwin would have been just as critical as Bonwick.

Immediately following the diatribe against Spain, Erasmus moves on to denounce British slave traders and appeals to Britain to end their evil doings: "Hear, oh, Britannia! potent queen of isles ... Now Afric's coasts thy craftier sons invade,/ And theft and murder take the garb of trade!" (*Economy*, II, 421-24). Following this, at line 431, he travels back in time to condemn past tyrannies, past empires, as when a despot conquered Egypt and Thebes. His poesy is strewn with phrases like these: "And swarming armies blackened all the lands" (442); "Lust in the van, and rapine in the rear" (454); "giant murder" (466); "Hosts follow hosts, and troops succeed to troops" (604). He reaches a high point with this: "Man mounts on man, on camels camels rush,/ Hosts march o'er hosts, and nations nations crush" (491-92). But he seems to admire Hannibal---"So when proud Rome the Afric warrior braved" (529)---

for being the one who "shook the rising empire of the world" (536). Clearly, he was repelled by any voracious empire and aimed to expose imperialism's brutality and greed. Hannibal was not a rebellious slave so much as a rebellious colonized subject.

It is significant that Erasmus Darwin would set a condemnation of slavery in between a denunciation of Spanish imperialism and his despair over nations crushing nations. When grandson Charles quotes his grandfather on slavery, in his biography of him ("Preliminary", 47), he goes to another poem where criticism of slavery stands alone. In *The Loves of the Plants*, Erasmus Darwin writes, "E'en now in Afric's groves with hideous yell/ Fierce SLAVERY stalks, and slips the dogs of hell" (III, 443-44; his grandson quotes lines 451-58 a little further on). I cannot say whether Charles Darwin deliberately avoided *Economy* with its fiercer, more expansive critique of slavery, connecting it to imperialism, but the result is that he limited his grandfather's insight into these injustices. Whereas Erasmus linked the injustices of imperialism and slavery, Charles looked at slavery standing alone.

There is an interesting footnote to this history. In the anti-slavery section of *Loves of the Plants*, Erasmus Darwin appeals to Parliament ("Ye bands of Senators") to consult its conscience and remember its tradition to "right the injured" (III, 449). The lines his grandson quoted, which include a reference to "Inexorable Conscience", end with these words: "... hear this truth sublime,/ He, who allows oppression, shares the crime" (457-58). Alfred Wallace quoted these very same lines (except changing 'He' to 'They') in *The Wonderful Century* (375). The lines as written by Erasmus Darwin applied only to slavery, but Wallace used them to shame colonialism. He made them his final comment on the political and economic injustices of British colonization. Specifically, it was Britain in India that caught his attention here. The "discontent, chronic want and misery", among other things, of the British government in India "must surely be reckoned among the most terrible and most disastrous failures of the Nineteenth Century." A few pages earlier he called European colonialism in Africa (which induced such injuries as seizing lands and cattle, and the "great demoralization both of black and white") "a modified form of slavery" (372). Wallace understood that Erasmus Darwin's denunciation of slavery applied just as much to colonialism. The grandson repressed any such awareness.

So many people were drawing a connection between slavery and colonialism, or seeing a similarity between them, that it sometimes seems like (and this is only a bit of an exaggeration) Charles Darwin was the only one who did not get it.

Some might argue that for Erasmus Darwin, colonizing conquest and violence were just what to expect of the larger universe. In *Economy* (IV, 385-88), in language very similar to what he says about human beings, he describes the destructiveness in the cosmos:

Star after star from heaven's high arch shall rush,
Suns sink on suns, and systems systems crush,
Headlong, extinct, to one dark centre fall,
And death and night and chaos mingle all!

Erasmus Darwin makes no moral judgment of this. Death and extinction are natural. But would he equate "nations nations crush" with nature's or the universe's "systems systems crush"? I don't think so. No matter how much humans and their nations may appear to mirror the universe and its systems, this elder Darwin clearly regarded the human activities of both imperialism and slavery as reprehensible and unjust.

For anyone familiar with the work of Erasmus Darwin, it is not surprising that in a poem entitled *The Economy of Vegetation*, he talks about slavery and imperialism. He also talks about steam engines, the possibility of flying ships, diving ships, towing icebergs to tropical climes, the arts, painting, music, the nature of language. He does this kind of thing in all his poems. Everything is connected to everything else. In *The Temple of Nature*, he uses expressions like "webs with webs unite" (I, 244), "Rings join to rings" (255), "the living web expands" (259), "the long line of Being never ends" (II, 20), "Web within web" (299). Humans are connected to the larger universe, but that does not mean humans are absolved of seeking justice.

In *Economy*, on one page (following the verses in the mid-300s in Canto II), he has three illustrations. One is a cross-section of the earth's crust and interior, showing its composition. The second is the famous medallion struck by Josiah Wedgwood (Charles Darwin's other grandfather), depicting a black slave in chains, on bended knee and hands clasped, with the legend "Am I Not A Man And A Brother" (all in caps and no question mark in this reproduction; recall that Charles Darwin expressed doubt about this sentiment of brotherhood---"yet differences carried a long way"---in Notebook C 217). The third is another Wedgwood medallion showing three female figures and one male (?) representing Hope, Peace, Art, and Labor. It was made from clay obtained from Botany Bay in Australia. As Erasmus Darwin explains (in a note to II, 315), many of these last medallions were sent to Botany Bay's colonists to show them "what their materials would do, and to encourage their

industry." Geology, science, the sex lives of plants, humanitarianism, the arts, human endeavors of all kinds---everything was interwoven into one vast scheme, including human injustice and the morally indifferent acts of the universe; no one thing gets to eliminate or override any other thing, they all find a voice and a place in his work.

Like the other early evolutionary thinkers, Erasmus Darwin had a holistic sense of life, nature, the earth and everything on it and within it. Charles Darwin would be a different sort of evolutionist altogether. If he believed in interconnectedness, it was only in theory. It did not guide his practical thinking or his larger view of life. Before I return to the issues of slavery, emancipation, and racism, I would like to review Charles Darwin's departure from holistic thinking.

Perhaps the closest Darwin came (in a tentative way) to Chambers's kind of holistic thinking, or for that matter his grandfather's, about mankind's intimate interconnectedness with the rest of nature was in his 1837 Notebook B 232 (note that he is conjectural throughout, beginning with *if* and ending with *may be*; I am omitting the editors' deletion and insertion marks and just presenting Darwin's final rendition): "if we choose to let conjecture run wild then animals our fellow brethren in pain, disease death & suffering & famine; our slaves in the most laborious work, our companion in our amusements. they may partake, from our origin in one common ancestor we may be all netted together." He is not fully committed to these ideas, except for common descent which he is growing more sure of. His 'all netted together' is comparable to 'life is everywhere one' in Chambers. But Chambers is more positive and assertive (not only by using *is* but by using all caps). In Darwin's case, he may have meant a limited notion of being netted by connecting it solely to common descent; he was not necessarily thinking of the rights and feelings of all creatures *now*, as Chambers was. It is fascinating how close though Chambers and Darwin were, as we will see again in Chapter 8.

Gillian Beer misquotes the last part of Darwin's statement by changing *may be* to *are*. She has him saying: "we are all netted together" (*Fields*, 26, 127). Normally, I would not nitpick like this. It's the general thought that counts. But in this instance, she has introduced certainty where there was only speculation. By paying so much attention to the younger Darwin and quoting him incorrectly, Beer idealizes him. She makes him out as either more certain of holistic ideas than he was or more creatively leaning in that direction. She has also ignored the fact that Darwin, in all his Notebooks and this one in particular, was often trying out the ideas of *others*, like his grandfather Erasmus Darwin and the naturalist George Robert Waterhouse. The heading Darwin put on Notebook B was *Zoonomia*, the title of his grandfather's book

(two volumes, 1794 and 1796). Erasmus had the words *E Conchis Omnia* (All from Shellfish, or possibly Seashells) inscribed on his seal and family crest, which summed up his belief that we all come from the sea; this was also expressed in a note on I, 295 of *The Temple of Nature*, "It must be therefore concluded, that animal life began beneath the sea." Chambers for his part would write, "Life has, as it were, crept out of the sea upon the land" (*Explanations*, 165). 'Netted' would be an appropriate word for describing anything caught up from the sea.

Waterhouse is mentioned several times in Charles Darwin's Notebook B. He had entertained a theory of all being connected, but gave it up. The editors of the Notebooks point out (in their note B 57-1) that Waterhouse said he had heard such a theory being called the 'net-work theory'. It is possible that Darwin used 'netted' because of his memory of what Waterhouse had said or alternatively because he had independently heard the same thing. Even if this is not the case, it is at least clear that Darwin was here engaging with the ideas of others, which he is trying on for size, and not offering his own unique insights. This thinking about affinities and connectedness would soon slip away from him. By the time he gets to *Origin*, 'we may be all netted' has been replaced by we are all ranked in 'groups subordinate to groups,' no *may be* about it. For Darwin, 'all netted together' would be the road not taken.

Had Darwin stuck with the idea that we are all connected, I don't think he would have been so caught up with a racist point of view which is about disconnection. In fact, it is likely that it was the racism he was already saddled with which prevented him from embracing a holistic approach to nature.

When Beer writes, "So unsecured and creative are Darwin's reactions in the 1830s that they reach out towards contradictory sequences of thought" (*Fields*, 6), I can agree up to a point, but when she continues that his early thinking "might equally have led to a reordering of developmental scales: the savage state is seen as fresher, as more alive to adaptive possibility, than are the ageing races of 'those long civilized'," that is just not true. There are spaces in Darwin's early writings where this idea might have crept in, but it never did. He was never *that* positive about savages, not even in his earliest, most open years when he was already evincing plenty of aversion to them and thinking about their extinction. Beer reads more goodwill into him than is warranted.

In Chapter 2, at the end of §2, I pointed out that, in his *Diary*, Darwin expressed melancholy only once and it was not for anything bad western civilization was doing to the natives. It was rather over the likelihood that superior civilization would lose out to inferior native life, when they repatriated three Fuegians to their homeland. "It was quite melancholy leaving

our Fuegians amongst their barbarous countrymen ... I am afraid whatever other ends their excursion to England produces, it will not be conducive to their happiness.---They have far too much sense not to see the vast superiority of civilized over uncivilized habits; & yet I am afraid to the latter they must return" (*Diary*, 142-43). Darwin never had a moment where he even came close to seeing savage culture equal to European, let alone surpassing it (fresher, more alive, as Beer puts it).

It was a memorable moment for Darwin, returning these Fuegians to their native land, a vivid first impression he recorded in his *Diary*. He was sending his journal home for safekeeping and also for critical comments from his family. As he said in a letter (April 25, 1832) to his sister Caroline, "Remember ... that it is written solely to make me remember this voyage, & that it is not a record of facts but of my thoughts.---& in excuse recollect how tired I generally am when writing it" (CCD 1.226). It was "an exact record of all my first impressions, & such a set of vivid ones they have been" (1.227). When they returned two years later in March 1834, Darwin saw that at least Jemmy was doing well. "I hope & have little doubt he will be as happy as if he had never left his country; which is more than I formerly thought" (*Diary*, 227). Like the Tasmanians that François Peron left behind, Jemmy "lighted a farewell signal fire as the ship stood out of Ponsonby Sound, on her course to East Falkland Island" (*ibid.*).

A lot may be going on in Darwin's melancholy over returning the Fuegians. Perhaps somewhere inside himself he had doubts that these savages should have been taken, or kidnapped, in the first place, though that is a completely wild guess on my part. Or Darwin could have been thinking of the conflicted state any person must live in when there are two cultures warring in one breast. You can read that into this passage, though I don't think it is strongly supported.

What is more obvious is his lament that civilization will lose out to a savage way of life in this situation. For civilization to lose even one inch in the battle with a barbarous culture was truly melancholy to him. It was the superior giving way to the inferior. Darwin would probably never have agreed with Charles Napier who wrote in 1835: "in King's Bench, or Cave, every man has a right to be as happy as he can, in this life; and I see no reason why the savage should not choose his own way, as well as other people. For my part, I think his wild life very superior in happiness to ours" (Napier, 99; Napier goes on in this vein for quite a bit, some of it quite funny; one of the things he points out is that the savage has "no '*learned professions*' to torment him;" his emphasis). Even if that last sentence about the superiority of the wild life is a bit of rhetoric on Napier's part, the sentiment about choosing

one's own way seems as honestly believed as it is generous. It is not something Darwin shared. His feeling about the superiority of the civilized life he was familiar with is understandable, but it does not help make one an objective scientist.

So let us not exaggerate how sensitive and advanced Darwin was. His ideas have to be understood in the context of the ideas of others of his time, others who went further than he did. Darwin put the brakes on how far in a liberal direction evolutionary theory should take us.

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I believe that Darwin's failure to truly grasp the interconnection of all things prevented him from seeing the connections between slavery, colonialism, and the plight of ex-slaves. It could also be that there was a certain willful blindness operating. To acknowledge any validity to the arguments that dispossession was unjust and that it was like slavery would be to admit a contradiction in himself. Here was an anti-slavery man tolerating slavery in another form. That is not an easy thing to swallow about oneself. Hardly anyone in his class of society would have encouraged him to examine the consistency of his own principles, or lack thereof. The overwhelming majority accepted imperialism's way of creating slaves and even the *de facto* slavery that often operated, despite the objections of many humanitarians who saw what was happening.

In Jamaica, after the full emancipation of slaves in 1838, things were not as bad as in Australia for Aborigines, but many ex-slaves who preferred to buy and work their own small plots of land (and many successfully did) found themselves up against planters who sought in various ways to impel them to work on their plantations for miserable wages whenever the planters needed them. As I reported earlier, one ex-slave objected in 1848, "What kind of free is this? This the free them gee we. This Free worse than slave, a man cant put up with it" (Holt, 174).

There were some humanitarians, such as Gribble and Carley, who fiercely protested *de facto* slavery and other abuses of the colonial system. They were in the minority and suffered for the trouble they caused. They were isolated and vilified in their communities. Gribble was a minister who eventually lost his mission. He was vindicated by a Royal Commission in 1905, twelve years after his death in 1893 (Reynolds, *Whispering*, 157-58; Gribble's son noted, "His 'vindication' 12 years too late"). David Carley was an ex-convict whose past was held against him and used to discredit him. In 1884, he poignantly wrote in a letter, "I am allone with out Money or Friends and I am to Old to Commence again [*sic*]" (168) and later that same year he explained in another

letter that "he had tried for more than eleven years to stop the 'Foul Stain on the Flag of our Country' but the only good he had done was to ruin himself" (169). No commission ever vindicated him.

The truth is that most emancipationists turned their back on ex-slaves and other workers after legal slavery was abolished. Ending legal slavery had become a popular cause embraced by the masses, but very few thought it through. They did not concern themselves with illegal forced labor. They did not think of the aftermath of emancipation and the racist hostility that would dog the steps of the emancipated. They washed their hands of the whole business and abandoned people who were virtual slaves to their fate.

That is pretty much what Thomas Huxley advocated in a short lecture, "Emancipation---Black and White," delivered in 1865 at the end of the American Civil War ('white' refers to women's liberation which takes up the bulk of the essay): "whatever the position of stable equilibrium into which the laws of social gravitation may bring the negro, all responsibility for the result will henceforward lie between nature and him. *The white man may wash his hands of it, and the Caucasian conscience be void of reproach for evermore*" (Huxley, *Lectures*, 115; emphasis added). He dispenses with the whole issue of blacks and emancipation in one page.

Huxley was glad that slavery had been officially closed down in Britain and America (its "doom is just" as he says in this lecture; also see D & M, *Sacred Cause*, 335, for how strong an abolitionist Huxley was), but he also stated here that there are "good grounds for repudiating half the arguments which have been employed by the winning side [the abolitionists]." The argument that bothered him the most was that white and black are equals. His firm belief was that Negroes on average were inferior to whites: "... no rational man, cognisant of the facts, believes that the average negro is the equal, still less the superior, of the average white man." He continued: "... it is simply incredible that, when all his disabilities are removed, and our prognathous relative has a fair field and no favour, as well as no oppressor, he will be able to compete successfully with his bigger-brained and smaller-jawed rival, in a contest which is to be carried on by thoughts and not by bites. The highest places in the hierarchy of civilisation will assuredly not be within the reach of our dusky cousins ..." And so it was that "The doctrine of equal natural rights may be an illogical delusion." The final result was that "emancipation may convert the slave from a well-fed animal into a pauperised man."

Huxley was probably speaking for many, if not most, abolitionists. Once slavery had been made illegal, they washed their hands of any more responsibility for people who, they all had argued, had been treated so

unjustly. Suddenly, with the end of slavery, the injustice was over and there was nothing more to think about. Inferiority, as a fact of nature, would limit what the liberated people could accomplish. There was nothing unjust in that. The "Caucasian conscience [will] be void of reproach for evermore."

Contrast this to Alfred Wallace's remarks in "Discussion on the Negro Race" (S095; this is actually a summary by an anonymous third party of Wallace's comments on someone else's paper delivered in March 1864). Wallace seems to concede the prevailing view ("the negro is very inferior in intellectual capacity ... only question ... how far that inferiority extends"), then wrestles with it. As for the accusation that the negro will work only "under the pressure of necessity," he notes that this is true of everyone, white people included. He then goes on to make the crucial point that we are unfair in judging negroes because we have only seen them in unfavorable conditions: "We had never seen the negro under favourable circumstances. We had always seen him either as a slave or perfectly free without any stimulus to exertion ... We had not yet seen the negro under the circumstances that would show him to the greatest advantage." In this one short piece, assuming it is an accurate summary, Wallace moves from accepting the general opinion of negro inferiority to undermining that opinion by pointing out we don't have the evidence to justify it. That is the mark of a great scientist.

Was Wallace alone in thinking like this? I don't think so. Here is the young explorer Joseph Thomson in 1881: "We have no right as yet to come to rigid conclusions about the character of the negro, and what his capacity for improvement may be. Travellers who have made such sweeping denunciations of the negro have seen him as degraded from ages of exposure to the curse of slavery, ever fighting like a wild beast for his very existence" (1.139). That so many scientists were not taking this in is not the fault of Thomson or Wallace. (As previously noted, Thomson did not stay true to this. That only shows how hard it is to keep egalitarian views in the face of a society's constant pressure to give them up.)

In bringing up Huxley's awful racism, I am not trying to make Darwin look guilty by association with his friend. Huxley's example, like Trollope's, merely shows that it was possible to have been an abolitionist and a harsh racist. And if you think Huxley and Trollope sound like pretty bad racists, just wait till you get a load of what Darwin's other friend Joseph Hooker, also an abolitionist, had to say about blacks (coming up further on in this chapter). Just because someone opposed slavery, this did not automatically make them humane and sympathetic to the situation of former slaves. Darwin's anti-legal-slavery position all by itself tells us nothing about whether he was as humanitarian as so many writers have claimed. It is a fact out of context of

other facts and therefore almost worthless.

Whatever Darwin or anyone else thought about legal slavery not only had no connection to the possibility of humane concerns about Aborigines, it had no connection to concerns about freed slaves. It is unfortunately entirely plausible that one could entertain terribly racist opinions and still regard legal slavery as an evil that should be abrogated. Of this company of men, Huxley, Hooker, and Trollope were the most resolutely, irredeemably racist, while Lyell and Darwin were the least fanatical. Darwin will always be for many "the gentler Darwin" (as D & M, *Sacred Cause*, 338, call him). But while less outspoken than the others, what Darwin shared with them was an indifference to racism as the underlying cause of both slavery and colonialism. They all deluded themselves into thinking that racism did not exist and had nothing to do with slavery which was a unique injustice unrelated to any profounder cause. Emancipation would resolve that injustice, and this being done, nothing further was necessary.

(Darwin reminds me of an incident from my childhood. I was probably around eight years old. There was a boy who lived in my neighborhood and whom I did not know, but I had heard rumors about him. There was something medically wrong with him. He could not defecate normally and had to wear a bag at all times with his waste collecting in the bag, so that there was always the smell of shit about him. Anyway, that's what all the kids said. I never got close enough to find out. One day a large group of us was playing in the street, when he suddenly appeared. We must have been near his house. We all formed a very wide circle around him. Nobody wanted to get near him. I believe this was the first time I had seen him. I remember how intensely lonely he looked. He just wanted a friend to play with. But everyone shouted nasty things at him and told him to get away, we don't want you around. I did not shout, I stood back in the outer part of the circle. I was like Darwin. I participated in the nastiness in my gentler way. I remember too that the boy looked proud and was determined not to be cowed by the insults, or I think I remember this. I'm not sure. I might be imagining what I wished he had done, or he might really have been as proud as I see him in my head right now.)

This is why emancipation cannot be considered a great humanitarian act. It was a humane thing to do, but minimally so. There was no follow-up, no attempt to make sure the former slaves got a fair shake, no effort to combat racism, and hardly any concern if slavery was continuing in effect through unfair labor practices. There were some notable exceptions to this, certain humanists who were shocked by the facts on the ground. There were also officials in the Colonial Office who did try, for example, to remove racist

obstacles to ex-slaves in Jamaica, but they were beaten back by a very stubborn white planter class that did not want to relinquish its dominant position. In general, however, the very limited goal of legal emancipation was doomed to fail because the potential success of freed slaves was throttled from the get-go.

Buxton had kicked off the establishment of the Aborigines' Protection Society by comparing their plight to that of slaves. Recall that Bannister said that Buxton and the other anti-slavery activists always had in mind the freedom of both the slaves and all free colored, or Aboriginal, people. In 1907, the APS merged into the Anti-Slavery Society, thus in some way confirming that the two were fighting essentially the same battle. A few decades later there would be an international Convention Against Slavery and a Convention Against Forced Labour. Australia ratified the former in 1926 and the latter in 1930 (Reynolds, *Whispering*, 219). The Treaty of Versailles also dealt with some of these issues. All this is getting slightly ahead of Darwin's time. The point is this: There was enough information available in his era to make it fairly preposterous for anyone to hold the position that colonialism and slavery were very different things. They were twin evils and sometimes intertwined evils. Although this only became obvious to many in the 20th century, a handful of humanitarians in the 19th century paid attention to the human rights abuses occurring here. Darwin was not among them.

I was going to end this section on that note. Then I noticed that Henry Reynolds provides a very good summary in *Whispering* (248-49). He is writing about Australia but much of what he says applies to other colonies as well:

As we have shown there always were people who objected to the course of events, who stood out against conventional and accepted views and who proclaimed the cause of justice and equality, reparation and regret and who often paid a high price for their principled dissent ... What the humanitarian story shows is that an alternative agenda was aired, a more humane course projected, was listened to, understood and then comprehensively rejected, often with derision. The colonists were offered a choice and chose to continue in accustomed ways, preferring violent dispossession ... to create a racially homogenous nation which had no place for Aborigines who it was comfortably expected would 'die out' on cue.

These 19th century humanitarians cared about human rights when most scientists had turned their backs and all but squashed them beneath their

theories of fitness and competition, survival and progress. The early humanitarians may not have consciously sought to challenge bad science, but that is exactly what they did. If we remember they existed, then we will also remember that anyone who argued that the extinction of people and cultures was inevitable, that indigenous people were not of great intelligence, that the land did not really belong to them, and that Europe was only fulfilling a dream of natural, rightful conquest---that is, who argued that all these things were founded on sound scientific knowledge---then we should remember that those who proposed these scientifically respectable ideas were not on the side of the angels.

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Darwin once expressed surprise that there was so little political material in his grandfather's letters---"it is singular how rarely there is more than an allusion in his letters to politics" ("Preliminary", 45)---which is not really all that surprising since Erasmus Darwin held radical ideas (his grandson calls him a radical) in a conservative age; understandably, he might have been reluctant to commit his ideas to paper. Darwin knew very well that his grandfather lived in a more repressive time and admired him for taking a strong stand against slavery when it was much harder to do so. After citing one of his letters and part of a poem bearing on slavery, Darwin reminds the reader that this was before the abolition of the slave trade and at a time when a religious society declined to give Christian instruction to slaves (47).

Fifty years later, it was much easier to express oneself on many (not all) controversial subjects without fear of repercussions. So it is more truly surprising that there is so little information about political and social issues in his grandson's letters. Charles Darwin's time was generally more liberal, though humanitarian enthusiasms went into a brief decline in the 1840s. Lively debate was more tolerated. At least twice in his letters, Darwin complained when certain people did not express *more* passionate outrage about the evil of slavery (in the 1845 letter to Lyell complaining of his placid attitude and in an 1862 letter to his American friend Asa Gray, noting "How detestably the special correspondent of the [London] Times writes on the subject; the man has not a shade of feeling against slavery;" CCD 3.242 and 10.471, respectively). That suggests that Darwin expected such passion could be expressed with little reprisal.

We do not get very much from Darwin on many subjects. We know less than we think we know, even as to slavery. Yet there are so many tantalizingly close encounters with people where Darwin might have revealed more or inquired more about many issues, had he chosen to do so. The

knowledge we would wish for never materializes. He expresses thoughts with just the barest of statements, leaving us in the dark about a number of things. Regarding slavery, how much do we know? Over and over again, he says he hates it, it is cruel, it is an abomination---and that is about it. What did he think about the economic injustice against slaves? We don't know. What did he think about civil rights for freed slaves? We don't know. Did he see poor blacks as inhabiting the same space as poor whites? We don't know. What considerations, if any, were due to the poor? Darwin, unlike Wallace, was very far from being a socialist, so it is doubtful he thought there should be any major policy changes for the poor. He fully believed in a class society and he believed the inequalities of class were good for progress.

I have previously alluded to a number of those frustrating close encounters and will round them up in a moment---in each case, how close we come to learning something, only to see it evaporate. But I want to begin with an exceptionally frustrating one that can be found in a letter from Joseph Hooker to Darwin, concerning the Jamaican massacre in October 1865. We can glean a few things from it, but not the most crucial thing. They were on opposite sides in this controversy. Darwin joined the group that wanted to prosecute the Governor of Jamaica for his brutal repression of the Morant Bay Rebellion and Hooker joined the supporters of Governor Eyre. But those bare facts reveal very little. I will have to go over these controversial events in some detail without which Hooker's letter to Darwin cannot be fully appreciated.

Thirty years after the emancipation of slaves in the British colonies, the rebellion began as a court disturbance on a Saturday, October 7, 1865. It became perhaps a full-scale rebellion by Monday the 10th, and was basically over ten days to two weeks later, though martial law continued for a while longer. At its peak about 1500-2000 people were involved (Holt, 299). Discontent over the way people of color were treated had been building for decades. Paul Bogle, the leader of the rebellion, was captured by the Maroons on October 23 and executed the next day. The Maroons were descendants of slaves when Spain ruled the island. They gave the British a lot of trouble in the 18th century. A truce was reached with the British allowing them to live at peace in the mountains and the Maroons promising to help put down any slave rebellions, should the occasion arise. This they did when a revolt broke out after Christmas in December 1831. In 1865, though this was not a slave insurrection, the Maroons were at it again, dealing out to Bogle his final fate. Without support from the Maroons, the rebellion never had a chance.

Months before the rebellion, in April 1865, a group of black smallholders in St. Ann's Parish sent the Queen a petition detailing their grievances and asking her to secure some land for them (there was a general belief that

abandoned land reverted back to the Queen and thereby to the public; see Holt, 269). They planned to "cultivate coffee, corn, canes, cotton and tobacco, and other produce. We will form a company for that purpose ..." and would pay for the land in installments (277). The response, which became known as "the Queen's Advice," was drafted by Henry Taylor of the Colonial Office. He had been one of those who had contributed to what ultimately became the original emancipation plan. In "the Queen's advice," he laid out the government's expectations: "... the prosperity of the Labouring Classes, as well as of all other Classes, depends, in Jamaica, and in other Countries, upon their working for Wages, not uncertainly, or capriciously, but steadily and continuously, at the times when their labor is wanted, and for so long as it is wanted." That is how they should prosper and "not from any such schemes as have been suggested." Five thousand copies of the entire reply were "distributed and posted in public places and read aloud in churches and other public meetings" (278).

The general source of the miseries of black Jamaicans, as Holt sums it up, was embodied in the planter who offered "low wages and sometimes no wages at all ... high rents or kept them out of possession of land for themselves ... [and who] weighted the law in favor of his own class and denied them justice" (300). Holt takes us to just a month before the revolt to what he calls "a remarkable speech in Bogle's chapel at Stony Gut" (300). The speaker is James McLaren, one of Bogle's closest aides. This is Holt's account of it, which includes quotes from McLaren's speech:

Though born free of ex-slave parents, "I am still a slave by working from days to days. I cannot get money to feed my family, and I working at Coley estate for 35 chains for 1s., and after five days' working I get 2s. 6d. for my family. Is that able to sustain a house full of family?" To which his audience replied: "No." He went on to urge that they send a petition to the government for land. "And if they will give up the outside land to *we*, we shall work with cane, and cotton, and coffee like the white. But the white people say we are lazy and won't work." [Recall what Trollope said about the slaves wanting to be emancipated from work. And of course he was not the only one.] When he said that, the people said, "We have no land to work." McLaren went on to complain of the high rents he paid for his provision grounds and the high taxes on his stock. If they had land, they could pay taxes and they would "not want anything from the white people, they would try to make their own living

themselves." They must go down to Morant Bay, he concluded, "in lump, to let white people see there was plenty black in the island." [Holt, 300-01]

It had been only a few months before this in April 1865 that the petition from St. Ann's Parish had been sent to London resulting in the denial that came to be known as "the Queen's advice," discussed above.

On October 10, 1865, after the court riot on Saturday, Bogle and his men drafted a formal complaint to Governor Eyre to protest "the mean advantages that has been taken of us from time to time:"

... and more especially ... when, on Saturday, the 7th of this month, an outrageous assault was committed upon us by the policemen of this parish, by order of the justices, which occasioned an outbreaking; for which warrants have been issued against innocent persons, which we were compelled to resist. [Then calling for the Governor's protection] which protection, if refused, we will be compelled to put our shoulders to the wheels, as we have been imposed upon for a period of twenty-seven years [i.e., since full emancipation in 1838], with due obeisance to the laws of our Queen and country, and we can no longer endure the same. [Bleby, *Reign*, 38; also quoted in Holt, 297]

It was signed by James Dacres, Paul Bogle, and James McLaren. Henry Bleby's comment in his 1868 book immediately follows and is worth noting:

This certainly is not the language of those who were engaged in, and about to carry into effect, a deadly conspiracy against the Government, and to destroy the white and coloured people; but that of men honestly appealing to the right quarter for the redress of crying grievances; and is, in itself, sufficient proof that the riot which took place on the following day [the 11th] must have been unpremeditated ...

Holt doubts that Bogle expected any sympathy from Eyre and believes that Bogle was prepared for "a violent showdown" (Holt, 297). Bleby was critical of Eyre for responding to this petition with force and for never mentioning it in his dispatches to the Colonial Office. The only reason we know about the petition is because it came out in the hearings of the Royal Commission.

In England, not much attention was paid to the grievances of the black residents of Jamaica. Instead, outrage focused on what happened to one

colored man, George William Gordon, a friend of Bogle. He really had nothing to do with the revolt. He was a wealthy landowner himself and a member of the House of Assembly. In the months before, he had given many provocative speeches in opposition to some of Governor Eyre's policies. During the revolt, he was in Kingston where martial law was not in effect. He was arrested there and taken to Morant Bay for trial under martial law. He was court-martialed on the 21st and executed on the 23rd. Gordon had been an important person in Jamaican politics. A Royal Commission of inquiry into the events and at least one later judicial hearing found the evidence against Gordon practically non-existent (there were only those fiery speeches in the legislature). The commanding officer hesitated to carry out an execution of a member of the House and wrote to Governor Eyre for confirmation; Eyre gave his full approval (Semmel, 53). This event became the rallying point for those seeking a trial of Eyre. The anti-Eyre forces consolidated themselves into the Jamaica Committee which Darwin would later join. An Eyre Defence Committee or Fund was also formed.

The final tally of government violence was "439 dead, hundreds flogged, and 1,000 houses burned" (Holt, 302). The Royal Commission sent its report to the Queen on April 9, 1866 and publicly released its findings several weeks later. It was severely critical of the lengthy continuation of martial law, excessive death sentences, reckless and "positively barbarous" floggings, and the "wanton and cruel" burning of 1000 houses, but at the same time praised Eyre for "the skill, promptitude, and vigour" with which he brought the insurrection to a "speedy termination" (in Semmel, 70). The brutality of the repression of the revolt shocked many people and institutions, including the London *Times* which was and remained a supporter of Eyre. Despite private attempts initiated by the Jamaica Committee to bring Eyre and other officers to trial, nothing ever came of these efforts at justice.

There were several civil suits in 1869 by Jamaicans for damages for the imprisonment, floggings, and destruction of homes they had suffered. They all lost because the courts ruled that the Act of Indemnity passed by the Jamaican Assembly properly exempted Eyre from all financial responsibility in putting down the revolt (Semmel, 183). In July 1872, the House of Commons by a vote of 243 to 130 agreed to defray Eyre's legal expenses (183-87). Two years later, ex-Governor Eyre was even awarded a pension by the new conservative government under Benjamin Disraeli.

During the debate over Eyre's legal expenses, MP Peter Taylor, former treasurer of the Jamaica Committee, characterized the massacre in these words: "a case of cowardice which magnified a trumpery riot into a widespread insurrection, and then drowned the phantom it created in an ocean

of murder, anarchy, and blood" (in Semmel, 186). This had been obvious to some people just weeks after the executions of Bogle and Gordon. In late November 1865, before anyone thought of prosecuting Eyre or other officers, Frederic Rogers, an official in the Colonial Office, who had been a supporter of the Governor, wrote to his sister of what had happened: "The soldiers seem to have made wildish work of it, and Eyre's hanging a member of the Assembly by court martial, sending him from Kingston for the purpose is rather startling ..." (in Semmel, 16-17). In another letter, he said of the whole "Jamaica business [which] is most terrible," that "It is really terrible to see human nature naked" (17). Eloquent descriptions of what had happened would be the only justice anyone would ever get out of this, if that is justice.

So Darwin was on the good side in this affair and this surely must tell us something about his humanitarianism. It is not that simple. The Jamaica Committee was formed in January 1866 (or possibly December 1865?). Darwin did not join until November 1866, though the Royal Commission had issued its report in April. Why the long delay? His friends Lyell and Huxley had joined only the month before. What were they all waiting for? One possibility is that they wanted to see how things were shaking out and who else had signed up.

It is also possible they had some hesitation in joining because the Jamaican crisis had become an English working class celebrated cause. In June and July 1866, there were two very large demonstrations in England for political reform (Semmel, 85-88). The second one, called by the Reform League, turned violent when over 1500 policemen tried to prevent the crowd from entering Hyde Park. No one was killed but many were beaten severely. According to Semmel (87), the respectable classes were beginning to associate white, working-class rabble with the blacks of Jamaica. For workers, Eyre had become a symbol of the same aristocratic power which was blocking legislative reform in the House of Lords (102-03). At a public open-air meeting at the end of August, one speaker linked the two great causes of the day, as summarized by Semmel (102): "a Tory government had as much right to shoot down people in Hyde Park as Mr Eyre had to murder hundreds of innocent Jamaicans." Working class agitation would not have thrilled Darwin.

Herbert Spencer had asked him to subscribe to the Jamaica Committee in a letter of November 2 (CCD 14.372). Spencer knew Darwin to be already sympathetic to the cause. To Hooker, Darwin explained very little when he wrote to tell him he had just joined: "For the more I hear about it the more atrocious the case appears" (Nov. 20, 1866; CCD 14.393). Again, the Royal Commission Report had been published in April. What more did Darwin need to know? He never says. Not in a letter at any rate.

What was atrocious to Darwin? Was it the brutality, the violation of constitutional rights, the suppression of ex-slaves trying to acquire their own land and make their own lives, or all or none of these issues? Was he aware of the abuses that led to the revolt? Did he care about how the black population in Jamaica was faring under so-called freedom? Had he heard of their petitions? What did he think of "the Queen's advice"? If Darwin ever discussed these things, it was only in oral communications. I cannot see that he put down in writing his thoughts about any of this. We don't really know the specific reason(s) why Darwin signed up with the anti-Eyre forces.

Huxley joined shortly before Darwin and what does that tell us about Huxley? He was a terrible racist, as we have seen. Supporting the Jamaica Committee had absolutely no implications about one's attitude toward the races, though of course people at the time might make assumptions. The *Pall Mall Gazette* pondered whether Huxley and Lyell had lent their support to the Committee because of their "peculiar views on the development of species" which perhaps had made them sympathetic to the Negro (Semmel, 128). Huxley's answer appeared in the October 31 issue. He stated that his peculiar views on development had nothing to do with it, nor had he joined because of "any particular love for, or admiration of the negro" but because "unless I am misinformed, English law does not permit good persons, as such, to strangle bad persons, as such" (ibid.). He went on to say that "if the most virtuous of Britons, let his place and authority be what they may, seize and hang up the greatest scoundrel in Her Majesty's dominions simply because he is an evil and troublesome person, an English court of justice will certainly find that virtuous person guilty of murder." He wished to hear a court declare whether Eyre had committed murder.

Huxley's stand on this issue was admirable. For Huxley, killing people by martial law without the protection of constitutional rights was "so frightful a precedent, that I desire to see it stigmatized by the highest authority as a crime" (in Semmel, 128). As he said in a letter to Charles Kingsley, who was on Eyre's side, he wished to see English law declare that "heroes have no more right to kill people in this fashion than other folk ..." (129). The Eyre people could not see any danger of a precedent here. This involved only the coloreds and blacks in a colony. Huxley's friend the physicist John Tyndall said at a meeting of the Eyre Defence Fund, "... if the precedent be restricted to Jamaica ... it is not frightful, and if it be extended to England the extension is unwarrantable. Who dreams of making Jamaica a precedent for England?" (Hume, H., 281). The Jamaica Committee certainly did. Further on, Tyndall could say, "I decline accepting the negro as the equal of the Englishman, nor will I commit myself to the position that a negro insurrection and an English

insurrection ought to be treated the same way" (Hume, 283). Despite his own racism, Huxley could see his way to the purer constitutional issue.

Many others were also concerned to establish that what happened in Jamaica was in no way a precedent for England. They reacted to the Morant Bay Rebellion with the same fear as if it were a slave rebellion. In 1868, in *Justice to a Colonial Governor*, W.F. Finlason wrote: "... an insurrection of negroes in a colony once a slave colony ... is a peril wholly exceptional ... A negro rebellion is necessarily, sooner or later, a war of *extermination* [of whites]. If not so intended originally, it ultimately, unless soon suppressed, must become so through the necessity of fear" (v-vi; his emphasis).

It could have been Huxley's argument about constitutional rights that outweighed any misgivings Darwin might have had about working class agitation (*if* that was the case; I can only speculate here). My general point is that even with respect to this particular issue, we have no evidence as to what Darwin's beliefs were. One cannot argue that joining the Jamaica Committee makes him a great humanitarian about races. There is nothing in the record, no details, to account him as having the highest humane motives, though obviously he must have had some minimal humane concerns. No one knows what his deepest convictions were in this case.

It is interesting that the *Pall Mall Gazette* thought that, for Lyell and Huxley, ideas about species development had something to do with it and equally interesting that Huxley denied it. Darwin would probably have echoed Huxley, though we have no information one way or the other. The *Gazette's* concern, in my view, was really a legacy of Robert Chambers. It was his interpretation of the development of species which stressed that all living things are connected and that an injustice committed against one part would have repercussions for all other parts. It is hard to extract a brotherhood of man from Darwin's *Origin of Species*. He gives us divergence of character in a hierarchy of dominant and weak species. This was obvious to anyone who read the book carefully.

But many people did not read Darwin carefully. They read him through the ideas of what they already knew about development. They *assumed* he was saying the same thing as the author of *Vestiges*, when he really wasn't. It is significant that Huxley specifically separates development (or evolution) from ideas of social justice, at least in this case, while Chambers connected them. Huxley needs to let people know that evolution has nothing to do with why he is pursuing justice in this matter, nor, it seems, has it inspired him to feel any love or admiration for Negroes. But for people who followed the sentiments of Chambers, this connection between evolutionary theory and certain social ideals would always exist. They incorrectly assumed that all proponents of

evolution, like Huxley and Darwin, would follow Chambers in this.

The Jamaican massacre and the controversy swirling around Eyre stirred up very strong feelings on both sides. It was not just that Eyre was a national hero to some and a national disgrace to others. Many of Eyre's defenders believed that in certain situations where thousands of lives were potentially in jeopardy (white lives of course), an official was justified on humanitarian grounds in taking precipitous action. The other side would point out that even if that were true, the actions such a person takes cannot be willy-nilly but must have some evidence to justify them and in Gordon's case there was nothing (outside of some provocative speeches he made in the Assembly in the months before the rebellion).

Both sides had ideas about what was true humanitarianism. The Eyre defenders resented the suggestion that the anti-Eyre forces had a monopoly on morality. Lord Shrewsbury, one of the speakers at a banquet held for Eyre when he returned to England in August 1866, did not like being lectured to by what he called "a faction who pretended to more humanity than fell to the lot of human nature" (Semmel, 97). Two of the more prominent literary and conservative figures on the Eyre Defence Committee, John Ruskin and Thomas Carlyle, had long supported English workingmen and gave away nothing to the radicals who claimed to represent them. Ruskin accused the radicals of hypocrisy because they supported *laissez-faire* economics which Ruskin believed was making working life miserable and was actually killing thousands of workers each year (115). Why should the lives of Jamaican Negroes be worth more than the lives of English workers?

Both sides had their share of Members of Parliament in their ranks. One peculiarity was that many prominent literary figures supported Eyre, while the Jamaica Committee had stronger representation from scientists. But there were exceptions. Joseph Hooker was one of those scientists who went to the other side. He had delayed publicly declaring his position probably because he did not want to be seen opposing Huxley and Darwin. He finally sent a couple of letters to the Eyre Defence Committee to express his support. I do not believe they survive but a few sentences were read into the record at a meeting of this Committee, the minutes of which were included as an Appendix to Hamilton Hume's *The Life of Edward John Eyre* (1867). Bear in mind that Hooker too was in favor of the abolition of slavery. Here in part is what John Tyndall, a close friend of Huxley, said for the record of that meeting (you can see how everyone was struggling to make a claim to the moral high ground):

let me now give you the opinion regarding the negro of Dr.

Joseph Dalton Hooker---a man in whom righteousness, mercy, and truth are blended with the highest intellectual excellence, and with knowledge garnered from all corners of the earth. Neither he nor I, let me say, ever had the slightest sympathy with negro slavery. Both of us equally abhor cruelty; both of us are ready to join in denouncing it, but neither of us is willing to commit himself to that "falsehood of extremes" which is the vice of the position of the Jamaica committee. This, then, is the opinion [of Hooker] ... "That the negro in Jamaica," he writes to me, "... is pestilential, I have no hesitation in declaring; nor that he is a most dangerous savage at the best." ... he regards the negro as essentially cruel, "inasmuch as when his blood is up, very cruel acts are his first acts, and these in great number." In a second note to me he thus repeats the conviction expressed in his first: "I consider him a savage, and a most dangerous savage too ... and the liberty given to him in Jamaica to have proved equally detrimental to the prosperity of that island." [Hume, 282-83]

Like Trollope, Hooker was sounding the note that emancipation had failed (because it did not increase British prosperity) and had merely set loose a dangerous beast. Tyndall too was presenting his own and Hooker's moral credentials in their abhorrence of slavery and cruelty.

When Darwin informed Hooker that he was going with the side opposed to Eyre, he said, "You will shriek at me when you hear that I have just subscribed to the Jamaica Committee" (Nov. 20, 1866; CCD 14.393). So they must have had discussions about this before. Here is Hooker's somewhat agonized reply (all emphases are his):

I do *not* shriek at your subscribing to the Jamaica Committee, though I entirely disapprove of it's persecution of Eyre (for whom I have *no* respect but much pity) individually. I have not a syllable to say for his acts.---Logically you are right; but there are a vast many considerations besides & above mere logic & law and *sentiment*, that, I think, should influence us in such cases: & the balance in my mind is in favor of letting bad alone.---You can do no good, & may make bad worse. You may guess how far I go with & beyond you in sentiment, when I add, that I hold it to be morally unlawful criminal if you will to take the life of animals *for sport*. & I can draw no line logical, between taking the life of a partridge for sport, or a man (white or black) for anger or revenge--- [Nov. 22, 1866; CCD 14.395]

The overall tone and purpose of the letter seem pretty clear: You and the others on the Jamaica Committee do not occupy the moral high ground; I have just as much right as you to make a claim of morality in this instance. He seems a bit disingenuous when he says he has no respect for Eyre and will not defend his actions---that is, in view of what he wrote to John Tyndall in those letters. One would have to guess that, with opinions like that, Hooker must have thought Eyre had done something good in suppressing a dangerous beast. But to Darwin, he gives the appearance of considering Eyre's actions somewhat reprehensible.

His main claim to morality is that, at the end of his remarks, he disapproves of killing anyone "for anger or revenge" (does he mean he is against capital punishment?). Remember that the Jamaica Committee was attempting to have Eyre tried for murder which would have meant his execution, if found guilty. Hooker's boldest move here is in reminding Darwin that Darwin was once an avid hunter (I wasn't sure if Hooker knew this about Darwin, but his remark that he goes beyond Darwin in sentiment seems to allude to young Darwin's hunting days). Hooker is saying that if you want to play the game of moral superiority, I can do that too because I'm against all killing and I see no difference between what your Committee wants to do to Eyre and killing animals for sport. Both are ugly. Everybody in this case wanted to boast of their morality and Hooker seems particularly anxious to do so.

Unfortunately, there is no record of a written response from Darwin. The two met in person less than a week later. Perhaps they hashed it over then and agreed to disagree. (This is what Huxley did with his friend Tyndall; see Semmel, 133.) Once again, we are frustrated in any possibility of learning more about *exactly* where Darwin stood and why he took his position.

Everyone felt a need to present their moral credentials. Despite this, the severe racism of Hooker and Tyndall seem pretty obvious. Previously in the same speech, Tyndall had said, "We do not hold an Englishman and a Jamaica negro to be convertible terms ..." (Hume, 281). When you hold that one race is inferior to another and take this to mean that any disturbances they create are not at all comparable and thus a revolt by one is to be more feared than a revolt by the other, it makes sense that you need to promote some other moral standards you can be proud of.

That high moral stance is also where John Ruskin was coming from. In a speech before the Eyre Committee, Ruskin in part characterized the English people as "a nation blinded by avarice to all true valour and virtue ... which, for the sake of filling its pockets, would pour mortal venom into all its air and all its streams [this was at a time when most scientists, with the rare exception

of Alfred Wallace, expressed no concern about pollution and the environment]; would shorten the lives of its labourers by thirty years a life, that it might get needle-packets two pence each cheaper ..." (Semmel, 117). He regarded the political radicals who made up a significant part of the Jamaica Committee as morally deficient in advocating *laissez-faire*. They would make Eyre a scapegoat to atone for their own murders of workers. But Ruskin had enough of a conscience that, as he learned more details about Eyre, he found it harder and harder to work on his behalf (118).

Unless we know what aspects of humanitarianism someone supported---for example, rectifying injustices against poor blacks and poor whites, the specific nature of these injustices, or whether they even thought there were any injustices against the poor---it is impossible to judge how much of a humanitarian someone was. This is no less true for Darwin than it is for anyone else, and in Darwin's case, we simply don't know; the necessary information isn't there.

Did Darwin look favorably on the efforts of free colored people, before the emancipation of slaves, to attain equal rights? Would he have welcomed a Jamaican government of browns and blacks making laws for white people? Here I will take an educated guess. I believe the answer to both these questions is yes, but it is not much more than a guess. What makes it a little more than guesswork is that Darwin once did express an opinion of the rights of free blacks in Brazil early on in his *Beagle* journey: "If the free blacks increase in numbers (as they must) & become discontented at not being equal to white men, the epoch of the general liberation would not be far distant ... I hope the day will come when they will assert their own rights & forget to avenge their wrongs" (*Diary*, 80). This is a rare remark from Darwin (and unfortunately is not in the published versions) and gives us such a precious glimpse into his thinking on an important social issue.

A little earlier in the *Diary*, he also responds to anti-abolitionists who argued that "the freed slave would not work" (69). He believes the existing evidence proves this argument is wrong. "What will not interest or blind prejudice assert, when defending its unjust power or opinion?" But this remark was made *before* emancipation took place. What did Darwin think afterwards? Was emancipation a success or failure? We don't know what he believed. Many in his society perceived the actual emancipation to be a failure (e.g., the collapse of the sugar cane industry in Jamaica) and many abolitionists were now whistling a different tune and arguing that blacks were lazy and would not work. Where did Darwin weigh in on this? Would the collapse of the big sugar plantations have signaled to him that blacks were lazy after all? Was the older Darwin as dedicated an idealist on these points as

the younger Darwin seems to have been? The information is not there to answer this.

These questions represented such controversial topics that the older Darwin may have been reticent to share his views on them. Certainly, Darwin had a high opinion of anyone who had a European education. If you adapted to western ideas and values, you were intelligent in his eyes. The color of someone's skin did not get in the way of Darwin seeing this. The ability of free coloreds to debate whites in the Jamaican Assembly would probably have been all the evidence he needed. With savages, a different set of circumstances presented itself. It was holding firmly to a non-European culture, as many Aborigines were wont to do, that particularly disturbed Darwin. Did he believe, as many of this time did, that freed black slaves were capable of reverting back to a savage state? On that, I have no information. Darwin conveys too little.

Here is another close encounter. We know he communicated with Richard Hill (previously discussed in this chapter) who was described fifty years later as "one of Jamaica's most worthy and remarkable sons---philanthropist, politician, magistrate, author, poet, naturalist, draughtsman, and indefatigable worker, and a man of wide sympathies" (quoted in Heuman, 60). He was educated in England and served one term in the Jamaican Assembly (1837-38). Before that he had been the first colored stipendiary magistrate in Jamaica. Governor Sligo appointed him Secretary of that department.

As we saw, Hill had strong political views about rights for free coloreds and the bearing this would have on emancipation of slaves. He used the expression 'complexional misanthropes' to describe racists. None of this fascinating history makes its way into the correspondence between Hill and Darwin. Their communication was solely on scientific subjects. In 1856, Hill had been recommended to Darwin by Philip Henry Gosse, a naturalist who had some help from Hill many years before for his book on the natural history of Jamaica. Hill responded to Darwin's first inquiry early in 1857. Among other subjects, Darwin was curious about the bees and domesticated animals in Jamaica, and also whether skin complexion in Europeans made any difference in their liability to tropical diseases (to Hill, Aug. 8, 1859; CCD 7.322). Hill sent him some honeycombs which Darwin desired to carefully measure. Darwin later sent him a presentation copy of *The Origin of Species*, but we don't know what Hill thought about it.

It seems that Darwin learned more about Hill from a Judge Wilkinson of Jamaica whom he met at a water cure establishment in England and who had spoken highly of the multi-talented Hill (ibid.). Who knows what Darwin and the judge talked about in a steam bath or a whirlpool? To Hill, Darwin wrote,

"I was quite delighted (if you will not think it impertinent in me to say so) to hear of all your varied accomplishments and knowledge, and of your higher attributes in the sacred cause of humanity" (ibid.). That is all we learn and it is not much. Darwin was probably referring to Hill's work in the anti-slavery movement and possibly also his work on behalf of the freed slaves. As long as Darwin (or Hill or anyone else for that matter) memorialized nothing further in writing, we cannot know anything about what Darwin thought of any of the detailed issues surrounding emancipation or even what exactly Darwin admired in Hill's humanitarian efforts. Hill did so much. Darwin's general praise tells us little. Like all the other evidence, there are simply no grounds for accounting Darwin a *great* humanitarian. Modest, limited, yes, as I've said before, but not great.

With Huxley, Hooker, and Hill, we were on the verge of learning more about Darwin. Darwin had an opportunity to engage with them on the matter of civil rights and racial justice. The *Pall Mall Gazette* editorial brought up the question of whether evolutionary ideas were having an effect on this debate. Darwin contributes no thoughts on any of this, though who knows what he said in private conversations. Three more examples raise expectations that apparently will never be fulfilled.

In the second chapter, I quoted John Lort Stokes who had his melancholy reflections on the fate of Aborigines and I briefly mentioned that he considered the British treatment of the natives a "national crime" (more on this in Ch. 6, §7). As it happens, Stokes served as an officer on the *Beagle* voyage and shared a cabin with Darwin for, I believe, the first two years. There are numerous mentions of him in Darwin's *Diary*, but nothing very interesting. In letters, Darwin says he liked Stokes very much (e.g., CCD 1.203) and would later congratulate him on the success of his book (CCD 3.373), as previously noted. Darwin read some of the proof sheets for this book, but I have not come across any comments by Darwin on its contents. He had some correspondence with Stokes and saw him a few times in London while Stokes was writing his book (this is from a letter to FitzRoy, CCD 3.359). Whatever they may have discussed in person, nothing found its way into writing. How early did Stokes's insights about imperialism begin? Did he and Darwin talk about this when they roomed together on the *Beagle*? Did they discuss these matters when they met in London? We will probably never know the answers to any of these questions.

Darwin's friend and Captain of the *Beagle*, Robert FitzRoy, was Governor of New Zealand (1843-45). We previously saw that he got into trouble for being too considerate of Maori rights. That might have inspired an exchange of ideas with Darwin. If it did, alas nothing has come down to us. Unless a

new letter, diary, or memoir is discovered in which the author records that he once heard Darwin utter such and such (or has it on good authority that Darwin did so), we are going to remain in the dark about a lot of things.

Succeeding FitzRoy as Governor was George Grey (1845-53 and 1861-68). Before that, Grey had been Governor of South Australia (1841-45), a position that had been offered to Charles Napier. Grey wound up his career as Prime Minister of New Zealand (1877-79). In Chapter 3 (§3), I quoted his good opinion of the intelligence of Aborigines from his book *Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery* (1841), and in the second chapter, I presented his reference to the melancholy prospects of Aborigines as a result of the prejudice of the invaders. Darwin read this book. We come to know this through a bizarre circumstance, a very minor scandal, that once again brings us close to the possibility of learning more about Darwin, which possibility is never realized.

Stokes had asked Darwin to read some of the proof sheets for his forthcoming book. In a brief note in response (Nov.-Dec. 1845), Darwin made the following disparaging comment about Grey's expedition: "Poor Grey has made a very amusing book, but what a catalogue of mishaps & mismanagements. The whole expedition was that of a set of School Boys" (CCD 3.263). Somehow, this note came into the hands of Grey. Both Darwin and Stokes were mortified by the incident. It caused Darwin a good deal of distress; "a vexatious affair," he called it in another note to Stokes (CCD 3.373). To FitzRoy, Darwin wrote that "... if I had expressed my whole opinion [of Grey's book] it would not have been so contemptuous; thank Heaven, I hope I shall never see him again" (CCD 3. 369; Darwin had briefly met Grey once, probably in May 1837; see CCD 3.365 n3). Stokes thought he had destroyed Darwin's note (CCD 3.363) but apparently it got mixed up with the proof sheets he sent to the printer (CCD 3.363 n1) and perhaps some malicious person there forwarded it to Grey.

Grey returned the note to Darwin and actually apologized to Darwin for having read it (CCD 3.319). He thought it had been something originally intended for him. Grey said not a word about the insult. Darwin wrote back profusely apologizing for his impertinence, which had not been intentional, and assured Grey that he could name "many individuals, to whom I have expressed my strong opinion of the many high qualities shown in your work, of which, the amusement it afforded, was but a small part" (CCD 3.364). He also said, "Your account of the aborigines I have always thought one of the most able ever written." As is too typical of Darwin, all we get is this general statement with no further details. Which part of Grey's account is he referring to?

It is doubtful in the extreme that he meant Grey's opinion that the Aborigines are "as apt and intelligent as any other race of men I am acquainted with" (Grey, 2.374). Nowhere in Darwin's writings does he show that he believed that or even that he ever considered this as possibly true. (Grey is mentioned once in *Descent*, 660, for his opinion of the proportion of native women to men; Stokes is also mentioned once, at 431, for his description of a certain species of bird.) Grey also strongly believed that "The fact of the natives being unable to give testimony in a court of justice is a great hardship on them, and they consider it as such" (2.380). Did Darwin agree? Later on, he read about the same issue in Bonwick's book. But Darwin never responds to details like these, so we have no idea what he thought about this or many other things. Perhaps Darwin was just endeavoring to pay Grey some sort of compliment by calling his writing on the Aborigines "one of the most able ever written." By the way, Grey backed up what he professed, when he was Governor of the colony in South Australia. He "took the lead in enacting an Aboriginal evidence act for South Australia" (Smandych, 272).

Grey accepted Darwin's apology (this letter from Grey has been lost) and Darwin was most grateful in response (Nov. 13, 1847; CCD 4.95-96). Grey also offered his assistance with anything Darwin might need in his research into natural history. Darwin immediately takes him up on his offer and gives long explanations of two geological questions he has, which he is hopeful Grey might have answers to or could forward to some naturalist working for him (4.95). This too is typical of Darwin. He always had a lot of curiosity about the natural world, but he does not ask Grey any questions about Aborigines, about their intelligence or anything else. There are lots of inquiries in his letters about geology and other matters of natural history, and hardly anything about the natives. To Grey, he says, "Ever since the voyage of the *Beagle*, I have felt the deepest interest with respect to all our colonies in the southern hemisphere" (CCD 4.95). I have no doubt that this was true and found expression in private conversations, but there is little evidence of it in his correspondence.

There is one slight clue about what he found most interesting in Grey's account which is found in a letter to Alfred Wallace (May 28, 1864): "When reading Sir G. Grey's account of the constant battles of Australian savages, I remember thinking that Natural Selection would come in ..." (ARW 1.154). Wallace in his reply took him to mean that the constant battles are "leading to selection of physical superiority" (ARW 1.156). He warned Darwin of simplifying too much and jumping to conclusions. "For instance, the strongest and bravest men would lead [in battle], and expose themselves most, and would therefore be most subject to wounds and death." (And therefore they

would be less likely to leave progeny behind to give their characteristics to.) Darwin would incorporate this point in *Descent* (155). Wallace also pointed out that if one tribe was too bellicose, it might inspire all the other tribes to unite against it, leading to its own annihilation. Darwin ignored this point. According to Wallace, there were "so many exceptions and irregularities that it [constant battles] could produce no *definite* result" (Wallace's emphasis). He doubted very much that natural selection would in this case lead to any specific physical modifications "and can we imagine it to have had any part in producing the distinct races that now exist?" (ARW 1.157).

What Wallace was pointing to is that human life is more complex than that of any animals. Humans in particular have an ability to cooperate, negotiate, and form alliances which makes survival far more complicated for them than it is for many animals for whom strength and speed may be the paramount qualities necessary in the struggle for existence. In the case of human beings, we are tempted to reduce it all to intelligence, but intelligence has many offshoots; there is no one simple line in which it develops. Darwin never incorporated the human ability to negotiate and compromise as part of what is so important in our existence. These features contradicted his belief about the all-or-nothing quality of his idea of competition. He never even considered that human wars do not always end in complete annihilation of one side, but rather in peace settlements.

For our purposes, all we can conclude from Darwin's comment about Grey in his letter to Wallace is that once again Darwin ignores the humanitarian points made by Grey. The general impression one gets from his letters is either that he had only a slight curiosity about Aborigines or that he believed he already knew the main things about Aborigines. His ideas about savages were well-settled early on and he seems to have felt he had nothing much new to learn about them. In both Grey and Stokes, Darwin read their opinions of the injustices practiced towards Aborigines. Darwin has nothing to say about it. His silence is frustrating and is so consistent that one suspects he did not agree with their assessments, but did not want to kick up a fuss about it.

His reluctance to get into any discussion of the rights of freed slaves and the injustices of illegal slavery is also frustrating. All this could just mean that for Darwin, these things were low on his list of priorities. It is laborious to write letters and takes a lot of energy. Darwin wrote and received lots of them. (In 1871, Darwin wrote to Wallace, "I am tired with writing, for the load of letters which I receive is enough to make a man cry" [CCD 19.211].) But if the troubles of Aborigines and former slaves were not a high priority with him, that too tells us something about his limited humanitarianism.

The one thing we do have solid information on is his low estimation of

savages and his belief that their inferiority would lead to their elimination from the world. In his view, there would be no peace settlements with Aborigines. It would be competition to the death. Opinions to the contrary seem to have held little or no interest for him. He passes up every opportunity to acknowledge such contrary opinions let alone to deal with them. He violated his own insight that "a man is most apt to fall into error exactly where from his ignorance he feels no doubts" (CCD 20.261). Darwin roped science into the task of justifying his prejudices about Aborigines to make them seem reasonable, and banished all doubts. The full case for that awaits the chapter coming up.

5

EVIDENCE, EVIDENCE, EVIDENCE

It's not a question of your word against my word. It's your word against the evidence.

---Deputy Chief Brenda Leigh Johnson on *The Closer*
(played by Kyra Sedgwick)
(not a verbatim quote, but pretty damn close)

We don't demand solid facts! What we demand is a total *absence* of solid facts!

---Vroomfondel in Douglas Adams's
The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (76)

~ 1 ~

Vroomfondel could have been speaking for the great majority of academics who are more concerned with upholding an ideology than with discovering and revealing the evidence. That is the only dispute I have with scholars. They are more concerned with controlling knowledge than exploring it. This entire book, and this chapter especially, is not about my views versus the views of scholars. This is not opinion tennis. This is about scholarly opinions versus the actual evidence, as Deputy Chief Johnson might have put it.

One of the most common defenses made against the charge that Darwin was a racist is that his theory is not about races, but about individuals. It is the biological variations and adaptations of individuals and the struggle for existence among individuals that Darwin identifies as the moving forces of evolution. To make races or any other group part of the picture is, according to Richard Dawkins, "actually very *un-Darwinian*. For Darwin, the struggle for existence was a struggle between individuals within a species, *not* between species, races or other groups" (Dawkins, *Greatest Show*, 62n; his emphases).

Adam Gopnik enthusiastically agrees with this view that Darwin cast aside races in favor of individuals. He says Darwin was "passionately opposed" to

racist views (which he sums up as resting on "the simple premise that races exist, and then that some are smarter or higher or purer than others", Gopnik, 159). Darwin's "evolutionary theory is a long explanation of why only individuals have a real existence, while races and species, far from being fixed and authoritative, are just convenient temporary designations of populations whose only real rule is that they vary" (159). Though Gopnik seems to generally believe that Darwin's theory implies no politics (155, 197), he is also capable of saying that in his time, this theory "naturally tended to prove the equality of men" (158). He further claims that the only way you can read racism into Darwin's writing is "by falsely declaring what it *did* say" (155; his emphasis).

We have already seen enough evidence to know that Gopnik is wrong about this. The position he outlines as anti-racist was stated most clearly by Charles Napier, as previously discussed. Napier was adamant that only individuals can be ranked, not races or individuals. He was exasperated by those who played the game of placing races on a "gradatory scale" (which Darwin participated in) and was disgusted by the claim that Australian Aborigines were the missing link between man and monkey. He insisted that these people "are as highly gifted by the Creator, both in body and mind, as we are ourselves" (Napier, 169). All this is unmistakably anti-racist, as I think Gopnik would agree. But as we have already seen, Darwin believed in ranking races and placed savages in a grade so inferior that it would lead inevitably to their extermination. This chapter will clinch the argument that he believed very much in a struggle for life between groups and that some groups would lose this struggle by virtue of their inferiority. That's what the evidence tells us, if you care about that kind of thing.

If one were looking for Darwin's most succinct formulation of this, it would be his comment to his cousin Francis Galton which I previously quoted: "Would it not be truer to say that Nature cares only for the superior individuals and then makes her new and better races?" (ML 2.44). Nature makes species and races. While that statement could mean that Darwin saw better races as a by-product of individual struggle, the evidence from *Origin* and *Descent* will show he believed more than that. As we will see, competition for Darwin was not just between individuals but between races and species. "New and better races" were those which outcompeted all the rest.

Yet Dawkins and Gopnik represent things differently. Stephen Jay Gould gives us more of the same. In a July 1995 article in *Natural History*, "Spin Doctoring Darwin" (a selection from it is quoted in Glick, *What about Darwin?*, 153-54), Gould compares Darwin to Adam Smith who stressed that

the main activity occurs among individuals with higher benefits for society only emerging from their struggles. A "theory of ultimate individualism" is what Gould calls Darwin's theory (in Glick, 154). He made the same point in other essays (see *Richness*, 224, 226, 241). Gould says, "natural selection operates by sorting organisms within populations" (ibid., 226). He believes modern evolutionary theory has made this clearer, but also that this "underlies the logic of Darwin's own version of natural selection" (224). "Natural selection may lead to benefits for the species ... [only as] side consequences ..." (in Glick, 153). Is that what *The Origin of Species* is really about? Is the origin of dominant and weak species a mere side consequence? Does that really capture Darwin's essential belief?

Both Gould and Gopnik are very proud that Darwin was profoundly opposed to slavery and use this to draw huge conclusions about his humanitarianism. Unlike Gopnik, however, Gould knows that Darwin was no egalitarian; only by selective quotation, says Gould, can you make it appear that he was (*Mismeasure*, 417). He acknowledges that Darwin had his prejudices against many of the native peoples of the world. But in the last essay of *The Mismeasure of Man*, he argues that this makes Darwin paternalistic rather than racist. I will explain in a later chapter why that is a specious distinction in Darwin's case, though I think it will become obvious long before then. It is equally important to be specific about Darwin's racism--what kind of racist he was and what kind he was not---and not just hang a general label on him. Nor is the matter of his personal prejudices nearly as important as the way it affected his science of man. If there were no effect on his science, his personal feelings would not be very significant, not for me anyway.

Gould also has a more subtle point to make: We take Darwin too literally if we harp on that business about the struggle for existence. Darwin meant it metaphorically, claims Gould, and he quotes from *The Origin of Species* to prove it, where Darwin says: "I should premise [presume, in Gould's quotation] that I use the term Struggle for Existence in a large and metaphorical sense, including dependence of one being on another, and including (which is more important) not only the life of the individual, but success in leaving progeny" (*Origin*, 87; quoted in Gould, *Richness*, 541; I cannot find 'presume' in any edition of *Origin*). Gould goes on to say that perhaps scientists, including Darwin, do bear some responsibility for the vicious misinterpretation of this phrase: "Darwin may have been explicit in labeling the struggle for existence as metaphorical, but most nineteenth-century versions (including Darwin's own illustrations, most of the time) stressed overt competition and victory by death--- surely a more congenial

image than peaceful cooperation for an age of aggressive expansion and conquest, both ethnographic and industrial" (Gould, 541-42). The question is whether Darwin also contributed to this in words, not just illustrations. Gould's last allusion to European colonialism is key to understanding what influenced Darwin.

This is not about what evolutionary theory ideally should be. I appreciate the fact that the theory has been modified and improved since Darwin. I have no problem with anyone who wants to purify it and offer a new and improved version---who wants to make it more humanitarian. I also have no problem with people who want to argue that Darwin at his best had certain things to say about individuals, not races, but I would dispute the claim that in his first book about this, *On the Origin of Species*, he never spoke about competition between species or races or groups. I also have a problem with writers who fail to give us the full title of that first book or try to reinterpret it: *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. (Dawkins claims that Darwin did not really mean *Races*; a little further on we will see why he is wrong about that.) It is easy to see that the sub-title is just a more elaborate statement of Herbert Spencer's 'survival of the fittest' (which Spencer came up with in 1864, five years after *Origin* was published); Darwin fully approved of 'survival of the fittest' in the fifth edition of *Origin* (Chapter IV was retitled "Natural Selection, or the Survival of the Fittest") and actually used it the year before in *The Variation of Animals and Plants*, and then again in *The Descent of Man* (e.g., 81, 156).

We have to ask what Darwin's *full* views were and how did he himself apply evolutionary theory to human beings in *Descent*. Are these writers correct that Darwin did not write about the evolution of races, did not see important differences between races, and was not as literal as can be in applying the struggle for existence to human races, even talking about violence and competition between the races of humankind as a biological struggle, with the superior ones winning the fight for survival? I think not. I am certain not. The abundance of quotations from Darwin on these matters in *Descent* is staggering. You do not have to read racism into Darwin. It is there in the bluntest, most certain of terms. How could these writers ignore it all? Where is this misdirection coming from?

I don't think Darwin was the worst kind of racist. He was not vile or nasty and did not generally exult in the white man's superiority. I do not think his racism was as severe as Huxley's and Hooker's. But his racism was serious and it went deep. It was created and sustained by the culture of his time. It was a rare 19th century writer who vigorously complained about racism and

colonialism, but such writers did exist. Darwin was not one of them, except in the limited way of opposing legal slavery. The origins of evolutionary theory took place in writers who were more humanitarian than Darwin and then he took it in a new direction. A careful study of Darwin potentially reveals the relationship between science and culture. Science is almost never born pure and is rarely carried out in a pure way. There are degrees of purity and impurity. It has always been so with western science. And western intellectual thought has not been good at confronting this.

I also want to be clear that I am not disputing one of the main conclusions of evolution, that is, that we are all descended from one common ancestor. It is what Darwin said about how the developed races of man stood in relation to one another that concerns me. Practically every writer on Darwin has called him a revolutionary and has made this a thoughtless truism. But so much of what he wrote fit into the colonialist mindset of his time that it is questionable how revolutionary he was. The evolutionary thinkers who came before him were the true revolutionaries. It is mindboggling how much evidence contradicts the claim that there is no racism in the work of Charles Darwin and how absent of supporting evidence is the defense of Darwin. I want to know why so many writers give us a completely false accounting of the totality of what Darwin wrote, though maybe I don't really want to know. Maybe I just want to expose it and leave it to future generations to figure out the whys and wherefores and make sense of it all.

~ 2 ~

Most of this chapter will be taken up by the evidence from *The Descent of Man* because that is where Darwin deals with human groups in relation to other human groups. But I want to begin with some attention to *Origin*. Even a cursory reading of *The Origin of Species* reveals how wrong writers like Dawkins, Gould, and Gopnik are. It raises the question: Does anyone read Darwin or are they deliberately blinding themselves and their readers to the evidence? The main point is how much Darwin spoke about struggle or competition between species and all groups. I will get to that almost immediately, but even on the level of individuals, someone like Dawkins gets Darwin wrong. In the second paragraph of this chapter, I quoted Dawkins who has Darwin say that the struggle is between individuals within a species. That's not quite what Darwin says. Just a few pages into Chapter III of *Origin*, Darwin writes that the struggle is "either one individual with another of the same species, or with the individuals of distinct species, or with the physical conditions of life" (88). Individuals from different species can and do compete with each other, in Darwin's view. Intra-species is not the only place for

struggle and competition.

As we will see over and over again, the need to erase what Darwin wrote is very strong in Darwinists. Gopnik carefully selects words from Darwin that put him in the best light possible and make him appear very caring, sensitive, humble: "Slight, small, varied, struggle, helpful, hopeful, natural, selection, modification (not revolutionary change)" (Gopnik, 203; these words are italicized in his text). He calls these the words of Darwinism and the words of liberalism. Indeed, Darwin did exhibit these characteristics some of the time, but not all the time.

Gopnik hides from his readers that Darwin also loved and abundantly used these words to describe species and individuals in relation to other species and individuals: competition, exterminate, extinct, vigorous, feeble, inferior, higher, lower, improved, beat, supplant, colonists, colonise, foreigners, natives, intrude, invade, dominant, victorious, triumph over, and many more. Just to consider one of these words, how often does Darwin use the verb 'beat' to describe what one species does to another! Here is how often (most of these are in the form of 'beaten'): Fifteen times; to wit, *Origin*, 100, 108, 137, 209, 211, 316, 365, 375 (3x!), 383, 420 (2x!), 516, 517 (I kept track of this while reading *Origin* and also confirmed this count in a digital version). Thus, at 316, we have "... intermediate varieties ... will generally be beaten out and exterminated during the course of further modification and improvement." Compare that to this comment on 137: "rare species ... will consequently be beaten in the race for life by the modified descendants of the commoner species." And at 516, "... the more dominant groups beat the less dominant." On 472, he expresses the same thought but avoids 'beat': "dominant groups ... supplant many smaller and feebler groups." (In Ch. 9, §4, I will discuss his frequent use of 'improve'; there are 45 occurrences of improved and 11 for improvement in the first edition of *Origin*.)

Some of the words I listed above Darwin will use for both individuals and groups. But it is shocking how many of these words refer exclusively or primarily to groups like species. There is more than a side consequence going on here. Darwin made it very clear that groups, not individuals were his main concern. Only two of the citations for 'beat' could possibly relate to individuals (108, 517). The rest are clearly about organic groups beating other groups. As to 'exterminate' and 'extinct', they apply only to groups. His repeated use of words like 'colonise', 'colonists', and 'invade' also applies primarily to species. It is species, not individuals, that colonize. It is a group activity. One group moves in on another group. Darwin most of the time definitely means groups or species defeating other groups and species. I believe he uses the term 'dominant', a word he really loves, exclusively for

groups, as I have not noticed any statements concerning dominant individuals.

Darwin was capable of bouncing back and forth between considering individuals and considering groups. Thus, on 382, we have "the species of the less vigorous groups" and on 513, "the most vigorous individuals". If you want an example of Darwin's bounce being closer together, take a look at the following quotes. In Chapter III of *Origin*, "Struggle for Existence", Darwin states that "... the struggle almost invariably will be most severe between the individuals of the same species" (100). That should make Darwinists very happy. Then on the very next page, Darwin gives us "... the struggle will generally be more severe between species of the same genus" followed by the example of "... one species of rat taking the place of another species under the most different climates!"

He will even perform this back and forth jitterbug in the same sentence. At the end of Chapter III, he writes, "The land may be extremely cold or dry, yet there will be competition between some few species, or between the individuals of the same species, for the warmest or dampest spots" (103). In the last chapter too, he encapsulates in one sentence the idea that competition applies to both individuals and species: "As the individuals of the same species come in all respects into the closest competition with each other, the struggle will generally be most severe between them; it will be almost equally severe between the varieties of the same species, and next in severity between the species of the same genus" (513). The truth is that Darwin saw individuals and groups in the same way, struggling and competing with each other, almost mirroring each other. He never confined his thinking to individuals. To claim that he did is pure fabrication.

One could think of it this way: On the face of it, it would be highly absurd if someone like Darwin believed there was a law governing the modifications and adaptations of individuals, but no such law for the rise and fall of species. Darwin would reject any idea that what happens to species is haphazard and without a plan. That would be too much like capricious divine fiat. The laws for species might be more complicated, but there will be some rational set of causes we can understand, which will most likely be similar to the one for individuals. That is Darwin's outlook to a T and that is why he uses so many of the same terms for individuals and species.

It should not be all that shocking (though it certainly stunned me, as I did not discover this until several weeks after I wrote the above paragraphs) that in his 1844 essay, Darwin made the following point: "Groups therefore, in their appearance, extinction, and rate of change or succession, seem to follow nearly the same laws with the individuals of a species" (1844, 199; cf. 155, n 2). I don't know of anything in *Origin* that contradicts or goes back on that

thought. At the end of the 1844 essay, he also likens 'the production and extinction of forms' to 'the birth and death of individuals' (253). This is also in the earlier Notebooks, both before and after his inspiration from Malthus: "... a *generation of species* like generation of *individuals*" (B 63; his emphases) and "The similarity of child to parent appears to follow same law in two of the *same variety*, as in *two varieties* ... The laws, therefore, of likenesses of fathers to children of mankind, no doubt are applicable to likenesses, when species & races are crossed" (E 77-78; his emphases; cf. E 83).

Comments about competition or struggle are the main body of evidence I am considering from both *Origin* and *Descent*, but it has to be noted that even when Darwin is not going on about competition, he is still very much investigating what happens with species. For example, he talks about how a remarkable development in an organ "is of high importance to that species" (*Origin*, 183; cf. 184) and how such developments or variations are "taken advantage of by natural and sexual selection, in order to fit the several species to their several places in the economy of nature ..." (189). Darwinists would probably like to believe that he meant individuals where it says 'species' in these quotes, but then you have to rewrite Darwin to make him say that.

Another startling instance of Darwin's emphasis on species outcompeting other species is from the very end of *Origin* (535), in the next to last paragraph of the book: "... it will be the common and widely-spread species, belonging to the larger and dominant groups, which will ultimately prevail and procreate new and dominant species." There is no mistake about what Darwin is saying (and he makes this observation about dominant and widely-spread species quite often in *Origin*; cf. 134, 363-64, 390, 472). It feels very much like the influence of colonialism that makes Darwin think like this.

I don't want to belabor this point in *Origin* because I will be dwelling on *Descent* in a moment, but since I cannot resist belaboring (oh, the delights of making your case with overwhelming evidence), here are four more quotes in this vein from *Origin*: "One large group will slowly conquer another large group, reduce its numbers, and thus lessen its chance of further variation and improvement" (155); "... species and groups of species have tried to overmaster other species in the great battle for life" (159; on 160, he uses 'overtop'); "... almost every species ... would increase immensely in numbers, were it not for other competing species" (207); and finally, "natural selection can and does often produce structures for the direct injury of other species" (234). Whatever Gould and others would like to think Darwin's theory was really about, Darwin himself saw the world in terms of groups in combat and competition with each other.

One could assemble an almost endless number of quotes like this from

Origin where a species is said to compete with other species and acquire an advantage, dominate, beat, supplant, win, defeat, triumph over another species in the struggle for life, or as Darwin says at another point, "in the race for life" (383). Is he talking about individuals or species in this last bit? It isn't always easy to tell with every comment Darwin makes, but on the page previous to this metaphor of a race for life, he says "the species of the less vigorous groups ... tend to become extinct together, and to leave no modified offspring on the face of the earth" (382; on 137, he speaks of the race for life between rare species and common species; cf. 209; I also cannot help but note how biblical that 'on the face of the earth' is). At times, Darwin seems to be more than just recording observations. He almost seems to relish the idea that weaker groups will disappear from the earth forever and leave no descendants, no memory that they were once here. It is almost as if Darwin regarded it as justice that things are like this because it's the way nature wants it to be.

Even in the title of the book, Darwin told us his main concern, but it seems many writers refuse to listen. The book is about *The Origin of Species*, not the origin of individuals. Gillian Beer reminds us in *Plots* (58) that 'origin' is not a reference to a primordial organism or a point in time. "It is, rather, the description of a process of becoming ..." For Robert Chambers too. In *Vestiges* (151), he speaks of "the origination of new species." It's clear that he means a process. Near the end of the book (385), Chambers stresses that the theaters of existence in nature are but part of a whole that is constantly becoming and that a nature in which everything "were to go on for ever unchanged" would be an "endless monotony." (Rafinesque whose work I will go over more fully in Chapter 9 called no change "gloomy uniformity.") We don't see it all because "the rest ... [has] yet to be evolved." Both Chambers and Darwin used 'evolved' once in their respective books. 'Evolved' is not quite the last word of Chambers's book as it is in *Origin*, but it is remarkable how close Chambers and Darwin were down to even trivial details.

And how does this process of originating take place? The next phrase in the title of Darwin's book tells us: *By Means of Natural Selection*. Natural selection explains how species come to be. This was true for Darwin from the very beginning. A couple of months after he realized his theory, in Notebook E 50, he wrote (probably in November 1838): "it was absolutely necessary that Physical changes should act not on individuals, but on masses of individuals.--so that the changes should be slow & bear relation to the whole changes of country, & not to the local changes."

His book is about how species come to be. It is not called *The Misnomer of Species* or *The Illusion of Species*. It is not called *The Origin of Individuals*

with Species as a Side Effect. Explaining how very real species originate was always Darwin's great goal. In an earlier Notebook, probably between mid-May and mid-June 1838, he wrote, "A species is only fixed thing with reference to other living being ... As species is real thing with regard to contemporaries---fertility must settle it" (C 152; further on, C 161, he explains that his working definition of species is "simply, an instinctive impulse to keep separate, which no doubt be overcome, but until it is the animals are distinct species"). Species are not so walled off from each other that they have no genetic relationship, but they are distinct members of one large family of life. One might say the whole purpose (or, if not purpose, then result) of evolution is to create distinct species. Darwin tells us so in the last chapter of *Origin* (516): "New and improved varieties will inevitably supplant and exterminate the older, less improved and intermediate varieties; and thus *species are rendered to a large extent defined and distinct objects*" (emphasis added and right on point). I am always stunned how a writer like Darwin who explained himself so clearly could be so misinterpreted by well-known writers.

It is fair to say that natural selection does not explain individuals. What explains individuals is mutation and inheritance. How did this individual come to be? Mutations are all you need to explain that. Natural selection explains how individuals come to be collected into varieties and species. These are very real to Darwin; they are "defined and distinct objects." There is even more to it. Darwin is using natural selection to explain not only groups but our system of classifying groups in a network of groups subordinated to groups: "... natural selection, which results from the struggle for existence ... explains that great and universal feature in the affinities of all organic beings, namely, their subordination in group under group" (*Origin*, 477; cf. 83, 454). You will never see Darwin explaining a system of individuals subordinate to individuals. It is *only* the subordination of groups that interests him.

My focus here has been on Darwin's words in *The Origin of Species*, but it is worth bringing in a quote from *The Descent of Man* because it directly contradicts what Gould said above about Darwin's theory being a "theory of ultimate individualism." Darwin begins by saying, "With the higher social animals, I am not aware that any [physical] structure has been modified solely for the good of the community, though some are of secondary service to it" (*Descent*, 83). So far this matches what Gould said about the main struggle and benefit in evolution being for individuals with secondary benefits for the group. But Darwin continues in *Descent*: "In regard to certain mental powers the case ... is wholly different; for these faculties have been chiefly, or even exclusively, gained for the benefit of the community, and the individuals

thereof, have at the same time gained an advantage indirectly" (83). This is the exact opposite of what Gould said. In a letter written the same year *Descent* was published, Darwin mentions "the great principle of acting for the good of all the members of the same community, and therefore for the good of the species" (CCD 19.287).

It is simply not true that Darwin confined the concepts of natural selection and the struggle for life to individuals. Whoever says Darwin did this is ... well, let's just say, mistaken (to be kind about it). The better adapted species go on, the less well adapted go extinct, and the ones that continue always do so at the expense of the ones that are exterminated. Some species have to die and disappear. This is true even in artificial selection in domesticated animals. "We see the same process of extermination amongst our domesticated productions, through the selection of improved forms by man" (*Origin*, 137; in the first chapter, he describes such exterminations by breeders who destroy the varieties they don't want; 54, 55, 64). Extinction looms large for Darwin and that is something that only happens to species and groups, not individuals. You could say that for Darwin species either conquer or become extinct (if there is a third category, it would be that some are on the way to extinction, on "the high-road to extinction," as he calls it in *1844*, 150). It is adapt or die in Darwin's world of nature: "... those which do not change will become extinct" (*Origin*, 352; cf. 128, 353). The choice is that stark. There is no third choice of being small and weak and yet somehow surviving. If you are small and weak, you are on that high road to disappearing.

"We need not marvel at extinction," Darwin tells us (*Origin*, 360; previously, 356, he told us of how he once made this mistake when he used to be astonished by extinction and then realized "how utterly groundless was my astonishment!"). Extinction is as normal as normal can be. So normal, it is to be expected. This was an early insight for him, even before discovering natural selection. He promoted this idea quite often in his Notebooks (RN 133; B 22, 153; E 122). At one point, he explains that because change is "necessarily excessively slow" and because changes become "firmly embedded in the constitution" which is "hereditary & fixed", when an animal does become unfit (for a new environment, which Darwin does not spell out here), "the animal cannot change quick enough & perishes" (C 153).

This should be enough evidence for any reasonable person. Academics, however, are not reasonable people. They have power and turf to defend. I know somebody will object that all this evidence may be accurate, but strictly speaking, natural selection acts only on individuals and any competition between species is merely consequent to that (which is exactly what Gould says in "Spin Doctoring", in Glick, 153). Besides noting that it is Gould who

is doing the spin doctoring, my response is two-fold.

First, others can modify, adjust, and improve Darwin's theory all they want, including restricting natural selection to individuals. I have no problem with that, as I said above. I am concerned with what Darwin thought, what Darwin felt, what Darwin thought he felt or didn't feel, and what he expressed in his writings. It is wrong to say that *The Origin of Species* was devoted only or even mainly to the evolution (or descent with modification, as Darwin put it) of individuals. There is a profound reason why 'Species' and 'Races' are in the title of his book. It is their survival, development, adaptation, and extinction that engrossed Darwin most of all.

Second, resolving this is not a matter of verbal gamesmanship. And that's all the argument 'natural selection applies only to individuals' amounts to. The strict definition of natural selection is irrelevant. It is the substance of Darwin that we have to describe as carefully and accurately as possible. What did he intend his work to be about? Darwin talks constantly about competition between species, about winners and losers among species, and about which ones are best adapted to survive. *Constantly!* That's what matters. If the only point to natural selection were its effect on individuals, it would not be very important and Darwin would have had little interest in pursuing it. The *only* reason natural selection has immense importance is because of its effect on species, varieties, races, groups. *That* is why Darwin wrote the book and for no other reason.

Ian Tattersall, one of the most advanced evolutionary thinkers today, reaffirms this emphasis on species by calling them "the basic actors in the evolutionary play" (Tattersall, 142). That would be Darwin's view as well.

Very simply, Darwin is using natural selection to explain what happens to species. Could it be any clearer? Natural selection operating on individuals is the mechanism through which it happens, but the ultimate effect is on species. Actually, more strictly, mutations act on individuals and natural selection acts on species. One of the burning issues of the day for naturalists was whether species were immutable or mutable. Those who took the former position believed each species was created separately and independently from the rest; one could not change into another. The latter position held that one species could gradually give birth to a new one. Artificial breeding showed that humans could produce new varieties, but given enough time, could you get a new species?

Darwin believed that you could and that nature did it all the time, but very slowly. Proving the mutability of species is the absolute center of Darwin's work. He was not satisfied that he could do it until he discovered natural selection. Throughout *Origin* he brings up various natural facts and then

demonstrates that such and such fact cannot be explained by the theory of independent creation, but my theory can explain it. Independent creation, he says, "makes the works of God a mere mockery and deception" (199; there is a similar statement in the last paragraphs of both the 1842 and 1844 essays where he calls it derogatory to the Creator to have him create each form of life by individual acts of will; in these early essays, he was already distinguishing his theory from the theory of independent creation). Strictly speaking, this is the theory of common descent (as distinct from the theory of natural selection), which Chambers had already proved was more probable than the theory of independent creation. This is provable, in other words, without reference to natural selection which is only one way common descent could happen.

As in the work of Chambers, much of Darwin's proof that common descent (or evolution) is happening has nothing to do with natural selection. But Darwin was also looking for a cause or specific process that would explain how such descent was taking place. Without it, he was not content that the proof for evolution was complete, even though technically it was; after all, one can prove *that* something is happening without proving *how* it is happening and that's what Chambers did. Darwin knew this distinction: "It is one thing to prove that a thing has been so, & another to show how it came to be so" (Notebook E 69). But he never maintains this careful distinction in *Origin* and he never pointed out that his grandfather demonstrated the reasonableness of common descent and Chambers its probability, though neither could provide an explanation for what was happening.

Individuals are the means, but Darwin is out to prove where species come from, and why some successfully proliferate and last longer, while others diminish and become extinct. Natural selection explains this. Natural selection explains species. *That* is the whole point of Darwin's work. The fate of individuals was ordinary stuff, of interest to poets and dramatists. Darwin was after bigger game.

When I shortly get to *The Descent of Man*, we will see specific evidence of Darwin connecting natural selection to the success and failure of human groups (tribes, nations, races). As a foretaste, here is a specific point from *Origin*, from his summary of Chapter IV (157-58; cf. 143). Darwin argues that natural selection and extinction (which, again, happens only to groups) are intimately connected. We couldn't have one without the other: "... we already see how it [natural selection] entails extinction [157] ... Natural selection ... leads to divergence of character and to much extinction of the less improved and intermediate forms of life [158; and he repeats the point at the bottom of the page]." As he says two chapters later, "extinction and natural

selection will, as we have seen, go hand in hand" (204-05). The point is so important that he even brings it up in the Introduction to *Origin*: "... and we shall then see how Natural Selection almost inevitably causes much Extinction of the less improved forms of life ..." (23). (By 'forms of life', Darwin always means general forms like species; he never means individuals.)

If natural selection is what makes extinction happen and if extinction is the fate of failed species or groups, then natural selection is operating on groups, not just individuals. Again, it is there in the title of the book. It is foolish to twist his words to make them say anything else. If somebody still insists that Darwin did not mean natural selection in this way, then I can only throw up my hands, drop the term 'natural selection', and simply say that Darwin spoke about competition between individuals and competition between groups, and it is this sense of competition that gets to the heart of what Darwin is about.

For anyone who is not fond of following up every nuance of an argument--and I don't blame you, it can get boring---I recommend skipping these next three paragraphs. I am raising this only to indicate how arbitrary is the reasoning of many Darwinists. Why should natural selection have the individual as its target? Why not the organs or any other parts (heart, muscles, eye, hand, etc.)? Why not the cell? Why not the gene (which Darwin did not know about)? Indeed, some evolutionists, like Richard Dawkins, believe the gene is the primary focus of the action of natural selection. But even if you didn't know about genes, it is rather arbitrary to make the benefit of the individual the central premise. Why should natural selection "think" about the entire individual? If natural selection is a blind force and does not work to favor species, why should it work on behalf of the individual? Why not, in its blindness, work to improve the heart or the lungs or the muscles---each component of an individual? (Tattersall, 107-08, believes that natural selection is in fact about "the survival and reproductive success of the *entire* organism" [his emphasis] ... It can only vote up or down on the whole package." If he is right, then natural selection is not really "a blind process," though he also refers to it this way [60]. It cannot think, or vote, on the whole package and also be truly blind. The whole system is so complex, as Tattersall also points out---every individual is comprised of many traits [some might favor survival and some might not] and lives in an environment of many factors---that quite a lot of some kind of "thinking" must be going on to achieve survival.)

Darwin described natural selection as if it were a thinking or purposeful process that benefitted the individual and dominant groups. That was a *cultural choice* he made. He was expressing *our* point of view which we are

only too happy to impose in western culture. But if nature is not a thinking agent, there is no scientific reason why nature should promote individuals or groups or anything else. Natural selection promotes nothing and casts no votes. Any choices we see in favor of individuals or groups are either arbitrary or culturally determined. It might just as well be each organ that is the primary beneficiary or something smaller, like each cell or perhaps the gene as Dawkins would have it.

If it is wrong to bring species into it, it is just as wrong to bring the individual to the forefront. A truly blind force would no more favor the individual than it would species. Dawkins may have a point that it is ultimately the selfish gene. Or he might be very wrong. Thinking in terms of the individual represents a philosophical bent more than a scientific one. It is another piece of evidence that Darwin's theory (of natural selection and not the more general idea of evolution from previous life forms) is very human-centric and not the objective theory that many have claimed it to be. And--- here is the nub of my present argument---*if* there are good reasons to make the individual the beneficiary of all this, there are equally good reasons to make it the species. (Tattersall does both, as we have seen; he makes it the individual and he also calls species "the basic actors in the evolutionary play" [142].) One could widen it even further. Just as there are evolutionists who want to narrow it down to the gene, there are evolutionists who want to open it up to the entire planet viewed as a single organism. In any case, Darwin made his choices. He emphasized species as much as he did individuals, and actually, he emphasized species more. Both were very real to him. It was ultimately the origin, the life, the development and demise of species, not individuals, that he wanted to explain. Natural selection was integral to that explanation.

~ 3 ~

Recall that Gould tried to defend Darwin from any interpretation that makes him appear too violent by quoting his remark that he is using the term *struggle for existence* "in a large and metaphorical sense." I will grant that something like 'the race for life', which Darwin uses several times in *Origin* (133, 137, 209, 383), may be metaphorical, but other crucial expressions he uses are not metaphorical and are meant quite literally. He repeats and repeats the words I listed above (competition, extermination, etc.) so much that the effect is like having them drilled into your head. Darwin uses them to convey the sense of endless competition: "... all organic beings are exposed to severe competition" (86; this is on the page just before 'a large and metaphorical sense'). The incessant use of all these words indicates a deep-seated commitment to the values of an aggressive and imperialistic society. They

appear far too often in Darwin's writings to be mere metaphor. And this is just the evidence from *Origin*.

I am afraid Gould misinterprets what Darwin meant by the "large and metaphorical sense" of the term *struggle for existence* (*Origin*, 87). The important word there is 'large'. As Darwin goes on to explain, he wants to use the term to cover the largest set of organic beings (both vegetation and animal)--both the obvious cases where we really see a struggle (animals in combat) and the ones where the struggle is not so visible and therefore more metaphorical (as with plants and seeds). But there truly is in every case a life and death struggle which Darwin takes pains to make clear. "Two canine animals [picture bloody tooth and claw] ... may be *truly* said to struggle with each other ..." (my emphasis). This sentence immediately follows the one containing 'large and metaphorical'. Gould actually includes it in his quotation of Darwin, but seems not to realize what Darwin has chosen to be excruciatingly clear about: In the case of animals, the struggle is not metaphorical at all, it is *truly* a struggle. That is what Darwin says.

Darwin continues by explaining that this is true of plants too, even if less visible. So, for example, the mistletoe depends on the apple tree, but "can only in a far-fetched sense be said to struggle with these trees ... it may metaphorically be said to struggle ..." He means it is less obvious; he does not mean it is not really happening. On the next page, Darwin reiterates his firm belief in the struggle for existence by stressing the Malthusian doctrine that "more individuals are produced than can possibly survive" (88). Some will have to die. Gould attempts to blunt all this by pulling 'metaphorical' out of context and implying that Darwin did not see the struggle as ruthless. But for Darwin, there is nothing metaphorical about struggle or competition. It is very real and very much about life and death, though not always bloody in tooth and claw.

We see birds singing, says Darwin (just before the metaphorical remark), but "we do not see, or we forget, that the birds ... mostly live on insects or seeds, and are thus constantly destroying life" (87). Sometimes it is seed against seed struggling for moisture. Less vivid perhaps, but just as deadly, according to Darwin. As dramatically as he ever put anything, Darwin stated, "... natural selection acts by life and death ..." (*Origin*, 228). He was even more powerfully on point in his 1842 essay where he called natural selection "selection by death" (10), and then in the 1844 essay, he explains the difference between natural selection and sexual selection by declaring that in the former, the loser dies (93). Death---real death, not metaphorical---had the principle role at the very origin of the theory and never lost that position.

About half a century later, Alfred Wallace reaffirmed this point about

natural selection in an interview in the *Daily Chronicle* (Dec. 4, 1893; S736). "The method by which the animal and vegetable worlds have been improved and developed has been through weeding out. The survival of the fittest is really the extinction of the unfit." Natural selection does not select the more fit. It does not pick winners and hand out ribbons to the best fitted. Its real job is to select the weakest and eliminate them. The ones left over are the ones we call the fittest. Natural selection does not reward the healthy, it gets rid of the sick. And the manner of getting rid of individuals and species can be quite brutal or it can be more hidden.

This was not a new view of nature. In *The Temple of Nature*, Darwin's grandfather had reflected on "the perpetual destruction of organic life" but also "that it is perpetually renewed in other forms by the same materials" (note on I, 126). In Canto IV, entitled "Of Good and Evil", Erasmus Darwin memorably described the various cruelties of predators attacking prey and that included "the thick ranks of vegetable war" (IV, 42) where herb, shrub, and tree "Whose roots diverging with opposing toil/ Contend below for moisture and for soil" (IV, 45-46)---the very point his grandson would make in *Origin*. (This is where E. Darwin also described the Ichneumon wasp; see Ch. 1, §5.) As he so vividly expressed it (IV, 63-66):

Air, earth, and ocean, to astonish'd day
One scene of blood, one mighty tomb display!
From Hunger's arm the shafts of Death are hurl'd,
And one great Slaughter-house the warring world!

In the note to the last verse, he reiterates the point: "the world may indeed be said to be one great slaughter-house." I don't think anyone could forget that and certainly not Charles Darwin. In fact, Charles Darwin scored the above lines in his copy of *Temple* (see Erasmus Darwin's *Temple* at BHL for information about his markings; also see Fara, *Erasmus*, 250). He also quoted his grandfather from another of his works in which Erasmus described organic nature as "one great slaughter-house, one universal scene of rapacity and injustice." Charles Darwin said of this observation that it was "forecasting the progress of modern thought" ("Preliminary", 113).

In another poem, Erasmus described the struggle for life among plants: "A contest for air and light obtains throughout the whole vegetable world; shrubs rise above herbs, and, by precluding the air and light from them, injure or destroy them; trees suffocate or incommode shrubs; the parasite climbing plants, as Ivy, Clematis, incommode the taller trees ..." (*The Loves of the Plants*, note for III, 329). In *Temple*, the plants compete to the death below the ground and in *Loves*, above ground. One great slaughter-house. His grandson

would not disagree.

Erasmus Darwin also knew the other side of it, the fecundity of nature which was "wonderfully prodigal in her seeds of vegetables, and the spawn of fish; almost any one plant, if all its seeds should grow to maturity, would in a few years alone people the terrestrial globe" (*Economy*, note on IV, 367). Or as he says in *Zoonomia* (1.485), seeds and spawn are produced "in such inconceivable abundance as would in a short space of time crowd the earth and ocean with inhabitants." Malthus was not the first writer in whom Charles Darwin encountered this thought (see first few pages of Volume 1 of the 1826 sixth edition of Malthus's *Essay*). There it is in Erasmus Darwin decades earlier.

Though this means there must be a ghastly perishing "in uncounted millions", Erasmus deduces that this "wise superfluity of provision" is one of the general laws of nature (ibid.). In *Economy* (note on IV, 367), he expresses it this way, "As the works of nature are governed by general laws, this exuberant reproduction prevents the accidental extinction of the species ..." The fact of extinction was still being debated in his time, but at least he saw that the destruction of nature was so prevalent that it would take huge numbers of births to prevent the logical result. Charles Darwin would encounter these thoughts again but more precisely expressed as producing a pressure to survive, when he read the sixth edition of Malthus's *Essay on Population*. Reading it first in his grandfather's works may have prepared him to see the significance of it at just the time he needed it.

Natural selection, to return to the explication of it in *Origin*, preserves individuals with favorable variations by destroying those with unfavorable deviations, but the preservation is only an accidental by-product of the destruction which itself is actually the immediate goal of natural selection. Darwin even adds, as I quoted him earlier, that while natural selection cannot produce a modification in one species for the good of another, "natural selection can and does often produce structures for the direct injury of other species ..." (234; I previously offered this as an example of Darwin relating natural selection to species). If all this is not social Darwinist enough for you, we have in the last sentence of Chapter VII: "... one general law ... namely, multiply, vary, let the strongest live and the weakest die." Natural selection is deadly, make no mistake about it. For losing species, the loss is forever because extinct species never reappear (351, 382). The stakes are high in Darwin's world of nature and that is not just a metaphor.

Gould seems to recoil from this Darwinian view of the world. In *Bully for Brontosaurus* (427), he tries to rescue Darwin from promoting the view that violence proliferates in nature. I understand what bothers Gould. He strongly

objects to the misuse of Darwin's theory by fascists who use it to justify murder and mayhem (in Gould's words). I agree with him about this. But that does not mean that the violence in nature is not central to Darwin's vision. The bleakness of this vision, or of the theory of natural selection, is so obvious, I found it absolutely startling that Gould could not see it or would refuse to admit it. So I kept searching. He published so many books. Then I found it. In an essay in *I Have Landed* (see especially 105-09), Gould acknowledges that Darwin's worldview is indeed bleak. Competition and struggle, he says, are key elements of it and the only reason natural selection is not always bloody is because plants do not shed blood. "But, more often than not, competition proceeds by the sword, and some die that others may live" (105; he even quotes the passage about singing birds destroying life).

At the end of this essay, however, Gould again tries to retreat from what he just acknowledged. He admits that he has a hard time ending on a somber note because his temperament is generally cheerful (107). Oddly, though, he goes on to claim that a somber note would also be factually incorrect about Darwin, and then he does something wildly inaccurate. He ends with a beautiful quote in which Darwin talks of how overwhelmed he is by what he sees in nature in "the glory of tropical vegetation" and that for him it was "like giving to a blind man eyes ... Such are my feelings, and such may they remain." Gould offers this quote in the context of making the point that Darwin "could not deny the apparent truth of natural selection as a mechanism of change, but ... never lost his sense of beauty or his childlike wonder" (109). Gould seems to imply that this evidence shows that natural selection did not change his positive attitude about nature. The problem is that this quote comes from a diary entry of January 16, 1832 (*Diary*, 23)---very early in his *Beagle* journey and six years *before* Darwin discovered natural selection! How can a poetic statement *before* natural selection prove that natural selection did not change this feeling into something more bleak?

So Gould admits the bleakness and then tries to make it disappear. He continues to avoid the full implications of Darwin's dark view of nature. For me, this is evidence of the danger of creating heroes, saints, and gods. Gould is unable to fully confront the reality of Darwin's worldview. He constantly softens Darwin to give us a glowing model of what an ideal naturalist should be. It is not Darwin's fault that he cannot measure up to this fantasy. Darwin is sometimes even more blunt (on many subjects) in his letters, as noted previously. To Joseph Hooker (July 13, 1856) a few years before *Origin*, he wrote, "What a book a Devil's chaplain might write on the clumsy, wasteful, blundering low & horridly cruel works of nature!" (CCD 6.178; this is in the spirit of Erasmus Darwin who referred to "the coffins of nature," *Temple*, note

on I, 126, and even more shockingly, as noted above, "one great Slaughterhouse the warring world!" at IV, 66).

Is it fair to conclude from all this that Darwin was a Social Darwinist? Yes and no. Some cautious comments are in order. Darwin certainly sounds like a Social Darwinist much of the time. He gave them the language they needed. And more than language. He gave them a strong emphasis on the ideas of fitness and survival as ultimate goals and he distinguished between the more and less fit; getting rid of the unfit would be a natural thing to do. It is more likely that the harsh language in *The Origin of Species* influenced Herbert Spencer than the other way around because Spencer wrote much more mildly before he read *Origin*. In the essay in which Spencer came very close to formulating a theory of natural selection, "A Theory of Population" (1852), he never gets into severe competition as heartily as Darwin does. Spencer came close because he was influenced by Malthus just as Darwin and Wallace were; the essay is basically a defense of Malthus who is mentioned once at the beginning.

As to whether Darwin was a Social Darwinist, the main argument in Darwin's defense---and a good argument it is---is that however strongly Darwin expressed himself, he was writing about *biological* matters; it is a great leap to take these *biological* ideas and apply them to *social* problems.

That argument would carry the day for me except for two things. First, on occasion, Darwin did apply his biological thinking to social concerns. He did worry about the degeneration of society caused by helping the weaker members. For example, vaccinating the poor would help the weak and unfit to live, and helping the weak to propagate "must be highly injurious to the race of man," though he argued that such sympathy for the poor was the nobler part of our nature and we should just learn to accept some of the bad effects of that. Taking action to get rid of the weaker members of society seemed to make him nervous: "We must therefore bear the undoubtedly bad effects of the weak surviving and propagating their kind" (all of this is in *Descent*, 159). This concern that a race could degenerate is another indication that races were very real to him. Also, in a letter I previously quoted, he expressed his disapproval of trade unions and cooperative societies because, it seemed to him, they were "opposed ... to all competition" and "This seems to me a great evil for the future progress of mankind" (CCD 20.323-24). Darwin was not at all averse to applying his theory to modern social problems, including the plight of the working class.

Second, he made natural selection function as a justification for colonialism, which was a social policy if ever there was one (we have already seen some of this in Chapters 2 and 3, and will see more in future chapters).

What can be said in Darwin's favor is that he was not an all out Social Darwinist. He did not ruthlessly follow up every logical implication of his theory for every social problem that presented itself. But because he did do it sometimes, a Social Darwinist can always legitimately argue that if Darwin could apply his ideas to this and that, why can't we do it here and there? It would be hard to make a case that the Social Darwinist is being un-Darwinian or inconsistent in extending Darwin's applications even further.

There is a little more that should be said about the second point. So many of Darwin's admirers, including Gould and Ernst Mayr, want to save him from the charge of Social Darwinism. They all want to pin it on Spencer. Mayr said it should be called Social Spencerism (Mayr, 883 n4; as does Nicholas Wade in his recent book, 24). In Darwin studies, Spencer is everyone's favorite whipping boy and serves as an excellent misdirection. But as a number of scholars from Australia, New Zealand, and Canada have pointed out, much of what we call Social Darwinism can be found in Darwin's work (see the essays by Barry Butcher and John Stenhouse in MacLeod). As Stenhouse says, certain Social Darwinist scientists "found in Darwin's works, especially *The Descent of Man*, the idea repeatedly discussed that races were unequally endowed in the struggle for existence and that Britons were especially well equipped for success ... Darwin supplied plenty of grist for the *pakeha* [Maori for white people] supremacist mill" (in MacLeod, 412).

Mayr identified the main features of so-called Social Spencerism as "struggle for existence, unmerciful competition, and social bias" (Mayr, 883 n4). But these are all important elements in Darwin's outlook and theory. It is exactly what Darwin believed and made use of. Moreover, Darwin was quite willing to dump these unmerciful categories on what he and everyone else called the savage or lower races, not only as they battled each other but in their conflict with European nations. Add 'cultural bias' to Mayr's list and it's a perfect catalogue of Darwin's beliefs about non-European races.

We must not lose sight of the fact that Darwin agreed degeneration was a real phenomenon. He insisted that the weaker members of society "undoubtedly" have a degenerating effect on the race (see above). But he was reluctant to do anything about it in his society. It was not a courtesy he would extend to savages. He was only too glad to be rid of them. The trick he pulled off in their case was that he convinced himself that their disappearance is natural or due to their own immorality; it was bound to happen, and Europeans are in no way to blame for their demise; we were just incidental to the inevitable. As far as I know, Darwin was never in favor of taking any measures to put a stop to the devastation facing native peoples.

It is therefore entirely accurate to say that *Darwin was a pure Social*

Darwinist abroad but timid about it at home. What is striking to me is that while Darwin hesitated to apply biological principles to his own human society---partly out of timidity, partly out of good sense because he realized that human society was too complicated---he had no hesitation applying these principles to the non-white races. It is one sign that he saw other races as closer to the world of animals. As he said in the October 1859 letter to Lyle (quoted in Ch. 1, §1), he believed the process of natural selection was working to improve the intellect of certain human races and to eliminate the intellectually inferior races ("the less intellectual races being exterminated"). This might be Darwin's earliest statement in writing, and one of his most compact, of the applicability of natural selection to human beings. It is not primarily individuals that he is concerned with. He is quite plainly stating that natural selection improves species and races and picks out the inferior ones for extermination. Darwin said it. There are no ifs, ands, or buts about it.

But on to the nitty-gritty of *Descent*. Let's see what can be garnered from Darwin when he turned his attention to man in a scientific book.

~ 4 ~

The first thing to do is set out the evidence in four main blocks. I will begin by listing the many times in *The Descent of Man* that Darwin presented race, or tribe, or nation as pitted against race, tribe, and nation. He saw competition between groups and said so in the most unambiguous way. Then I will go on to the evidence that he made this part of the theory of natural selection, and next the evidence for his repeated low opinion of savages and his belief in the superiority of the civilized nations. His cavalier acceptance of the extermination of most native peoples is the last block of evidence I will examine. He was certain, like so many of his culture and time, that savages would become extinct and he expressed no regrets about it. That he could be opposed to slavery and yet complacent about the extermination of savages is one of the most puzzling things about Darwin. It is actually a puzzlement about European culture, not Darwin alone.

I am a little sorry to be so brusque about these issues. I have absolutely no wish to take Darwin down a peg or two. He was a good scientist, but not perfect, and it does not serve Darwin or science by pretending he was. He was not subtle about his beliefs about the place of savages. There is no need to be subtle in presenting what he plainly said. It is western intellectual history I wish to take down several pegs because it has been so dishonest in investigating its own history. That dishonesty has reigned supreme in the study of the history of evolutionary thought.

Here is the first set of quotations from *Descent* on races, tribes, and nations

in competition with each other (I will have occasion to use some of these quotations more than once because they illustrate more than one theme; also note that by 'endowed', Darwin usually means endowed with social qualities like sympathy, fidelity, courage, morality, patriotism, and obedience; see 153, 155, 157, 158; one exception is in the second quote below where he means endowed with the sagacity to invent weapons and traps):

A community which includes a large number of well-endowed individuals increases in number, and is victorious over other less favoured ones ... [83; this echoes 'favoured races' in the sub-title of *Origin*]

The tribes, which included the largest number of men thus endowed, would increase in number and supplant other tribes ... from the remotest times successful tribes have supplanted other tribes ... At the present day civilised nations are everywhere supplanting barbarous nations ... [153]

When two tribes of primeval man ... came into competition, if (other circumstances being equal) the one tribe included a great number of courageous, sympathetic and faithful members, who were always ready to warn each other of danger, to aid and defend each other, this tribe would succeed better and conquer the other. Let it be borne in mind how all-important in the never-ceasing wars of savages, fidelity and courage must be ... A tribe rich in the above qualities would spread and be victorious over other tribes: but in the course of time it would, judging from all past history, be in its turn overcome by some other tribe still more highly endowed. [155; note how Darwin emphasizes conquering and victory; he never considers negotiation and peacemaking part of human life]

[On 157-58, there is more of the same and Darwin makes the point that a tribe being victorious over other tribes is natural selection, which I will come to further below. Here I just want to quote the end of this argument:] At all times throughout the world tribes have supplanted other tribes; and as morality is one important element in their success, the standard of morality and the number of well-endowed men will thus everywhere tend to rise and increase. [158]

... it is chiefly through their power [that of the arts] that the civilised races have extended, and are now everywhere extending their range, so as to take the place of the lower races. [160]

Individuals and races may have acquired certain indisputable advantages, and yet have perished from failing in other characters ... The western nations of Europe ... now so immeasurably surpass their former savage progenitors, and stand at the summit of civilisation ... [167; I quote this mainly to illustrate that Darwin can speak of both individuals and races as acquiring advantages.]

... a nation which produced during a lengthened period the greatest number of highly intellectual, energetic, brave, patriotic, and benevolent men, would generally prevail over less favoured nations. [168; again, here is 'favoured' applied to groups]

You can see a general pattern emerging whereby Darwin's reasoning allows him to claim that if one group prevails over other groups, it is because the successful group is generally more intelligent and more moral than the groups that lose. His examples make no allowance for other possibilities: for example, that one nation prevailed because it was more brutal and immoral or had an unfair advantage. He does not seem to see the possibility of immorality in the victors. Nor does he see that even wars are not always to the death, but often end in peace settlements; nor does he consider that peaceful negotiations might forestall wars altogether.

Natural selection follows from the struggle for existence; and this from a rapid rate of increase. It is impossible not to regret bitterly, but whether wisely is another question, the rate at which man tends to increase ... But [like the lower animals] man ... has no right to expect an immunity from the evils consequent on the struggle for existence. [168]

The above quote *immediately* follows in Darwin's text the previous one I have presented and starts a new paragraph. Strictly speaking, it does not belong in this series, as it is not specifically about species or races. He seems rather in this paragraph to be talking about individuals, but the fact that he can flow so smoothly from a discussion of favored nations, and natural selection playing a role in the development of the United States (which I will get to below), to a discussion of natural selection among individuals is telling. I

included this quote here because it gives us a foretaste of things to come. It represents Darwin's sober assessment of death and even extinction (which comes up in the next quotation) as all too natural. His culture saw *everything* as a fight to the death. At a minimum, Darwin is saying: Neither individuals nor races have anything to complain about when death or extinction comes calling, so don't whine or cry; apparently even cries of injustice would be precluded. Here then are a few more pertinent quotes from *Descent* (I quoted the first one at greater length in Ch. 3, §6):

At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilised races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace, the savage races throughout the world. [183; he also predicts here the extermination of the anthropomorphous apes.]

Extinction follows chiefly from the competition of tribe with tribe, and race with race. [211]

When civilised nations come into contact with barbarians the struggle is short ... The grade of their civilisation seems to be a most important element in the success of competing nations. [212]

... the increase of each species and each race is constantly checked in various ways; so that if any new check, even a slight one, be superadded, the race will surely decrease in number; and decreasing numbers will sooner or later lead to extinction; the end, in most cases, being promptly determined by the inroads of conquering tribes. [222]

That is a lot of quotations. And there is more to come. Keep in mind that in three of them (160, 183, 222), Darwin speaks of the inevitability of the extinction or displacement of savages. All the quotes combined make it clear that Darwin was concerned with explaining the success of communities, nations, tribes, races, species---groups in competition with groups.

I just have to make one comment on the last quote, even though it is getting ahead of myself. One of the uses that evolutionary theory served is that it helped Europeans make the argument that we don't have to feel guilty about the extermination or disappearance of savages because their fate is inevitable. Natural selection has doomed them to it. We are just hurrying along a bit that which is only natural. You can see an inclination towards this kind of thinking in *The Descent of Man*.

How could so many scholars, scientists, and writers miss all these comments by Darwin? Only a very few have paid any attention. Dawkins, Gopnik and even Gould are not writing about the real Darwin. They are writing about a fictional Darwin who exists only in their heads. Gopnik cannot bring himself to quote the full title of *Origin*, not even in his bibliography at the end of the book, though he gives the full titles of Darwin's other books. That sub-title of *Origin---The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life---* must cause him some pain.

Dawkins almost suppresses it as well. He does bring it up once in a footnote in *Greatest Show* (62n). He dismisses it as "ill-chosen and unfortunate", implying that it did not express anything deep in Darwin. He goes on to say that *Races* in this sub-title actually means individuals and appeals to an obscure definition in the OED (definition 6.II) to justify his point. He thinks he has finally clarified Darwin to himself so that he can state unequivocally that Darwin's struggle for existence has been misunderstood as "a struggle between *groups* of individuals" (his emphasis). There is an important lesson in Dawkins's false reasoning: The creation of a fictional Darwin (one who had no racism in him) sometimes necessitates the creation of fictional evidence.

Darwin could have written *individuals* in that sub-title if he had wanted to. He knew English well enough. He was a careful enough writer, most of the time, that if he were going to rely on an infrequent meaning of a word, he would have informed his readers. We have seen in the above quotes that he frequently spoke of groups in competition. Adrian Desmond and James Moore point out that in Darwin's cultural context, "Racial contact, racial preservation, racial fate were the great arguing points of the age" so that Darwin's choice of the word *races* in his title "put the book at the centre of the greatest moral debate of the moment" (*Sacred Cause*, 306). Alfred Wallace, who discovered the theory of natural selection independently of Darwin and always vigorously defended the theory he called Darwin's, once used Darwin's sub-title in a way that made it clear he understood Darwin to be referring to groups. "It is the same great law of '*the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*,' which leads to the inevitable extinction of all those low and mentally undeveloped populations with which Europeans come in contact" ("The Origin of Human Races," S093, clxiv-clxv). Dawkins seems to be the only one who feels impelled to rewrite Darwin's own meaning.

That's not all. In his 1844 essay (210), Darwin clearly refers to *favoured* species: "The extermination of species follows from changes in the external conditions, and from the increase or immigration of more favoured species." In *Descent*, Darwin again uses the adjective *favoured* in connection with

groups, thus confirming what he meant in the title of *Origin*. We already saw it in two of the quotations above from *Descent*. In the first one from page 83, he referred to certain communities "victorious over other less favoured ones." On page 168, he spoke of which nations "would generally prevail over less favoured nations." Darwin knew exactly what he was saying. On 164, he in fact favorably (I realize the irony) quotes another writer, W.R. Greg, who used 'favoured races' in explaining the problem of degeneration: "In the eternal 'struggle for existence', it would be the inferior and *less* favoured races that had prevailed---and prevailed by virtue not of its good qualities but of its faults" (Greg's emphasis).

Darwin expressed no problem with Greg speaking this way and did it himself, as we saw, with 'communities' and 'nations'. The issue Greg was writing about was one that concerned Darwin and many others. They all noted that in modern civilizations it is often the poorest and weakest members of society who breed most abundantly, while the aristocrats and more able members put off getting married to a later age and have fewer children. If that trend holds and continues, a society will degenerate. Darwin agreed with this and was as worried as anyone else about it. He explores the question of degeneracy on pages 159 to 169 and returns to it again at the very end of *Descent*. If this obsession with a race degenerating sounds so much like scientific racism, well so be it. It was there in Darwin and many of the scientists of his time.

(An interesting side note: In the lengthy quotation Darwin approvingly provides from Greg, Greg begins with "The careless, squalid, unaspiring Irishman multiplies like rabbits." An Irishman complained to Darwin and asked him to remove the offensive remark. Darwin refused or ignored the request. [See D & M, *Sacred Cause*, 368.] It reminds me of another anecdote with a different result. A Jewish woman who was an acquaintance of Charles Dickens complained to him about his frequent references to 'the Jew' in *Oliver Twist* instead of writing 'Fagin'. Dickens understood and removed most, but not all, of these occurrences of 'the Jew'; see Julius, 203.)

As Darwin sums it up, just before quoting Greg: "Thus the reckless, degraded, and often vicious members of society, tend to increase at a quicker rate than the provident and generally virtuous members" (*Descent*, 164; cf. 159, 163). His response to this was that we perhaps need not worry too much about it because there are "some checks to this downward tendency" (164) and goes on to discuss them, the details of which are not of immediate concern here. The fact that Darwin could spend any time at all on the question of the degeneracy of the race is another sign of how real races were to him. At the end of the book, he also recommends that no one should get married until

they are sure they can provide well for their children (688), but he stops short of suggesting that this should be legislated. He also makes a far more humble point in his earlier discussion: The rise and fall of civilizations is a complicated matter; there are many factors and we don't understand them all, so that even if some aspects of society are bringing it down, there may be other factors that help it to prevail. There are numerous instances of Darwin referring to races and species as very real entities. A deaf, dumb, and blind man could find them.

This brings me to what Darwin had to say about natural selection and its application to races or tribes or nations. Remember that Gopnik, Dawkins, and others would have us believe that Darwin applied it only to individuals.

If Darwin and others thought they had a handle on why some animal species become extinct, while others thrive, the situation was much more complicated when it comes to human groups: "... the gradual decrease and ultimate extinction of the races of man is a highly complex problem, depending on many causes, which differ in different places and at different times ..." (*Descent*, 221-22). He repeats this thought so many times (e.g., 158, 166, 168; on 158, he brings it up three times!) that you get the feeling he was reminding himself and others to proceed a little cautiously here. It won't stop him from hazarding his opinion on what he thinks is going on, but he was asking everyone not to come to firm conclusions until we can know more. "Progress seems to depend on many concurrent favourable conditions, far too complex to be followed out ... The problem, however, of the first advance of savages towards civilisation is at present much too difficult to be solved" (158). But we can make suggestions and Darwin did so.

(In Notebook E 47, he wrote, "I have felt some difficulty in conceiving how inhabitant of Tierra del Fuego is to be converted into civilized man." He continues that in Australia missionaries have made slow progress in this. The implication is that we don't understand how to ensure progress. While Darwin and others were wondering about this, some humanitarians were wondering which was the real issue: how to achieve progress or who are the real savages.)

In that first quote (from *Descent*, 83) in the above list, Darwin was saying that natural selection creates well-endowed individuals which help the group to increase and be victorious over less favored groups. He is very clear about this in the preceding sentence: "With strictly social animals, natural selection sometimes acts on the individual, through the preservation of variations which are beneficial to the community" (83). He returns to this further on and argues, for example, that a tribe that had clever individuals who could invent useful things would triumph over tribes not favored in this way (153-54).

Then he goes on to consider social qualities like sympathy, fidelity, and courage which were gained "through natural selection, aided by inherited habit" (155). This led to the third quote which I provided above and repeat here: "A tribe rich in the above qualities would spread and be victorious over other tribes: but ... in its turn [would be] overcome by some other tribe still more highly endowed" (155). The tribe or race that has the most individuals with advanced social qualities wins.

But Darwin notes that a peculiar problem arises (which he got from Wallace who had pointed it out to him, but he does not credit Wallace; see end of previous chapter). While qualities like courage and self-sacrifice may be beneficial to the community, they are often disastrous for the individual. It was Wallace's point that Darwin's original approach ignored such problems and made natural selection too simplistic. But now Darwin sees: "He who was ready to sacrifice his life, as many a savage has been, rather than betray his comrades, would often leave no offspring to inherit his noble nature. The bravest men ... would on average perish in larger numbers than other men. Therefore, it hardly seems probable, that the number of men gifted with such virtues ... could be increased through natural selection, that is, by survival of the fittest" (155-56; note his use of the expression coined by Herbert Spencer).

How does he resolve this? After all, he is convinced that social qualities are indeed important to the survival and success of human groups and yet some of these social qualities may not get passed on because, for example, the brave individuals perish sooner. His answer is that social qualities have a more powerful stimulus for their development: "the praise and the blame of our fellow-men" (156). These instincts are acquired in the first place through natural selection but are furthered by social approval ("... even dogs appreciate encouragement, praise, and blame" [156]). A man who sacrifices his life for others "would by his example excite the same wish for glory in other men ... He might thus do far more good to his tribe than by begetting offspring ..." (157).

This strong sense of social encouragement Darwin also sees as part of natural selection. He expands his list of social virtues to patriotism, fidelity, obedience, courage, sympathy, aiding one another, and sacrifice for the common good, and says that a tribe that included many individuals with such qualities "would be victorious over most other tribes" and then comes the kicker, as Darwin *immediately* adds, "and this would be natural selection" (157-58). I should note that he follows this up with the humbling observation again that it is difficult to settle finally why one tribe succeeds and another does not. Progress is not the norm and does not follow a straight path. The

path can also be complicated by the factor of natural selection often producing changes that directly injure other species (*Origin*, 234).

Recall that Darwin connected natural selection to "certain mental powers" when he said that "these faculties have been chiefly, or even exclusively, gained for the benefit of the community, and the individuals thereof gained an advantage indirectly" (*Descent*, 83) and just a couple of pages later, we have "natural selection arising from the competition of tribe with tribe" (85). Darwin clearly sees natural selection acting to benefit the group. He does not introduce or follow these statements with any fanfare, as if he were presenting something unusual or new. He is only explicating what has always made sense to him. There is no sense of anything controversial about this. Natural selection determines the successes and failures of groups, the winners and the losers, the survivors and those knocked out of contention. Natural selection rules. The species and races that rule come to rule because of natural selection.

Make no mistake about it. Darwin did see competition between human groups and did give natural selection a prominent role. In the struggle, some tribes or races became more sociable and more civilized and made it to the top. The losers disappeared. Extinct. No more. Done in by the superior, more civilized groups. Of course, some savage races survived in other parts of the world due to their isolation. But all that was ending now as civilized Europe explored the globe. In the contest between civilized and savage, there was no contest. It was western civilization all the way. The savages were doomed.

But any success could be temporary. "Natural selection acts only tentatively" (167)---perhaps the most profound statement in all of *The Descent of Man* and a key to why Darwin was so troubled by all this. The anxiety inherent in that statement is central to the formation of Darwin's thoughts about the evolution of humanity in its various cultures. In *The Origin of Species*, he expressed it this way: "But which groups will ultimately prevail, no man can predict; for we well know that many groups, formerly most extensively developed, have now become extinct" (*Origin*, 155). Even the civilized nations might retrograde one day. There is no guarantee of continued progress. I am making a point of it now but will come back to this.

Equally important is Darwin's humility which I briefly noted above. We do not understand all the causes of the rise and decline of civilizations. The situation is confusing. Darwin admits to being confused. There are too many factors to consider. He had no definitive answer and could even waffle a bit on the importance of natural selection in the competition between groups. "Natural selection acts only tentatively." It gives nothing permanent. "With civilised nations, as far as an advanced standard of morality, and an increased

number of fairly good men are concerned, natural selection apparently effects but little" (163). He elaborates that point several pages later: "With highly civilised nations continued progress depends in a subordinate degree on natural selection; for such nations do not supplant and exterminate one another as do savage tribes" (169); this also tells us how brutal his conception of natural selection was, as extermination is seen as an integral part of it. In other words, among the civilized, no one nation has the power to eliminate another, so natural selection, which is really about a fight to the death, is not as operative as it would be in more primitive societies.

Natural selection for Darwin is not merely about improving an organism's or a group's abilities. It is about survival ability above all. It is about life and death. Where there is no struggle to the death, there is no natural selection, or not a full throttle natural selection

I am not sure how real or deep Darwin's humility was here. He seems to be acknowledging that human life is complicated and we don't know all the factors that contribute to success or failure, but it is also very clear that he will not let go of the importance of natural selection for human societies---despite the fact that Wallace had warned him several years before in a May 1864 letter (see last paragraphs of previous chapter) that he was oversimplifying the effect of natural selection on savage peoples. Though he used one of Wallace's points (noted above) about the bravest getting killed before they could pass on their attributes, it seems Darwin did not take in the whole of what Wallace was saying about "so many exceptions and irregularities that it [constant battles] could produce no *definite* result" (ARW 1.156; Wallace's emphasis).

Wallace was not as rigid as Darwin in applying natural selection to human life. He tried to put the evidence first and kept asking himself whether natural selection could really explain all the pieces. He could see that human beings were capable of negotiating and cooperating (hence, his other point in that 1864 letter that several tribes might form an alliance to defeat the one tribe that was most aggressive; Darwin continued to ignore this). Life was not always a battle of strength against strength; getting stronger might not work to a tribe's advantage if it was not capable of working with other tribes. In those instances where life is not about lethal combat, would natural selection come into play? Under the strict conception of natural selection in Darwin's terms, it shouldn't. Darwin plunged on and forgot about the peaceful side of humanity, including the ability to negotiate solutions, though it is possible that Wallace's points really did have an effect on him, causing him to emphasize that there were many factors at work here.

On the whole, Darwin seemed sure that natural selection would always be

the main factor. Assigning a smaller role to natural selection in the case of civilized nations actually reinforces how important Darwin thinks natural selection is in the case of groups, whether nations or races or tribes. This is so for two reasons. First, a small role is not the same as no role (which is what Dawkins, Gopnik, and so many other hero-worshippers of Darwin want to claim was his position on natural selection and groups). The fact that Darwin admits a small role among civilized nations means that he thinks natural selection does act on groups. Second, he is implying that he sees a larger role for natural selection between savage races, where one could gain the upper hand enough to entirely wipe out the other (as he says in the last quote in the block above), and also between civilized and savage races where the power imbalance is more drastic and obvious. (I believe Wallace would have interjected here that this is oversimplifying.) Any imbalance between races or tribes or nations that favors one and is destructive to another would likely be interpreted by Darwin as part of the scheme of natural selection.

Even where natural selection is less active, Darwin could not be perfectly consistent about this. In America, a civilized nation, natural selection does play a bigger role: "There is apparently much truth in the belief that the wonderful progress of the United States, as well as the character of the people, are the results of natural selection; for the more energetic, restless, and courageous men from all parts of Europe have emigrated during the last ten or twelve generations to that great country, and have there succeeded best" (*Descent*, 168). Earlier (162), he proposed that human restlessness and wandering was a leftover quality from barbarianism and acted as a check to civilization, but it turns out to be quite useful for a new country like the United States---which is why we cannot give any final answers because just when you think a quality might retard progress (as restlessness did for barbarians, at least in Darwin's opinion), it might play out another way under other conditions. Natural selection is always dependent on external circumstances. When these change, the game of survival changes.

There is also a general piece of evidence which reinforces the obvious fact that Darwin was always focused on groups. I have reserved for a future chapter a discussion of the relationship between Darwin and Malthus, but it is well-known how much Darwin owed to Malthus. Malthus's population principle---food production cannot possibly keep up with sexual reproduction, which puts pressure on the population to contain itself, often in the form of checks on the population, such as disease and famine---was about the pressure that scarcity of sustenance or resources puts on the *whole* population. Individuals may feel the pressure too, but it was how the population at large was affected that concerned Malthus. Man in the mass was the issue. Darwin

adopted this wholesale. Natural selection is this population principle applied to all organisms in nature. *The effect on large populations was always a part of Darwin's concern. Take that away and you undermine the whole point of his theory.*

And when I say the theory of natural selection was *always* about groups for Darwin, I literally mean *always*. In the first Notebook entries regarding his newfound inspiration from Malthus, Darwin mentions "the warring of species" (D134), "the final effect ... of this populousness" (D135), and most significantly, his quotation of Malthus on "the causes of population & depopulation" as "constant ... laws of nature," with Darwin adding, "I would apply it not only to population & depopulation, but extermination & production of new forms" (E3; the Malthus quote is found in his *Essay*, 114, in the first edition, and 1.529 in the sixth, which Darwin read).

Thus, Darwin is always coming back to how natural selection helps human groups, not just individuals. His was never a theory of individualism, as Gould claimed. "Obscure as is the problem of the advance of civilisation, we can at least see that a nation which produced during a lengthened period the greatest number of highly intellectual, energetic, brave, patriotic, and benevolent men, would generally prevail over less favoured nations" (*Descent*, 168; and do not forget that the subtitle of *Origin* referenced "favoured races"). It happens because of a proliferation of certain types of individuals, but the essential event is the promotion of advanced groups. Individuals are the means, but groups are the ultimate goal. As he said in a letter to his cousin Francis Galton (previously quoted at the end of §5 in Ch. 3), "Would it not be truer to say that Nature cares only for the superior individuals and then makes her new and better races?" (ML 2.44).

Did Darwin believe that there are intellectual and moral differences between human races? Yes, he did. He said so often enough, repeatedly expressing his low opinion of savages. It is exactly what we would expect based on what we have seen so far. More quotations to come.

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It is not hard to find passages in Darwin's *Descent* where he stresses the similarities of all human beings. Gopnik (156) quotes this from *Descent*, 207: "Although the existing races of man differ in many respects, as in colour, hair, shape of skull, proportions of the body, &c., yet if their whole structure be taken into consideration they are found to resemble each other closely in a multitude of points." Gopnik could have done even better had he quoted this from the next paragraph: Darwin says we should all be "deeply impressed with the close similarity between the men of all races in tastes, dispositions

and habits. This is shewn by the pleasure which they all take in dancing, rude music, acting, painting, tattooing, and otherwise decorating themselves; in their mutual comprehension of gesture-language, by the same expression in their features, and by the same inarticulate cries, when excited by the same emotions" (207-08).

This is Darwin at his best, noticing the common humanity of all of us. But you have to read these remarks in context. He is making these observations to get to a particular result: "Now when naturalists observe a close agreement in numerous small details ... they use this fact as an argument that they [various races or species of animals] are descended from a common progenitor who was thus endowed ... The same argument may be applied with much force to the races of man" (208). Darwin is out to prove his central thesis about a common ancestor for all humans and apes. (Lest we forget: Chambers, Lamarck and Erasmus Darwin had already been there.) *Proving equality is not Darwin's goal.*

In fact, while Darwin denied that the human races are different species, it should not be forgotten that the differences between races were so important to him that he agreed 'sub-species' would be an appropriate term: "... it seems that the term 'sub-species' might here be used with propriety. But from long habit the term 'race' will perhaps always be employed" (204); "it is almost a matter of indifference whether the so-called races of man are thus designated, or are ranked as species or sub-species; but the latter term appears the more appropriate" (210). That Darwin thought human groups were different sub-species is significant. Apart from demonstrating our common descent, he emphasizes important differences and takes pains to make exceptions to the commonness:

There is, however, no doubt that the various races, when carefully compared and measured, differ much from each other, --- as in the texture of the hair, the relative proportions of all parts of the body, the capacity of the lungs, the form and capacity of the skull, and even in the convolutions of the brain. [Note how he moves from hair texture to convolutions of the brain with such ease.] ... *Their mental characteristics are likewise very distinct; chiefly as it would appear in their emotional, but partly in their intellectual capacities.* [195-96; emphases added]

The variability or diversity of the mental faculties in men of the same race, *not to mention the greater differences between the men of distinct races*, is so notorious that not a word need here be said. [45; emphasis added; Darwin always pointed out the great

variations among individuals, but few people have noted that he saw such variations from race to race; it was simply a well-known fact as far as he was concerned.]

... none of the differences between the races of man are of any direct or special service to him. *The intellectual and moral or social faculties must of course be excepted from this remark.* [229; emphasis added; the context here is Darwin's discussion of how the slight variations among men came to be acquired and fixed; beneficial variations can be explained by natural selection, but slight variations between races do not fit this. As noted, he makes an exception for the intellectual and moral faculties where he does see wide, important differences.]

Nor is the difference slight in moral disposition between a barbarian ... and a Howard or Clarkson; and in intellect, between a savage who uses hardly any abstract terms, and a Newton or Shakespeare. *Differences of this kind between the highest men of the highest races and the lowest savages,* are connected by the finest gradations. Therefore it is possible that they might pass and be developed into each other. [86; emphasis added; there are gradations, and just prior to this passage, Darwin noted that he was struck how three members of the one of the lowest of savages, the Fuegians, "resembled us in disposition and in most of our mental faculties", but his point is that while there is nothing fundamentally different and that we should be able to see a development from lowest to highest, there is indeed a lowest and highest and we can see it between civilized man and savages.]

Even the most distinct races of man are much more like each other in [physical] form than would at first be supposed; *certain negro tribes must be excepted* ... [195; emphasis added; while Darwin is only talking about physical appearance here, note how he is quick to add that he sees an exception; differences in savage tribes or races must always be attended to.]

This last remark is soon followed by the first quotation offered above where he observes the strong differences between the races. Darwin takes pains to argue that these differences should not prevent us from concluding

that we have a common ancestor, but the extreme differences are real enough for him, so that the category of sub-species would capture this. A naturalist who encountered various human tribes for the first time "would at once perceive that they differed in a multitude of characters, some of slight and *some of considerable importance*" (196; emphasis added). Darwin also everywhere displays his low opinion, and sometimes disgust, with savages, most spectacularly on the last page of *Descent*, which ought to be as famous as the last paragraph of *Origin*, and which I will soon get to.

You could sum up Darwin's *entire* argument this way: If there were such a thing as a truly fundamental difference between races, it would be one that indicates the races originated from different ancestors (he uses 'fundamental' in this sense in *Descent*, 86). We do not have that with human beings or even between humans and the higher mammals, like gorillas and chimpanzees. Here, the abundance of similarities allows us to reason our way to the conclusion that we have, if you go far enough back in time, one common progenitor. *However*, looking at things from the other direction (going forward), that common ancestor produced, millions of generations later, an astounding variety of forms, species, and races. This variety means that there are *considerable* (though not fundamental) *differences* of such an order that we can say that some of these descendant races are very high and advanced, while some are very low and crude. For Darwin, both ends of this conclusion--common ancestor and widely varying descendants---are incontrovertible.

He had already prepared us for this in *Origin of Species*. In Chapter XIII, summing up his results from the second and fourth chapters, "... from the varying descendants of each species ... there is a constant tendency in their characters to diverge" (455). Referring back to his famous tree diagram in Chapter IV, he concludes that "the amount or value of the differences between organic beings all related to each other in the same degree in blood, has come to be widely different" (465). Even though *Origin* was not about man, Darwin had to briefly note "... the differences between the races of man, which are so strongly marked" (232). The common genealogy is one point Darwin wants to establish, which he often called 'descent with modification' (the term he preferred to 'evolution'). The other point is that those modifications were notable, widely divergent, and very real. And do not forget his Notebook comment: "... civilized Man, May exclaim with Christian we are all Brothers in spirit---all children of one father.---yet differences carried a long way" (Notebook C 217). "All men are Brothers" is not a conclusion Darwin would draw from nature because the differences are too strong or considerable.

The differences are a fact of life for Darwin and most scientists of his time. If races were not so different, it would not take a whole book, and a long one

at that, to argue that they all derive from one source. The differences are extreme enough to warrant some serious thought on how the species and races could be related. When Darwin points out the similarities, he is doing so in order to bolster the argument that we all flow from the same ancestral stock. He is definitely not arguing that today's similarities erase today's differences, making us all equal. The differences exist, they amount to deep division at certain points (particularly in the intellectual and moral faculties), and while these differences do not cancel out the basic fact of an underlying relatedness, they also reinforce the fact that the descendants are not all equal in the struggle for life. In no way does Darwin think that civilized humanity and savage humanity are equal on this score or possibly any score. Equality is the furthest thing from his mind. We will see abundant quotations on this in a moment.

One of the most amazing and intriguing things about life for Darwin and many others is that the original form of life did not just keep replicating itself exactly as is or with only the slightest of variations. Over time, this one source gave birth to an astonishing diversity of forms. Organic life is wondrous in part because it produces truly *different* forms. A first life form that just kept cloning itself would not be wondrous; it would be "gloomy uniformity" to Rafinesque and "endless monotony" to Chambers. The famous last paragraph of *On the Origin of Species* builds to the conclusion that "... from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved." In *Descent*, he also expresses this amazement at organic life: "The most humble organism is something much higher than the inorganic dust under our feet; and no one with an unbiased mind can study any living creature, however humble, without being struck with enthusiasm at its marvellous structure and properties" (193). That is certainly beautiful from one point of view. But how does one see this diversity? As all parts being equal partakers of a whole? No. At least not for Darwin and many others of his time.

In that offhand remark about humble organisms being higher than the dust beneath our feet, we have a hint of Darwin's attachment to order and rank. He never escapes thinking in terms of hierarchy. This is not just his problem. Perhaps none of us ever escapes it. In the first chapter, I quoted Margaret Hodgen's comments on the prevalence of hierarchical thinking in western thought. This was as true for Darwin as for anyone else. He became a secular theologian.

"Hell alone," writes Hodgen, "filled with deviationists or fugitives from the rigidities of the chain of being, could claim emancipation from order and rank" (*Early*, 404). Dante might wish to dispute that. But Hodgen's point still

stands. We love to systemize the world (as she also observed) and put each thing, person, and group in its place. It is "very quieting", she said, this habit of hierarchical thinking (396). We will allow no one to escape categorization. There is nothing inherently wrong with seeking systems and order and even rank. The question is: Is anybody getting screwed in the process? It is a question that concerned Alfred Russel Wallace and other humanitarians, like Gerland, Rafinesque, and Chambers, but not so much Darwin.

Hodgen also observed how difficult it is to challenge any ideas which have been around for such a long time:

Modern cultural investigation has taken up its abode in a mansion of organizing ideas ... more closely related to the early levels of Western theology and philosophy than to the data of human history. Nearly all the principles of inquiry employed by recent generations of scholars in Europe and elsewhere are of great age and authority ... Non-European folk have had no part in their formulation. [478] ... No old problem known to sixteenth- or seventeenth-century ethnology, and *no old solution, has been wholly abandoned or become obsolete*. [480; emphasis added] ... Despite advances in biology, physics, and chemistry, students of man have seldom ventured beyond the conceptual schemes of previous generations ... Seldom, even by scholars of the most elevated philosophical and historical vision, have widely entertained and cherished principles [such as hierarchy and Eurocentrism] been brought before the bar of conscious and rigorous judgment. [480-81]

It was in these pages that she also quoted Agnes Arber for her point that "the general intellectual atmosphere ... is compulsive to a humiliating degree." That atmosphere, as Arber said, limits our choices, in both the problems that should be investigated and the potential solutions, by getting us to censor ourselves.

What we are good at is denying that the old ideas have any hold on us. We spin our ideas to make them appear new, but they are rarely new. Except for the idea of evolving, progressing and maybe even regressing *through time*, Darwin did not really change the way westerners thought about the world. His version of hierarchy developing in a temporal sequence was just as rigorous and rigid as previous hierarchies. There was no revolution. Nothing changed. Certainly not for savages. There's a top and there's a bottom. The powerful win and the powerless lose, as always. Or, as Darwin would put it throughout *Origin*, some prevail and some become extinct. He was already letting us

know what would preoccupy him in *Descent*.

But doesn't temporality include the idea that the hierarchy is not fixed but may change over time? Theoretically, yes, and there is a note of potential revolution here, but it didn't come from Darwin. First of all, in nature as Darwin described it, to those who have, more will be given, and to those who have little, even that little will be taken away. Darwin argues that dominant groups will generally remain dominant for a long time, while rare species will become rarer and rarer until they disappear altogether (e.g., *Origin*, 155; or as he puts it so acutely in the 1844 essay, 149-50, "decrease in numbers or rarity seems to be the high-road to extinction").

The reason for this is that certain characteristics are what made the dominant group dominant to begin with and these characteristics are inheritable, so that its offspring will continue to be dominant. Any favorable variations will make the descendants more dominant. The strong will only get stronger as their competition weakens, and the feeble will not be able to stand up to the onslaught; they will get weaker until they are finally extirpated from nature. Dominant groups thus not only tend to remain dominant, they will become even more dominant: "throughout nature the forms of life which are now dominant tend to become still more dominant by leaving many modified and dominant descendants" (*Origin*, 83). Changes in species can occur, but they are so slight and gradual that, unless they were helped along by other circumstances, these small changes would not aid the weak. The result is that you can expect the dominance of a group to remain in place for a long time. This has to be comforting news for anyone who worries about the stability of hierarchy. It probably comforted Darwin too.

The last sentence I quoted above comes in the final paragraph of Chapter 2 of *Origin*. It is fascinating that Darwin should make this remark so early in the book. Before he has gotten to the chapters on "Struggle for Existence" and "Natural Selection", Darwin is already telling us (or reassuring us?) that the dominant will only get more dominant. To those who have more will be given. Why so early? I can only guess, but I think the following might explain it. Up to this point, he has only discussed artificial selection (Ch. I) and varieties as incipient species (Ch. II). These were not new points. Chambers had already highlighted these factors in his argument for evolution. Before Darwin, such ideas had been used to advocate for social change and even revolution. Nothing is permanent, everything is in flux. I think Darwin wanted to alert his readers very early in the book, especially his upper class fellows, that his theory would be different, even though he appears so far to be making the same argument as Chambers and others. He would use evolution to promote social stability with little or no change. (I will discuss this more fully

in Ch. 9, §3.)

In this sense, Darwin's theory changes nothing. Hierarchies plod on. But Darwin adds an important caveat: "But which groups will ultimately prevail, no man can predict; for we well know that many groups, formerly most extensively developed, have now become extinct" (*Origin*, 155). And again, on 156, "... of the species living at any one period, extremely few will transmit descendants to a remote futurity." A species may think (if it could think) that its descendants will be around forever, but most will find disappointment in the long road ahead. Later on in *Descent*, Darwin would deflate the idea of endless progress (or endless domination) in five chiseled words: "Natural selection acts only tentatively" (*Descent*, 167).

I think all three of these sentences are the most significant Darwin ever wrote. They are filled with anxiety. What Darwin sees is an underlying impermanence in nature and in human life too. He got that from the previous evolutionists. You can never be sure that those at the top will always be on top. Following that last quote, Darwin gives the example that Spain was once a great world power and is now "distanced in the race." He indicates that we cannot be sure of all the reasons for Spain's decline, but he blames a large part of it on the Catholic Church for eliminating some of the best men through persecution. He then goes on to praise the wonderful progress of Britain and the United States and attributes this in part to natural selection which, he implies, gave these countries "the greatest number of highly intellectual, energetic, brave, patriotic, and benevolent men" which enabled them to "prevail over less favoured nations" (168). He believes savages have these qualities in lesser degree.

The reason Darwin entertains any caveat at all is because of one great, inarguable fact: Extinction happens! Even to species that once were numerous. If there was any revolution here, it was in the discovery in the previous century that extinction is a fact of life. It shook up the intellectual world of Europe (I owe this insight to Sven Lindqvist), and that included Charles Darwin. There was quite a controversy over whether fossils were the remains of extinct species or something else. The possibility of obliteration caused a deep anxiety. Not only because it upset their idea of a never-changing world of life forms, but because it implied that *any* species could possibly be expunged one day.

By Darwin's time, extinct species had become an accepted, if not happy, fact of natural life, but this had happened only recently and was still disturbing. Just think: in the 1780s, Thomas Jefferson had rejected the idea of extinction. If the bones of something called a mammoth had been discovered, then he was convinced such an animal must still be wandering around

somewhere. He based himself in part on Indian stories about the mammoth and in part on this (spelling modernized): "Such is the economy of nature, that no instance can be produced of her having permitted any one race of her animals to become extinct; of her having formed any link in her great work so weak as to be broken" (Jefferson, *Notes*, 83).

Darwin said he had originally been astonished that a well-populated species could ever be extinguished (*Origin*, 356). It was after a lot of thought on the matter that he realized extinction was normal and would happen sooner or later to most species. If we are surprised at all, it should be at our presumption that we understand all the causes of the rise and fall of species (360). This loss of astonishment that extinction occurs does not necessarily mean a loss of anxiety.

Darwin stressed that extinction is as gradual as the production of new species or, in fact, even slower than new productions (*Origin*, 355, 359). It sneaks up on you. This could be a cause for more anxiety or relief depending on how you look at it---relief because any given generation will not have to worry about it, as it will be a long time coming. But where exactly does the anxiety come from? Is it the mere fact of extinction itself or that it approaches so stealthily? Or does the hierarchy cause the anxiety? If there were no order and ranking, would there be any reason to be anxious about one's place and ultimate fate in the universe? One of the implications of a hierarchy is that something is always conniving or struggling to take your place.

If individuals can learn to live without undue fear of death, why could not a species? Why shouldn't a species go about its appointed rounds without eventual extinction making one bit of difference? It should certainly make no difference to the naturalist. But human societies do get anxious. Nineteenth century Europe was such a society. What causes this on a wide scale is something I will be thinking about for a long time. Generally, it is the ones at the top that have the most to agonize about.

If Spain could go from top to not quite bottom in a few hundred years, what might happen to Britain or any other country over time? Impermanence is a revolutionary idea, but it did not come from Darwin. It came from the discovery of extinction. In one way, extinction is the driving force of the theory of natural selection (no death, no competition, no improved variations). "On the theory of natural selection the extinction of old forms and the production of new and improved forms are intimately connected together" (*Origin*, 355). The new cannot come in, fully in, until we get rid of the old. In a similar way, it might have been the driving force behind colonialism: If extinction is something that is bound to happen, then better to them than to us. Like lightning bolts. If one strikes your neighbor, maybe it won't happen to

you. Whether it's logical or not, it is a powerful emotional belief. Combine such anxiety with fear (or disgust) of the Other and the ability to kill whoever you want whenever you want with little resistance, and genocide is just around the corner.

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I for one am tired of hearing about revolutions, intellectual, scientific and otherwise, when all that happens is that the rich get richer, the poor get poorer and the dominant get more dominant. And the ordered and ranked are subjected to more order and rank. The academic elite uses "revolution" as another misdirection. We are supposed to be dazzled by it and fall in line and hail the great intellectual achievement. "Revolution" is a laurel wreath that transfixes us. What we don't see is how much the so-called revolution just continued old, and fairly conservative, ideas. We don't see how much in Darwin's theory was not revolutionary at all, but comforting to the ruling powers. The stranglehold of these rigid ideas is now obscured because we are busy celebrating the "revolution". And we miss where the revolution really was: In the discovery of the startling fact that extinction happens and that it could happen to any species. That was not a result of Darwin's theory. That was a discovered fact that preceded his theory. The response to that fact would determine what western civilization was morally made of.

We should learn to question what is new, if anything, in the intellectual world and what is a continuation of the old. Distinctions are necessary. Did Darwinian evolutionary theory give us real human diversity or only a semblance of it that would be used to serve western needs? In the academic world, no one can hear it when the objectors to "revolution" scream. Even a whisper is too loud and deemed out of order. Well, yes, out of order is exactly the point.

Questions should be asked here. However much classifying, grading, and rigorously ordering may help us understand the flora and fauna of the world, the question has to be asked why this should be applied to the groups of mankind. It is a question Darwin would never have asked---not because he saw man as part of nature and saw no reason why we should not treat man as we would any other part of nature, but because he accepted the European habit of ordering everything according to a hierarchy and because he had such a low opinion of savages that he could not conceive of them in any way as other than below civilized Europeans.

Darwin frequently expressed his reservations about and even disgust with savages. He was clear that there is a hierarchy (an old idea that Darwin did nothing to challenge) and clear about where savages belong in the hierarchy

of human societies. In theory, maybe the savages would continue to have a long existence and the civilized countries would disappear, but Darwin did not believe that. He even argued that European nations were in a kind of stalemate of power ("... such nations do not supplant and exterminate one another as do savage tribes", *Descent*, 169), and therefore natural selection does not play a great role in their case. Things were more or less equal between European countries, but not between Europe and the savage races. The odds were in favor of Europe and Darwin saw no reason not to keep it that way. As promised above, here is a selection of prejudiced remarks from *The Descent of Man* (I am repeating some I have already given because they belong in this set too):

The variability or diversity of the mental faculties in men of the same race, not to mention the greater differences between the men of distinct races, is so notorious that not a word need here be said. [45]

The savage and the dog have often found water at a low level, and the coincidence under such circumstances has become associated in their minds. A cultivated man would perhaps make some general proposition on the subject; but from all that we know of savages it is extremely doubtful whether they would do so ... The savage would certainly neither know nor care by what law the desired movements [of making currents in the water] were effected; yet his act would be guided by a rude process of reasoning ... [98]

Judging from the hideous ornaments, and the equally hideous music admired by most savages, it might be argued that their aesthetic faculty was not so highly developed as in certain animals, for instance, as in birds ... but such high tastes [as admiring a beautiful landscape or refined music] are acquired through culture, and depend on complex associations; they are not enjoyed by barbarians or by uneducated persons. [116; on the low form of savage music, cf. 636.]

... a savage will risk his own life to save that of a member of the same community, but will be wholly indifferent about a stranger [how did Darwin know this?]. ... Nevertheless many a civilized man, or even boy ... has disregarded the instinct of self-

preservation, and plunged at once into a torrent to save a drowning man, though a stranger. [134; I suppose Darwin never heard of American Indians extending themselves to help European colonists; Darwin also attempts to compare a civilized man helping a stranger with a monkey saving a zookeeper's life, introduced at 126, but he misses the fact that the zookeeper was not a stranger to the monkey but a friend.]

Most savages are utterly indifferent to the sufferings of strangers, or even delight in witnessing them. [142]

[By way of summing up, Darwin references] ... The chief causes of the low morality of savages, as judged by our standard ... [such as their] powers of reasoning insufficient to recognise the bearing of many virtues ... I have entered into the above details on the immorality of savages, because some authors have recently taken a high view of their moral nature ... [143-44; Darwin implies he disagrees with the positive assessment of savages.]

There is, however, no doubt that the various races, when carefully compared and measured [notice how some attempt at science is introduced here with 'measured'], differ much from each other, -- as in the texture of the hair, the relative proportions of all parts of the body, the capacity of the lungs, the form and capacity of the skull, and even in the convolutions of the brain. [195-96]

The belief that there exists in man some close relation between the size of the brain and the development of the intellectual faculties is supported by the comparison of the skulls of savage and civilised races, of ancient and modern people, and by the analogy of the whole vertebrate series. [74; he cites statistics here to prove that "the mean internal capacity of the skull" is greater in Europeans; he acknowledges that there are plenty of exceptions among individuals, but in general, measuring skulls can tell us something about mental differences among groups and he goes on to give mean measurements for Europeans, Americans, Asians, and Australian Aborigines, stressing the latter's lowest number.]

The astonishment which I felt on first seeing a party of Feugians [*sic*] on a wild and broken shore will never be forgotten by me,

for the reflection at once rushed into my mind -- such were our ancestors ... I would as soon be descended from that heroic little monkey ... or from that old baboon ... as from a savage who ... knows no decency ... [689; on the monkey, see selection from 134 above; on the baboon, see 91, 124.]

At some future period ... the civilised races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace, the savage races throughout the world. [183]

I am confining my quotations to *Descent*, but if one looks at Darwin's personal writings, his prejudices appear to be even stronger, as previously noted. In a letter to the Rev. Charles Kingsley, he described that first sighting of savages in Tierra del Fuego, "a naked painted, shivering hideous savage," a little differently---not just astonished, but revolted, "as revolting to me, nay more revolting than my present belief that an incomparably more remote ancestor was a hairy beast" (CCD 10.71). In the same letter, he said he had gotten used to the idea of our human genealogy, confessing in a sense that it took him time, but one gets the very definite impression that he never got accustomed to the idea of being related to savages. (This is the same letter where he said that one result of the extermination of savages would be that "the Human race, viewed as a unit, will have risen in rank.")

I quoted again the last remark in the block above not just because it is Darwin's most blunt statement of the inevitable extinction of savages and not just because it indicates his assessment of their inferiority in the fight for survival, but because the immediate context of it shows Darwin comparing savages to animals. He often links them in his discussions. Here he was trying to answer the objection that fossils have not (yet) been found which show a progression of species, as evolutionary theory predicts there should be, for at present there seems to be a "great break" between man and his nearest allies. Breaks occur often, Darwin points out. In fact, in the future when the savage races and the anthropomorphous apes have been exterminated, the break between civilized man and his nearest allies will be even wider. Perhaps civilized man will be even more advanced than he is now and the break will be between him and his closest ally, "some ape as low as a baboon, instead of as now between the negro or Australian [Aborigine] and the gorilla" (184). When the savages and the gorillas and chimps are gone, exterminated, no more a part of this world, they will become missing links and we won't see how close man and such animals are or were. The Negro and the gorilla are closer than civilized man and the baboon. Darwin frequently stressed the wide gap between civilized man and animals and the smaller gap between savages

and animals.

As in this example, Darwin's racism is often delivered in subtle form, in small doses, as part of a more complex point he is making. He will pass off some remark about, say, the Negro and the gorilla, that will give you just a whiff of his low estimate of savages. The racism does not emerge full blown until we get to the last page of *Descent*. Before that, we get hints about how deeply he might feel about this. We forget how often Darwin compared savages and animals. He notes that "many of the wilder races of man are apt to suffer much in health when subjected to changed conditions or habits of life" (218). Only the civilized races resist this. "Man in his wild condition seems to be in this respect almost as susceptible as his nearest allies, the anthropoid apes ..." (218). Part of this suffering in health is increased infertility (which will "sooner or later lead to extinction" [218], and there it is again! Extinction!). How to explain this infertility? By "the analogy to the lower animals" (219). He then compares the sterility of savages to the sterility of certain tamed animals (219-20). "Civilised races can certainly resist changes of all kinds far better than savages ..." 220. There is a sense of superiority here, I think.

There are also places in *Descent* where Darwin presents some biological evidence which seems to suggest that dark skinned people are closer to animals than Europeans are. I gave a couple of examples in Chapter 3. Darwin believed that the third eyelid and the sense of smell were more developed in Negroes than in Europeans and most developed in animals (see *Descent*, 34-35, text and n. 35 and 36). He does not register these points as a boast, but it is clear that these facts are not displeasing to him. To be fair, I should also note that Darwin compares civilized men to domesticated animals, but I don't think that changes the implications of his comparisons of wild human races to wild animals.

He even compares the Maoris of New Zealand to rats: "The New Zealander ... compares his future fate with that of the native rat now almost exterminated by the European rat" (222; and there is extermination again!). Europe is so superior that even its rats are superior! (On 102, he describes the common rat as having "conquered and beaten several other species" in Europe and elsewhere, including parts of New Zealand. Darwin was very capable of describing species, not only individuals, in competition and combat. He did this in words, not just with drawings, as Gould implied.) If you think that last comment about the superiority of Europe's rats is stretching it a bit, think again. In *Origin* (375-76), Darwin states his belief that while Great Britain's plants and animals are capable of overrunning those of New Zealand (exterminating the native species of New Zealand), the reverse is probably not

true. New Zealand life forms would make little headway in England, he believes. Hence, Darwin concludes, "Under this point of view, the productions of Great Britain, may be said to be higher than those of New Zealand." And that is in *The Origin of Species* which is supposed to be a purer work of science. Also, note how Darwin again and again makes extermination serve as a sign of inferiority. Europeans had a stake in eliminating indigenous peoples. It would prove the inferiority of the savage.

Most important, we should not forget Darwin's final argument on the last page of *Descent* for his thesis that man is descended from a lower form ("Man still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin")---where he draws a specific comparison between, this time, Fuegians and wild animals (689). He acknowledges that being descended from a lower form will be distasteful to many. Yet we admit that we are descended from savages ("there can hardly be a doubt" about this, says Darwin) and this, he says, is far more disgusting than being descended from a monkey. I quoted this above and repeat it here a little more fully: "For my own part I would as soon be descended from that heroic little monkey [previously described on 126 as saving his keeper from an attack] ... or from that old baboon [see 91, 124] ... as from a savage who delights to torture his enemies, offers up bloody sacrifices, practises infanticide without remorse, treats his wife like slaves, knows no decency, and is haunted by the grossest of superstitions" (689). Savages delighting in torture was probably a hackneyed thought by the time Darwin expressed it. (Soame Jenyns in 1782 remarked that savages are "happy in executing, the most exquisite tortures" and the common people "are delighted with ... all spectacles of cruelty and horror" [*Disquisitions*, 22]; see Ch. 2, §5.)

As for those ancient savages from whom we are descended, Darwin considered them less evolved (he had a definite sense of progressive evolution) and placed them closer to the animals than modern humans are: "ancient races ... more frequently present structures which resemble those of the lower animals than do the modern ... ancient races stand somewhat nearer in the long line of descent to their remote animal-like progenitors" (*Descent*, 40; cf. 58)). Contemporary savages are also products of evolution so that he could place them higher than the ancient progenitors of human races: "The ancestors of man were, no doubt, inferior in intellect, and probably in social disposition, to the lowest existing savages" (84). On the next page, we are reminded that the lowest savage is greater in mental powers than "the most highly organised ape." Darwin constantly maintains a consciousness of order and rank. He knows exactly where everyone fits. Savages are higher than apes, but beneath western, civilized man who is at the peak (or summit, as he

says at the end of the book) of all organic beings.

How accurate all this was about the savage tribes of the world is another question. Darwin accepted too much from the exaggerated reports of others. He did not have firsthand knowledge. He said those Fuegians "had no government". It is remarkable that he could have believed something so stupid. What people on this earth has had no government at all? All the prejudices of his culture come out on this last page. This is as close as Darwin comes to calling savages sub-human. He considers them lower than monkeys and baboons (and that's pretty low, since these are lower than gorillas and chimps). I think he got a little carried away by rhetoric at the end of his book. Nowhere else that I am aware of does he say savages are beneath any animals, though in Chapter 2 (66), he also presents savages as lower than animals because they practice infanticide. This is an emotional conclusion, not a scientific one. That is probably the point. Darwin let his emotions about this affect his scientific view of these non-European peoples.

Does anyone still want to argue that there is no racism in Darwin's writing? He was not the worst sort. He was not a foaming-at-the-mouth bigot, heaving up the ugliest invective he could manage. Nor was he expressing his own unique outlook. This was the racism of the time. It is the racism of good people like Darwin that shows us how powerful racism can be. I don't think any of Darwin's contemporaries would have seen anything amiss in these opinions. It was natural to them to think and talk like this. That does not make it right. This is not a judgment of Darwin and his culture from a later vantage point, as Gould and Gopnik might fear. Some people in the 19th century tried to break away from this racism and colonialism; so it was possible, even if it did not happen very often.

Bear in mind that throughout *Descent* one of Darwin's arguments is that there is a *continuum* of intelligence and social instincts from lower animals to higher animals to man --- actually, for that last part about man, read "higher animals to wild man to civilized man". This was the very old idea of hierarchy, as Hodgen would point out. Darwin loves relating anecdotes of the intelligence of animals and their social behavior (and occasionally comparing them to the behavior of savages, as on 97, 109). There are *gradations* so that it is not hard to imagine that man developed gradually from lower forms. Savages are somewhere in between animals and civilized man, according to Darwin. Are they closer to the former or the latter? It doesn't really matter where exactly he placed them. If it is closer to the animals, then he was a very severe racist. But as long as he puts them *below* civilized, European man, then he has followed some degree of racism.

Interestingly, Darwin never sees that one point he makes can also be used

to undermine his categorizations of the civilized and the savage. Darwin believed all human beings were as much a part of nature as animals. Against those who would argue that man is not part of a continuum with the animal world, but belongs in a category all by himself, Darwin says, "If man had not been his own classifier, he would never have thought of founding a separate order for his own reception" (*Descent*, 176). And again on 179: "... man has no right to form a separate Order for his own reception ..." Excellent point, there. Likewise, one can say that if western man had not set himself up as the classifier and judge of intelligence, no one would ever have placed western man at the summit and the savages several grades below. It all depends on who is doing the measuring and comparing. (Recall that Darwin indeed proclaimed that "The western nations of Europe ... now so immeasurably surpass their former savage progenitors, and stand at the summit of civilisation ..." [167]; and if they surpass former savages, they likely surpass all savages.) Despite his professed belief that man is a part of nature, Darwin was putting European man into a category all his own.

No one, except a westerner, would have judged that the music of savages is hideous, that their tribes have no government, that their social sympathies exclude strangers, and that they are merciless and delight in torturing their enemies (all of which are given above as examples directly quoted from *Descent*; as for torture, savages could have learned quite a bit from Europe). Regarding their attitude towards strangers, Darwin had forgotten that he had just recently read in Bonwick's *The Last of the Tasmanians* of a white farmer's account of how a "whole tribe of Blacks all at once came forward to assist me" over many hours to put out a fire that threatened his crop (67) and how a young white girl lost in the Bush was kindly treated by the natives (39). These were not just strangers the Aborigines were helping, but strangers who were intruding into their homeland, and still the Aborigines helped them. On that point about brutality, Darwin and his culture never considered how utterly bestial were British methods of warfare and torture compared to the practices of many native groups who were far less bloodthirsty and knew nothing of the total warfare that the west in the 19th century was already honing to a fine skill. The west convinced itself of its own superiority and Darwin fell for it hook, line, and sinker.

As a counterweight to this false idea that savages have no government, here is Henry Reynolds on the facts about Tasmanian culture:

What has been conspicuously lacking in the assessment of Aboriginal history is an appreciation that the Aboriginal tribes were, in effect, small nations which had long traditions of

complex 'international' relations. They made war and peace, negotiated treaties, settled conflicts, arranged marriages and organized access to resources and right of way across territories.
[*Fate*, 149]

It is a complete denial of all common sense to think that any group of humans could live without some form of government and negotiation. If I harp on this, it is because it would be extremely bad science to let Darwin or anyone else get away with this sort of lousy anthropology.

They built up a denigrating image of savages precisely for the purpose of facilitating conquest---as I quoted Gerland earlier, "indeed for the purpose of treating them callously [or, recklessly, ruthlessly]" (*um nun gegen sie desto rücksichtsloser zu verfahren*; Gerland, 113). It made it easier to cheat them. In making savages childlike or animal-like, Europeans deprived them of the ability to reason and to enter knowingly into agreements like treaties. They could more easily break treaties with savages. All agreements with savages could be made null and void since, it was claimed, they did not have the capacity to appreciate the terms. (In 1690, John Locke warned against this sort of thing. Here he is in §14 of his *Second Treatise of Government*: "The Promises and Bargains for Truck, &c. ... between a Swiss and an *Indian*, in the Woods of *America*, are binding on them ... For Truth and keeping of Faith belongs to Men, as Men, and not as Members of Society [i.e., a particular society or ethnic group]" [his emphases]. Honoring agreements is a common human quality and obligation for all nations. Locke is another humanitarian voice who has been erased to a great degree, as I will fully discuss in Ch. 11, §4.)

In Darwin's defense, it could be said, as I noted above, that he got a little carried away by his own emotional rhetoric at the end of *The Descent of Man*. His rhetorical jabs---"I would as soon be descended from that heroic little monkey ... as from a savage"---imply that savages are lower than animals and that is something that Darwin clearly did not believe (e.g., *Descent*, 85, where he says that the mental power of the lowest savage is far above that of the highest ape). So maybe his disgust over savages got the better of him as he wound up his arguments. On the other hand, much earlier in the book, in Chapter 2 (66), when he is more coolly assessing things, he cites the savage practice of infanticide as "perverted," making savages lower than animals which would never do such a thing. But even when emotions get the better of Darwin, that is really no excuse for spreading nonsense and lies about natives (no government, delighting in torture, knowing no decency---all from the next to last paragraph of *Descent*). It made him into a promoter of bad science

about other human groups, in the service of imperial conquest.

Just to be excruciatingly clear about this: Darwin had little to no evidence for the judgments he made about the lower intelligence and social capacities of savages. He did no surveys and appealed to none which demonstrated how savages in general treated strangers or how they operated without a government or just how many people died in their battles or whether, for example, they killed women and children by attacking at night or at the break of dawn (something the British knew a bit about). He relied mainly on the reports of others and rather poor reports at that. As Desmond and Moore point out, "Darwin was cobbling together his anthropology mainly from second-hand sources" (*Sacred Cause*, 365).

In that remark he made about the differences in brain convolutions (*Descent*, 196)---which Peter Quinn in a letter to the NY Times Book Review (Feb. 15, 2009) offered as one example of Darwin's scientific racism---Darwin does provide a footnote: "See, for instance, Mr. Marshall's account of the brain of a Bush-woman, in 'Phil. Transact.' 1864, p.519." Perhaps he meant that this is just one example from a plethora of evidence waiting in the wings. Perhaps, but he does not say so. Darwin and others were quick to give credence to any evidence that reinforced their prejudices about savages. If this does not make us cringe, at least it ought not to sit well, no matter that the illustrious name of Charles Darwin is attached to such statements.

Adam Gopnik claims that Darwin studied man as minutely as he studied anything else. Referring to his last book, he says, "Darwin begins by devoting to worms the same meticulous, worrying attentiveness that he before had given to man and monkeys ..." (Gopnik, 168). He certainly devoted such attention to finches, beetles, worms, and much else, but to say that he did this with man is stupendously false. Oddly, Darwin made such a claim for his western intellectual and professional tradition: "Man has been studied more carefully than any other animal ..." (*Descent*, 203; also, 1844 essay, 89, mankind is "so much better known than any other animal"). There is a bold case of self-deception. No one of his or an earlier time had the scientific acumen and accuracy to carefully study human beings of non-western cultures nor did they acquire a precise understanding of western civilization and really grasp their own roots (and it can be debated how far we have come since Darwin). They were dreaming. They had made western man with his selfish interests the classifier for all things human and they failed miserably as scientists in doing so.

6

MAN IN THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES

... each new variety or species, during the progress of its formation, will generally press hardest on its nearest kindred, and tend to exterminate them.

---Charles Darwin (*Origin*, 137)

Small and broken groups and sub-groups will finally tend to disappear.

---Charles Darwin (*Origin*, 155)

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Much of Darwin's scientific attitude towards races we should have seen coming in *The Origin of Species*, but we have glorified that book to such a degree that we cannot see how schizophrenic it is. In part, it is an objective work of science, and in part, it is a very subjective book, imposing a hierarchical and Eurocentric view on nature. I think many of Darwin's contemporaries found the second side of its personality highly appealing without ever consciously realizing it. We have continued to suppress our awareness of it.

One way we've been in denial is by holding on to the scholarly myth that Darwin refers to mankind only once in *Origin*, saving it for the last chapter. As a result of his theory of common descent by gradual changes, Darwin proposes at the very end of the book that in some distant time, "Light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history" (534). That's it, says the confirmed opinion of virtually everyone. One cryptic sentence with the rest left unsaid. As it happens, that is totally untrue. Darwin refers to human beings about sixteen times throughout *Origin*. Most of it is not very significant, but a few pieces are noteworthy and hint as to what would come a dozen years later in *The Descent of Man*. Before I review this evidence, here is a sampling of what some of the best writers on Darwin have had to say

about this:

Richard Dawkins (*Greatest Show*, 183) tells us that in *Origin*, "Darwin's treatment of human evolution ... is limited to twelve portentous words [the ones quoted above]." Dawkins notes that in the last editions, Darwin made it 'Much light.'

Stephen Jay Gould also notes the emendation of 'Much light', but first firmly states, "The first edition of the *Origin* says little about *Homo sapiens* beyond a cryptic promise that 'light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history'" (*Richness*, 550).

In the edition of *Origin* which I am using, Charlotte Kelchner comments in her notes, "This sentence contains the only suggestion in *Origin of Species* that the human species, like all others, is a product of 'descent by modification'."

Robert Young (7) refers to "Darwin's one modest sentence on man in the *Origin of Species*."

Gillian Beer constantly mentions Darwin's silence on man in his first major work on evolution in her book *Darwin's Plots* (e.g., xix, 7, 21, 46, 53, 54, 56, 108-09). Darwin "there suppressed the presence of man" (21). "Man is a determining absence in the argument of *The Origin of Species*. In the first edition he appears only once [in the Conclusion] as the subject of direct enquiry" (53). She calls his silence tactical (54). Interestingly, she is capable of noting that "the human, [is] everywhere and nowhere in his argument" (xix) and further on, "In *The Origin* humanity lurks in the interstices of text, summoned and evaded, kept always out of the centre of attention ..." (108). I could agree with that last comment.

Alvar Ellegård has it that "Darwin referred to the question of Man only at the very end of the book ..." (293). Like Beer, he thinks Darwin was being diplomatic.

Neil MacMaster would not disagree: "In *The Origins* [sic] Darwin studiously avoided applying his theory of natural selection to humans since ... he wished to avoid controversy" (34).

Adrian Desmond and James Moore in *Sacred Cause* (329) write that for Thomas Huxley and Charles Loring Brace, an abolitionist and in-law of Asa Gray (Darwin's American friend), "humans were paramount in the *Origin*, even though they weren't there." Desmond and Moore also say Darwin was

"defusing the *Origin* by removing the humans" (346). In the introduction to their edition of Darwin's *Descent*, one section is entitled "Why Darwin Left Mankind Out Of The *Origin of Species*"(xxx). (Essentially, they too argue that Darwin did not want to be controversial.) Darwin certainly left out a full-blown treatment, but that is not the same as leaving mankind entirely out of the book.

Nicholas Wade sums it up for everyone: "In *On the Origin of Species*, published in 1859, he laid out his theory of evolution but, perhaps preferring to take one step at a time, said nothing in particular about the human species" (22).

That is enough, I think, to establish just how united all writers on Darwin are about this. Is it possible to be more wrong than dead wrong? If so, the scholarly world has achieved it. Many of the ones I have cited have done excellent work on various aspects of Darwin or 19th century science. I especially admire Robert Young's *Darwin's Metaphor*. If you have a chance to read this collection of essays, do yourself a favor. They are terrific.

But I am afraid that Agnes Arber's point is once again apt. The effect of the general intellectual atmosphere is compulsive to a humiliating degree. Once upon a time, someone said that Darwin did not include human beings in *The Origin of Species*, and everyone liked it so much, they kept on repeating it. They seemed to like the image of a cautious, modest Darwin who avoided controversy. It became a well-worn truism. It fits this mythical Darwin academia has been so very busy creating since the beginning. It's true that Darwin did not embrace controversy. He rarely responded to reviews and criticisms. He let Thomas Huxley, Alfred Wallace, and others do most of his fighting for him. But Darwin was not as cautious as the myth would have it and he certainly was not reluctant to allow some of his personal prejudices to enter the work and even to be obvious about it.

What does the actual text of *Origin* tell us? In contradistinction to all of these writers, I would point out that, in the first edition of *Origin*, Darwin refers to human beings in one way or another at least sixteen times (I am including the last most famous sentence about how light will be thrown). In addition, the colonialist perspective that is so prominent in *Origin* is very informative and presaged his ideas in *Descent* about human development and conflict between groups. By colonialist perspective, I mean the repetitive language of domination, beating, extermination, intrusion, invasion, and so much more, including colonists and colonise. This is extremely odd in a book that is supposed to be about nature outside of man. I have discussed some of this vocabulary some pages back and will return to this later on in this

chapter. First, I will go over the clues in a few of those sixteen references.

Most of them do not amount to much. About half mention savages (38, 39, 55, 56, 58, 60, 423, 531) and another three, Indians (99), uncivilised man (171), and Hottentots and Negroes (467-68). The rest are various general comments (92, 172, 232, 357, 534). While most of this tells us nothing, a few of these are brimming with portent. I won't go over all of them, just a few of the more noteworthy.

The first five references to savages are about their animal breeding practices. (This actually has some importance in a subtle way for our purposes; I will return to it later.) There is evident prejudice when he mentions 'the lowest savages' (56) and 'the barbarians of Tierra del Fuego' (56). The latter is especially serious as he alleges that these barbarians reveal the high value they set on their pet animals, "by their killing and devouring their old women, in times of dearth, as of less value than their dogs." He had a tendency in his anthropological opinions to rely on unsubstantiated rumors. He trusted others too much for their opinions on savages and did little of his own original work. (This rumor of eating old women is first mentioned by Darwin in an early letter [CCD 1.303]. He said it was told on separate occasions by two different Fuegians. The editors of CCD explain that years later, a missionary contradicted this and said the Fuegians were only saying what they thought was expected of them [CCD 1.306 n5]. Darwin repeats the rumor in 1868 in *Variation*, 2.260, where he also states that Australian Aborigines will kill an infant so that the mother can suckle a "much-prized puppy.") Alfred Wallace spent more time in the field amongst natives than Darwin did and, as a result, had a much better sense of them.

When Darwin compares our incomprehension in looking at organisms to the way savages look uncomprehendingly at a ship (531), an analogy he also used in his first unpublished essay of 1842 (50), he demonstrates a low opinion of savages, but this is one of his least severe comments. His prejudices against savages are consistently negative, but not always extreme. He is writing for an audience that thinks like he does and will get it and accept it without much question. They share his assumptions. They assumed savage inferiority so hard and fast that it became fact for them, for Darwin too. There was no other way to see them.

They confused a judgment and a fact, something Darwin in general knew was wrong to do. "False facts are highly injurious to the progress of science, for they often endure long" (*Descent*, 676). He himself indulged in many false facts about savages (and the Irish!; as previously mentioned, when an Irishman wrote to him that he was generalizing from too few facts in a comment in *Descent*, 164, where Darwin favorably quoted another's low

estimation of the Irish, Darwin would not change it; see D & M, *Sacred Cause*, 368). A few humanitarians like Wallace and Gerland made exceptional efforts to see indigenous people more accurately.

The first two essays, both not published until after his death, have far fewer mentions of human beings. He expresses some admiration for how savages track across country (1842, 19, and 1844, 124) and indicates "Difficulty when asked *how did white and negro become altered from common intermediate stock: no facts*" (1842, 53). There is also a general comment about how well we understand mankind (1844, 89), which is repeated in *Origin* (92). That's about it. The fact that he included so many more comments about humans in *Origin* is one indication that he was just brimming with a desire to talk about mankind in his first major book on evolution for the public.

In any event, several of Darwin's comments in *Origin* about human beings do bear closer attention:

Difference between the races: Scholars makes such a big deal of the last enigmatic "light will be thrown" comment, yet they fail to note that Darwin used the same expression much earlier in the book. In discussing our ignorance of the unknown laws of variation, he says he could also have illustrated this with "the differences between the races of man, which are so strongly marked; I may add that some little light can apparently be thrown on the origin of these differences, chiefly through sexual selection of a particular kind ..." (*Origin*, 232). He is certainly not shy about mentioning racial differences. True, he is not saying anything here about which are superior and inferior, but most of his contemporaries would have had little doubt about the implications of racial differences. We must always keep in mind that natural selection is about two things: 1) common origin, and 2) the branching differences from the origin. The differences are as real to Darwin as the shared ancestry. The consequence of differentiation also applies to sexual selection. This comment is too brief to draw any conclusion about his belief in the equality or inequality of human races, but it's not nothing either. Darwin is acknowledging that some racial differences are not slight (they are "so strongly marked") and that evolution by descent or by sexual selection produces great diversity and divergence of characteristics.

Hottentots and Negroes: In making his point that the system of natural classification is really based on descent, Darwin offers the following hypothetical: "If it could be proved that the Hottentot had descended from the Negro, I think he would be classed under the Negro group, however much he might differ in colour and other important characters from negroes" (*Origin*, 467-68). There is so much that lies buried in this one statement. For one thing,

Darwin is telling us that he does not count skin color as such a vital difference between humans. One is left to wonder what he would say about white and black. At the time, everyone knew that Darwin probably believed we all have one common ancestor. His explicit statement about white and negro in his unpublished 1842 essay (see above) was of course unknown to his contemporaries, but previous development theory, as for example in Robert Chambers's work, made it a pretty safe conclusion in Darwin's case too. In 1844, Chambers wrote in *Vestiges*: "We are ignorant of the laws of variety-production [a point Darwin would make over and over; e.g., *Origin*, 34, "The laws governing inheritance are quite unknown"]; but we see it going on as a principle in nature, and it is obviously favourable to the supposition that all the great families of men are of one stock" (*Vestiges*, 283; cf. 294, 305). Darwin's statement about Hottentot and Negro is a strong hint that humans have a common origin, and because of Chambers and others, the public knew what was coming. This remark also reveals the European arrogance of classifying everything on the planet, including other human beings. Darwin believed that we Europeans own the planet and that we can order it as we please. It hardly occurred to him that these other human beings might have something to say about that.

Knowledge of mankind: There is a brief reference to "mankind, so incomparably better known than any other animal" (*Origin*, 92). (In the 1844 essay, at 89, it is almost exactly the same.) In *Descent* (203), we will get "Man has been studied more carefully than any other animal." He also asserted in that book the possibility of "viewing him [man] in the same spirit as a naturalist would any other animal," but given Darwin's own disgust with savages, that was a rather bold overstatement. The brief comment in *Origin* would seem to be the most innocuous of all the statements about human beings, as Darwin is only saying we have a lot of knowledge about humans. He does not appear to be saying anything about what that knowledge includes. But, in the first place, we could ask why this statement is in *Origin* at all, given that there is supposedly no discussion of the human animal in this book. In the second place, if we pay attention to the context of this remark, we can see that there is indeed more going on.

The reference to mankind being "better known than any other animal" comes near the beginning of Chapter III, "Struggle for Existence". He has already introduced the reader to natural selection a few pages earlier (86) and to "the doctrine of Malthus" which he sums up as "more individuals are produced than can possibly survive" (88). Then in one long paragraph (91-92), he discusses how difficult it is to identify all the checks that operate on

population. "We know not exactly what the checks are in even one single instance" (92). But something must be checking the population (as Malthus, and now Darwin, argues), otherwise it would be spinning out of control. Even in mankind's case, "so incomparably better known," we don't know all the checks. By the end of the paragraph, he is reminding us of the great destruction in life, and particularly, the way the more vigorous kill the less vigorous (he uses plants as an example). The average reader of *Origin* might have missed this, but some scientists would have realized that Darwin is clearly saying that human beings are subject to the Malthusian population principle (of course they are, that being the original point of the principle). We may not know all the checks in the case of man, but there must be some checks because man is subject to the same law of population. Since that law is one of the pillars of evolution by natural selection, there is a clear implication that mankind is subject to evolution by natural selection, and in particular, to the law of the more vigorous exterminating the less vigorous. No colonialist would have disagreed with Darwin's way of putting things.

Also, not a small point, his allusion to our knowledge of human beings is a kind of preemptive strike. He means European knowledge, upper class knowledge---and a European, upper class way of looking at things will displace any other way of looking at the world, including the view of human beings from below. The more vigorous are going to remove them anyway, so their knowledge does not count. (Just as, I cannot help reminding everyone of what I reported in Ch. 3, §5: Walter Bagehot said of an aged savage who found western civilization "not worth the trouble," that "we need not take account of the mistaken ideas of unfit men and beaten races.") The knowledge of disappeared and disappearing people does not count for much in the worldview of Darwin and so many others of his time. This also became the legal principle of dealing with Aborigines: Their laws and customs do not count; they are mistaken ideas; Aborigines are subject to European laws wherever Europeans arrive. It is extremely ironic that Darwin's statement about mankind being better known leads, in Bagehot's case, to a statement about erasing the points of view of other human beings.

~ 2 ~

So much for Darwin's alleged silence in *Origin* on the problem of human beings. Some people might object that this last discussed comment of Darwin's is really such a bare hint, it hardly counts for much at all, and that I am reading too much into it. But my reading is straight from the context. And if the bareness of Darwin's almost throwaway line is such a problem, I will note that the very last of Darwin's comments on man (light will be thrown) is

also no more than a mysterious hint, giving even less information than any of the others I have discussed, and if commentators are going to make this most ambiguous remark a memorable statement about humanity, why not include the other hints which actually tell us more about what Darwin was thinking? Why do academic historians preclude so much and insist only on their invented mysteries?

Those same writers who make the dubious claim that Darwin referred to human beings only once in *Origin*, and this only at the end, will admit that, at the time, everyone knew that the human species was ultimately what the main issue was about. As soon as the book appeared, the old debate started up again with renewed fervor. What did Darwin's theory imply about the genetic history of mankind? Did it confirm or contradict what the religious establishment taught about man? Everyone agrees that this is what the publication of his book stimulated. (Even this point is not quite right as scholars make it out. The debate was already going on. Chambers for one had put this controversy on the map. Darwin only joined a revolution in progress. He did not start it.) But with unshakeable unanimity, these writers inform their readers that Darwin himself was silent on the subject of human beings in *Origin*. They insist on it.

There is nothing overt in the above clues that would tell us what Darwin believed about the differences in intelligence between the races. That would have to await *The Descent of Man*. Nevertheless, it is false to say that in *Origin* Darwin was completely silent on the subject of man and how his theory *might* apply to human beings. The context of the work of Robert Chambers, which had been around for fifteen years before *Origin* came along, is also important. Chambers had already argued that all human beings were probably descended from one common stock. This is what development theory pointed to. It was a foregone conclusion that this would be Darwin's opinion too. As we will see in Chapter 8, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck had argued fifty years ahead of *Origin* and sixty-two years ahead of *Descent* that man was descended from apes. There was no mystery to any of Darwin's contemporaries about where all this was headed.

There are also one or two other places in *Origin* with important hints about this. I did not list them above because strictly speaking he does not mention human beings in these references, but there is a strong implication of his further beliefs about this. He notes the way organisms in Australia (143) and New Zealand (375-76) fall before those introduced from Europe, and particularly those from Britain, and doubts their ability to compete with British and European life forms. Thus: "Under this point of view, the productions of Great Britain, may be said to be higher than those of New

Zealand" (376). There is no reason to exclude human beings from what Darwin means by organic productions. British forms easily take over in New Zealand (they "exterminate many of the natives," 375), but the reverse is not true; it is doubtful, he says, that New Zealand forms "would be enabled to seize on places now occupied by our native plants and animals" (376). Britain produces hardier races of organisms. It is a very small step to apply this kind of thinking to human groups and decide who is superior and who inferior. Darwin was not as reticent as so many people think to give some idea of what he believed about human evolution in *Origin*. It's another myth about Darwin that has to be given up.

In fact, I don't think it is quite accurate to say that it is merely a small step to apply this to human beings. I think the human application is already built into it and inspired this kind of science. This passage in *Origin* on the higher state of British organisms roughly corresponds to the *Diary* comment I quoted in the second chapter: "It is impossible for an Englishman to behold these distant colonies, without a high pride and satisfaction. To hoist the British flag seems to draw as a certain consequence wealth, prosperity and civilization" (*Diary*; 446). That same pride in British superiority lies hidden (and it's not really all that hidden) in his supposedly objective, scientific observation in *Origin*.

It is worth presenting in some detail the correspondence on this issue that passed between Darwin and Joseph Hooker, about eleven months before *Origin* was published, because it reveals that, despite his conflicted feelings about using 'higher', Darwin could not let go of it. On December 24, 1858, Darwin wrote to Hooker, "The plants of Europe with Asia as being largest territory I look at as the most 'improved', & therefore as being able to withstand the less perfected Australian plants ... See how all the productions of N. Zealand yield to those of Europe" (CCD 7.221).

I think it is right to conclude from this that Darwin was endorsing a concept of higher. That is how Hooker saw it. On December 26, Hooker responded, "I am horrified to find that you think Australian forms lower than Old World ones; because under *every method of determining high & low in Botany the Australian vegetation is the highest in the world*" (CCD 7.224; his emphases). He then gives six examples to illustrate his point and adds, "We cannot argue any thing by contrasting the multiplication of European forms in Australia & New Zealand with the absence of the converse in England." So here is Hooker registering a very strong objection to this manner of comparing organisms made by Darwin, even pointing out, "How often do I say all our arguments are edged swords."

Yet listen to how tortured is Darwin's reply (Dec. 31). He objects that he

does not believe in lower and higher, but clearly he cannot and will not give them up (his emphases throughout):

I do not think I said that I thought the productions of Asia were *higher* than those of Australia. I intend carefully to avoid this expression, for I do not think that any one has a definite idea what is meant by higher, except in classes which can loosely be compared to man [Note how he makes man an exception to the rule that there is no definite idea of higher] ... I believe a greater number of the productions of Asia, the largest territory in the world, would beat those of Australia, than conversely ... But this sort of highness (I wish I could invent some expression, and must try to do so) is different from highness in the common acceptance of word ... [After giving some examples of one organism beating out another] I do not see how this "competitive highness" can be tested in any way by us ... Not that I doubt a long course of "competitive highness" will *ultimately make the organisation higher* in every sense of the word; but it seems most difficult to test it ... I should be sorry to be forced to give up view that an old and very large continuous territory would generally produce organisms higher in the competitive sense than a smaller territory. I may of course be quite wrong about plants of Australia (and your facts are of course quite new to me on their highness) but when I read the accounts of immense spreading of European plants in Australia, and think of the wool and corn brought thence to Europe [Note the appeal to imperialism], and not one plant naturalised, I can hardly avoid suspicion that Europe beats Australia in its productions ... I want to clear my mind, as perhaps I should put a sentence or two in my abstract [i.e., *Origin*] on this subject. [CCD 7. 228-29]

He so clearly affirms his belief in what he calls "competitive highness" (an expression he never used again, as far as I am aware) and then incredibly adds (a little past mid-point in the above) that this will lead to "*higher* in every sense of the word" (his emphasis). What to make of all this? Did the senses of *higher* for Darwin include intellectually, morally, and aesthetically? Likely they did. This is not a man who was committed to avoiding concepts of higher and lower, however much he protested that he was. I think it is also not unfair to conclude that it looks like Darwin was affected by European colonialism's success and that he was using this colonial venture to guide his scientific thinking.

Recall that twenty years earlier in 1837 Darwin could write that "It is absurd to talk of one animal being higher than another" (Notebook B 74) and would essentially repeat this thought in 1847 in his marginal note in his copy of Chambers's *Vestiges*. If *The Origin of Species* (and the letters to Hooker) represents the mature Darwin, then his remark about the productions of Great Britain being higher is an instance of racism getting to Darwin and infecting his work. The immature Darwin of the Notebooks was a purer naturalist trying to spurn ideas of higher and lower, though as we saw he could not quite stick to it even then (see Ch. 3, §7). It is the young Darwin whom many scholars choose to remember and confuse with the later Darwin, pretending that the older Darwin never varied from some of the attempted ideals of his younger self.

And now here comes a point which is both obvious and subtle. I have skipped the one place in *Origin* where human beings are mentioned most frequently---Chapter I where humans in the form of animal breeders and horticulturalists appear numerous times, naturally so, since the first chapter is about artificial selection (add these to the 16 references mentioned earlier and the total grows). Darwin broke his "silence" on man in the very first chapter. I skipped it because I myself did not see it until I had finished writing about the other 16 references. It is fascinating how everyone misses this, including myself. We often notice the most obvious things last, if we catch them at all. One might object that man as a breeder---as an active subject selecting useful varieties---has nothing to do with man as one of the objects that evolution works on. At first glance, this is a very sensible objection. But if we pay close attention, something extraordinarily interesting is going on here. Darwin's first chapter is an excellent example of what I quoted earlier from Gillian Beer: "humanity [i.e., as a product of evolution] lurks in the interstices of [Darwin's] text, summoned and evaded, kept always out of the centre of attention ..." (*Darwin's Plots*, 108).

Is there any relationship (in Darwin's mind, that is) between man as a breeder of organisms and man as bred by evolution or natural selection? I think there is, but he does not directly state it. He gives rather broad hints.

Origin's first chapter is devoted to man's efforts to improve nature for his own uses, which was an important theme used by many to justify imperialism. "Through the most advanced knowledge and techniques, 'improvers' would organize the best possible future, both for those they expropriated and subordinated, as for themselves" (Drayton, 87). "British 'improvers' moved, at home and abroad, in the faith that they ultimately knew better than those on the ground. Their confidence depended, in part, on the assumption that they possessed a more profound understanding of how Nature worked" (90). There

is more like this in Chapter 4 of Richard Drayton's *Nature's Government* and indeed throughout the book. The British had better knowledge of nature and were out to improve the world, or so they said. At the end of the first paragraph of his first chapter, Darwin is noting, perhaps with some pride, "Our oldest cultivated plants, such as wheat, still often yield new varieties: our oldest domesticated animals are still capable of rapid improvement or modification."

Improving stock, a major professed goal of imperialism, is also a major theme of *Origin's* opening chapter. Variations of 'improve' (usually as improvement or improved) appear 16 times in the 37 pages of this first chapter. That is about 0.43 occurrences per page, or almost one every other page. It is not nearly as frequent in the rest of the book, but the occurrences of derivatives of 'improve' in the last thirteen chapters is not negligible either. There are 61 in reference to natural selection in 447 pages, almost 0.14 per page, which is about a third of what it was in the first chapter. In a more objective science, there would have been closer to zero occurrences. I am not even counting other expressions used in the first chapter and the entire book, which also include the idea of improvement, such as "the best individual animals" (56, 58), "a slightly better variety" (59), "inferior birds" (64), and "usefulness to man" (59); except for this last one, similar expressions appear in the rest of the book.

Natural selection will improve organisms in the fight for survival. Darwin alludes to natural selection twice in the first chapter, but he already brought up the link between natural selection and improvement near the end of the Introduction, observing that "Natural Selection almost inevitably causes much Extinction of the less improved forms of life." Natural selection fosters improvement by eliminating the less improved. This is just like the roguing of unwanted plants which he brings up in Chapter I (55).

Improving implies that there is a movement from inferior to superior. He is most forceful about this early in Chapter IV (109-10; this is on 84 in the original British first edition):

It may [the word, metaphorically, was inserted here from the 2nd edition on] be said that natural selection is daily and hourly scrutinising, throughout the world, every variation, even the slightest; rejecting that which is bad, preserving and adding up all that is good; silently and insensibly working, whenever and wherever opportunity offers, at the *improvement* of each organic being in relation to its organic and inorganic conditions of life. We see nothing of these slow changes in progress, until the hand

of time has marked the long lapse of ages ... [emphasis added]

Keep in mind the following equivalencies for some of the terms Darwin uses in this passage: rejecting = exterminating; bad = inferior; and good = superior. (All Darwin means by metaphorically, which he later inserted, is that there is no personal agent doing the scrutinizing. He does not mean that scrutinizing is not taking place. It is---only it is being done by an impersonal force, not by a person. For more on Darwin's usage of 'metaphorical', see previous chapter, §3.) The resulting improvements are very real. There is no such thing as metaphorical improvement, for Darwin.

The constant use of variations of 'improve' in the first chapter has already set up a theme that both man and nature will breed superior organisms by eliminating the inferior. Improving, as I said, implies there is a movement from inferior to superior, from worse to better, or lower to higher. Darwin was letting us know right off the bat that these categories of hierarchy will be important in understanding how natural selection works, but he was not saying anything as yet about how, if at all, inferiority and superiority will apply to the races of man. Or was he? There are a few not so subtle clues.

He directly states that civilized man is superior to savages in his ability to breed a better stock of animals and plants: "... neither Australia, the Cape of Good Hope, nor any other region inhabited by quite uncivilised man, has afforded us a single plant worth culture. It is not that these countries, so rich in species, do not by a strange chance possess the aboriginal stocks of any useful plants, but that the native plants have not been improved by continued selection up to a standard of perfection comparable with that given to plants in countries anciently civilised" (*Origin*, 59-60; 38 in original British 1859 edition). Prior to this, Darwin even told, or rather reminded, his British readers that English breeders are so good that they export their productions everywhere: "What English breeders have actually effected is proved by the enormous prices given for animals with a good pedigree; and these have now been exported to almost every quarter of the world" (53; 31 in British 1859 edition). Savages have for the most part done their selecting unconsciously (58, 62), which gives limited results. Also, their nomadism limits them: "Wandering savages or the inhabitants of open plains rarely possess more than one breed of the same species" (64).

Statements like these would have been taken in Darwin's time as practically an explicit endorsement of western imperialism. British imperialism proclaimed itself to be improving the world. Savage ability to improve was quite inferior (recall that Bagehot reiterated this point). We, the civilized, are the ultimate improvers and export our improvements---savages

are far behind us as improvers, and hence, by implication, as survivors, since better plants and animals play a role in the survival of human beings. One might point out that this only demonstrates the superiority of Europeans in one very limited way, but superior as breeders carried a lot of weight in Darwin's world, and in a sense, would serve as a justification for imperialism. For Darwin and his contemporaries, breeding was as much a symbol of general superiority as other symbols of imperialism. That the British were a superior race is one unmistakable message of *Origin's* first chapter, and it is strongly hinted that evolution has accomplished this.

In 1861, a flagpole flying the Union Jack was made from a Douglas fir from British Columbia. It was set up in Britain, towering over the surrounding trees, nearly twice their height. "Sir William Hooker [father of Joseph] pronounced it admirably calculated to impress on the public the 'size and bulk of the timber trees of one of our own colonies, British Columbia'" (Drayton, 207). Quinine was another such symbol. It was not only useful in defeating malaria but also served as "a symbol of the power of science to put nature on the side of imperialism" (208). Darwin himself wrote a letter in 1862 to the Superintendent of the Ceylon Botanic Garden to suggest a method for improving the tree from which quinine was obtained (209). It was, he said, "so important for mankind" (CCD 10.254). Breeding better plants and animals of all kinds was a major symbol of the purpose of imperialism, and would be used by Darwin as a model for how natural selection works. It is not an accident that explicit references to British imperialism appear in the opening chapter of *The Origin of Species*.

In 1649, Walter Blith published *The English Improver*, which he improved into *The English Improver Improved* in 1652 (and yes, this too can be found at hathitrust.org). (I owe my awareness of Blith to Drayton, 52.) A declamation on the cover promises "the Improveableness of all Lands: Some to be under a double and Treble others under a Five or Six Fould. And many under a Tennfould, yea some under a Twenty-fould Improvement." There was a long tradition before Darwin celebrating English ability to breed and improve. Blith even drew a connection between God's (or nature's) selection and artificial selection. "So God was the Originall, and first Husbandman, the paterne [pattern] of all Husbandry ... And having given man such a Paterne both for precept and president [precedent?] for his encouragement ... *Adam* [after expulsion from the Garden] is sent forth to till the Earth, and improve it" (Blith, pdf 74-75; pp. 3-4 in Ch. I). God breeds species and man can copy that. Blith presented God or Nature as providing a model, a pattern, for the human activity of selecting and breeding---humans in effect copying Nature---though in truth Blith (likewise Darwin) was using human breeders as a model

to explain nature.

Take a long moment to think about that. Two hundred and ten years before Darwin's *Origin*, there was an author arguing in essence that natural selection and artificial selection are the same thing. Blith was strongly implying that species in nature are not fixed, but are constantly being modified and improved. The more subtle implication is that nature will be a model and justification for imperialism---for improving the whole earth. Blith is actually not all that subtle about it. He laments that the English are not experienced enough in colonization: "... for though a new world [America] has been of late discovered, yet there is not an occupation or trade of finding them, nor are our English people very active in searching after them" (pdf 35). My point here is that as an early advocate for more imperialism, it's interesting that Blith felt a need to make nature complicit in the imperialist scheme.

Located in the interstices of *Origin's* Chapter I is a clear story of European man breeding his way to success and domination, while the savages' feeble efforts would lead them to languish---that is, if they survived at all. Unconscious selecting is a less improved form of breeding, and those who engage in it are, according to the dictates of natural selection, destined for extinction. This implicit message in *Origin*---natural selection has bred the British to be better breeders than savages---would have been acceptable to most of Darwin's fellow Britons, and even Hooker would probably have gone along with this.

~ 3 ~

The sub-title of *The Origin of Species* would always remain *the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. I previously quoted in Chapter 5 Richard Dawkins who regards the sub-title as "ill-chosen and unfortunate" (*Greatest Show*, 62n), as if Darwin did not really mean it. Tim Flannery calls it "an unfortunate subtitle", as if it were somehow a mere slip, and comments, "... only upon reading the entire book would one discover that the 'favoured races' did not explicitly include the British ruling class" (*Here on Earth*, 12-13). That is a completely unjustified remark. As we have seen, that glaring bit of nationalist and colonialist pride in the superior power of British organic productions over those of Australia and New Zealand would have been obvious, especially to British readers. The superiority of English breeding, boldly proclaimed in Chapter I, would have been another point of pride. When are people going to get that Darwin deliberately, intentionally, thoughtfully chose those words? *The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. There are even stronger imperialist hints in *Origin*, some quite as obvious as this one; they would have been unmistakable to a

contemporary British audience.

Flannery says that in his Australian childhood, "I was also taught that our continent was inhabited by inferior animals ... [and] in a remarkable parallel with our Aborigines, unable to cope with competition from introduced sheep, cattle and foxes" (*Future Eaters*, 13). He is hesitant, however, to remind everyone that Darwin made a contribution to this thinking. Flannery's books are quite good and he does acknowledge that Darwin embraced 'survival of the fittest' (*Here*, 13) and that Alfred Wallace was more committed to a holistic idea of evolution, but like everyone else, he feels a need to spin parts of Darwin in a more positive way and hide some of his more egregious notions.

Darwinian scholars have a tendency to dream up a more perfect Darwin than actually existed. As noted above, they use the younger Darwin to do this and they also miss that *The Origin of Species* is a schizophrenic book, as previously noted. Half the book is a supremely well-argued book, assembling a large array of evidence to prove a theory (or two theories, common descent and natural selection, there being more evidence for the former than the latter). The other half is just as supremely subjective, injecting the sensibilities of a European colonialist into nature. Too many scholars have pretended that this second side of Darwin either never existed or can be set aside as negligible.

There are many places in *Origin* where Darwin was telling us what he thought a superior, or favored, race was. It is not just there in the sub-title or in that comment on the higher nature of British organic productions. Darwin repeatedly uses words like colonists, colonise, intrude, and invade to describe the activities of species. What would a British reader think when he or she saw these expressions appear over and over again in *Origin*? Darwin never qualifies the use of any of these terms by saying something like 'I am of course speaking metaphorically.'

Any British imperialist would have been happy to read in the next to last paragraph of *Origin* Darwin's "prophetic glance into futurity ... it will be the common and *widely-spread species, belonging to the larger and dominant groups, which will ultimately prevail and procreate new and dominant species*" (535; emphases added; he made the same point earlier on 390, 472). This isn't even highly coded language. It is a near-perfect formula to justify British imperialism, yet framed as an objective, scientific statement. Or how about this statement from *Origin* (239): "Hence, the inhabitants of one country, generally the smaller one, will often yield, as we see they do yield, to the inhabitants of another and generally larger country." So if we take over other, smaller countries, it's only natural.

Just prior to stating the above formula (on 535), Darwin tells us that most species become extinct at some point and leave no descendants. He also makes this point earlier in the book: "... of the species living at any one period, extremely few will transmit descendants to a remote futurity" (156). Only the widely ranging species have a better chance to leave future descendants. So if you want to leave descendants and create a mark, a memory, on posterity, you had better make an effort to supplant smaller, weaker groups. If you were not already inspired to be an imperialist, that idea would do it. Races supplanting and prevailing over other races (supplanting smaller and feebler groups, as he says on 472 of *Origin*) was on Darwin's mind from the beginning. Imperialism would have proceeded apace with or without Darwin, but reading Darwin could make you feel more comfortable with it (just in case you were having any doubts). And, as we have seen, there were plenty of humanitarians who were trying to instill doubt.

He also explains something important about what he means by ranging widely: "... we should never forget that to range widely implies not only the power of crossing barriers, but the more important power of *being victorious in distant lands in the struggle for life with foreign associates*" (447; emphasis added). If you don't hear *Hail Britannia* in that, that is only because you don't hail from that era. Then there is this: "As natural selection acts by competition ... we need feel no surprise at the inhabitants of any one country, although ... specially created and adapted for that country, being beaten and supplanted by the naturalised productions from another land" (517-18). So no matter how well adapted and fitted a species is in its own land, it is in a sense only natural if a species from a distant land overcomes it. It would be extraordinary if Darwin were clueless about the human implications of all these remarks. As we saw, he had already said as much in Notebook E 65, "man is not an *intruder*" (his emphasis); he has a natural right to invade other territories.

And what happens when two dominant groups, who developed in regions isolated from each other, come into contact? "... whenever their inhabitants [from the two isolated regions] met, the battle would be prolonged and severe ... But in the course of time, the forms dominant in the highest degree, wherever produced, would tend everywhere to prevail. As they prevailed, they would cause the extinction of other and inferior forms ..." (*Origin*, 364-65). Again, the application of this to British imperialistic efforts would be recognizable to Darwin's readers. Flannery has no grounds whatsoever for making his remark that Darwin's "'favoured races' did not explicitly include the British ruling class" (*Here on Earth*, 12-13). It could be argued, though impossible to conclusively prove, that all these comments in *Origin* were modeled on British colonial activity. What is obvious, and hence provable, is

that these comments so closely parallel imperialism. Coincidence? I think not.

The lesson to be drawn from *Origin* is that if you want to survive as a species for many generations to come, then the goal is to become common and widely spread---a perfect justification for colonialism, as I have said. Indeed, Darwin does draw such a conclusion in Chapter IV. "I conclude, looking to the future, that for terrestrial productions a large continental area ... will be the most favourable for the production of many new forms of life, likely to endure long and to spread widely" (134). The message is to spread out and find large areas of land to do it in. Then a little further on: "... it is the common species which afford the greatest number of recorded varieties ...Hence, rare species ... will consequently be beaten in the race for life by the modified descendants of the commoner species ... [they] will become rarer and rarer, and finally extinct" (137). In Darwin's world, the dominant become more dominant and the feeble feebler still (e.g., *Origin*, 155). It is not a good thing to be a rare, small culture. It is almost a sin in Darwin's eyes. To survive you must become numerous, common, and spread out. To those who have more will be given, and to those who have not or have little, even what little they have will be taken away and they will be left to disappear.

Whether or not it can be proven that Darwin intended these comments about 'widely-spread species' and 'dominant forms' to have implications for British imperialism, this much can be said: If Darwin wrote any of these lines without realizing that they served nicely to reinforce imperialism, then he was either the densest man who ever lived or the most self-deceptive. If you are wondering how Darwin could think of European colonialism as natural (and I will always wonder about this, I don't think anything could ever adequately explain how he could make such a mistake), you have to consider that he had already naturalized it in *The Origin of Species* and described it there, as illustrated by the above quotes and this one (which follows hard upon the last quote I gave): "... each new variety or species, during the progress of its formation, will generally press hardest on its nearest kindred, and tend to exterminate them" (*Origin*, 137). It does not matter if we are all human beings; we will exterminate those closely related to us.

Keep in mind that variety and species are just other ways of talking about human races (in *Descent*, 204, 210, he would call human groups sub-species, but realized that the term 'races' would probably prevail). It is natural, says Darwin, for one group to exterminate a closely related group. Did human colonization and his own experience of it in his round the world trip from 1831 to 1836 influence the way he described nature in *Origin*? I don't know if that is provable beyond all reasonable doubt, but it is highly plausible.

Consider the signs for this. First, there are all the words he used in *Origin*

taken straight from his imperialistic culture---colonise, colonists, invade, improve, etc. Thus: "an intruder from the waters of a foreign country, would have a better chance of seizing on a place, than in the case of terrestrial colonists" (*Origin*, 429) and further on in the same chapter he argues that better than the idea of independent creation is "the view of colonisation from the nearest and readiest source, together with the subsequent modification and better adaptation of the colonists to their new homes" (448).

Second are all the sentences I have just quoted. One might have expected that when Darwin turned his attention to human beings in *Descent*, the colonial influence should have become more obvious. But as I will discuss in Chapter 10, Darwin hid the horrors of colonialism in *Descent* and resorted to euphemisms (such as come into contact and changed conditions of life for what could more honestly be called invasion and dispossession). In *Origin*, because he was ostensibly writing about non-human nature, he could express his colonial leanings more openly. He is more poignant about the disappearance of groups (such as savages) in *Origin* (where he is supposedly not talking about human beings) than he is in *Descent*: "Small and broken groups and sub-groups will finally tend to disappear" (*Origin*, 155). What a melancholy summation of much of human history that is. Broken groups, a broken people, destined to be eliminated. Darwin had already presaged in *Origin* what he believed would be the fate of native peoples throughout the world. But he would never say it in such stark language in *Descent*.

I would take the euphemisms in *Descent* combined with the bluntness of *Origin* to be another sign that what Darwin so clearly avoids being honest about in *Descent* means something was on his mind and that something had to come out somewhere, so why not in his first book on natural selection? If so (and I don't claim to be absolutely sure about this), it is ironic that Darwin's experience of colonialism in his long voyage influenced the expressions he used when he wrote about nature in *Origin*, but had the opposite effect of covering up when he more directly addressed the subject of humankind in *Descent*.

Gopnik tries to convince us that 'survival of the fittest' was too politically loaded a term for Darwin (Gopnik, 105), completely ignoring the fact that Darwin added it to the fifth edition of *Origin* and used it a couple of times in *Descent* (some of his most honest moments there) and that his own sub-title for *Origin* said essentially the same thing (it was that sub-title that inspired Spencer to coin the infamous term in 1864; see his *Principles of Biology*, 1.444-45; in later additions, he added a note here to indicate that this is where he introduced the term). 'Favoured races' raises political specters and was as political as 'survival of the fittest', though Gopnik might be eager to deny it.

(Oh, I forgot. Gopnik never mentions the sub-title of *Origin*.) And all those words about widely spread species and dominant forms and extermination do not bear political currency? (Oh, I forgot. Gopnik never quotes these remarks.) You can deny anything if you quote selectively.

This is what I mean by paying close attention to the evidence. So much of what writers say about Darwin is just plain wrong. They have this idealized image of Darwin in their heads. They write about their fantasy, not about the real Darwin. Darwin the great man (as Flannery and others call him) is a misdirection. I don't mind anyone singling out particular things about Darwin that are great, but the general epithet misdirects us away from the evidence that Darwinists believe must never be seen---that they themselves do not want to see. Like New Testament scholars on Jesus, Darwinists have adopted this motto about Darwin: The less we see, the more we know.

I suppose one could say that this emphasis on which races will dominate and prevail is another contradiction to his science which should have focused on individuals. Why did he do it? Part of the answer is not hard to find. It lies in what Agnes Arber said about being prisoners of the intellectual climate handed down from generation to generation. Darwin was not out to challenge everything. In *The Origin of Species*, he was challenging (as had Chambers) primarily one conservative idea: That there was no plan to creation (i.e., no knowable plan), that God created each individual and species purely as an act of arbitrary will with no rhyme or reason, or according to a reason knowable only to him. (For example, why are the bones in the wings of a bat and in the human hand so similar? Well, he just did it that way, or he did it according to a mysterious plan that only he knows.) There is a knowable plan, said Darwin and other evolutionists, there is cause and effect, and we can see it in the theory of a common descent from one progenitor, with (as Darwin's addition) modifications due to natural selection. Darwin was right that this theory explains so much. He never claimed it explained everything, though he struggled mightily to make it come as close as he could.

Darwin accepted much more from tradition than he rejected. He accepted the system of classification as devised by naturalists over the centuries. He could now reveal the hidden spring (the hidden bond everyone had unconsciously been seeking, as he frequently said in one way or another in *Origin*, e.g., 457, 463, 469, 477, 493), but he never disagreed with ordering and ranking. (Interestingly, at one point, he admits that "it is hardly possible to define clearly what is meant by the organisation [of the parts of an organic being] being higher or lower" and then adds, as an example, that we all agree that the butterfly is higher than the caterpillar, *Origin*, 485, even though we don't know how to define that.) It was the common view that no one disagreed

with. So too with the category of race and notions of superior and inferior. This was how groups of human beings were classified. Darwin saw no reason to dispute it. He was trapped. As Agnes Arber put it, "the general intellectual atmosphere of any given moment has an effect ... which is compulsive to a humiliating degree" (Arber, 7). Darwin was not out to revolutionize the categories of humankind. He made that very clear in *The Origin of Species*.

~ 4 ~

I finally found two authors who would agree with my point that Darwin provided many clues about human beings in *Origin*. One is Tony Barta in his insightful essay, "Mr Darwin's Shooters: On Natural Selection and the Naturalizing of Genocide" (2005). "It is not the case, as is generally assumed, that humans and human history entered his explanations as a kind of afterthought; they were there from the beginning, based on indelible early experience. The practices of colonialism that Darwin encountered as a young man were embedded in the vocabulary of his most influential work and its reception" (119). Even more devastatingly, Barta writes, "Before Darwin understood species, he understood genocide" (117).

The other author is Patrick Brantlinger, whom I have referred to several times, in *Dark Vanishings*. Even though he takes the usual point of view in a note, when he mentions "*Origin's* blank about humans" (219 n1), in the main text he gets it right: "... *The Origin of Species* has more to say about 'man,' human races, and the extinction of both species and races than has always been recognized" (169). Brantlinger does not go over all the evidence I have reviewed, but he does offer two pieces in support. One is that Darwin used concepts and terminology from human economics to describe nature, particularly from Malthus (whose theory was about human beings). And while Brantlinger does not bring up all the language in *Origin* drawn from colonialism, he does pick one term out and quite sensibly focuses on 'exterminated'. As he says, "Darwin often uses this term even when another, more neutral term such as *supplanted* or *superseded* would be more accurate" (ibid.). He sums it up well: "whether consciously or not, Darwin often applies the active, violent rhetoric of the discourse about racial extinction [of human beings] to processes that are long-term and nonviolent" (170). (I should note that Darwin occasionally uses the two terms together; e.g., "supplant and exterminate," 76; or "supplant and destroy," 155. Yet he is constantly humanizing these processes, as when he says on 155, "One large group will slowly conquer another large group ..." After "supplant and destroy," he mentions, "Small and broken groups and sub-groups will finally tend to disappear.")

I would love to have ended this meditation on the human aspect of *Origin* with Brantlinger's last quote, but his phrase "whether consciously or not" prompts further reflection. When investigating the problem of prejudice in scholarship and science (my main interest having long been New Testament studies), it is a common defense against anyone who identifies biases in the field to argue like this: You are being oversensitive and even if you are right, the alleged offenders did not mean it; they did not intend it; if any racism is found in their work, it was entirely *unconscious and unintentional* on their part, and therefore, we cannot really blame them; such bias will gradually disappear over the generations. (For a similar experience of this kind of response to bringing attention to prejudice in scholarship, see Amy-Jill Levine, *Misunderstood Jew*, 221.)

I have seen this defense asserted or hinted at time and time again. So many academics (Brantlinger excepted) seem to feel that *unconscious* racism is an excellent defense. I strongly disagree. Unintentional prejudice, if that is what it really is, makes the problem so much worse. It means unconscious forces are at work and that is the hardest kind of thing to expose and fix. Most of us (racist or not) are extremely resistant to acknowledging that we are controlled or influenced by unconscious factors greater than ourselves. It would be so much easier if scientists and scholars of all stripes deliberately infused their work with racist assumptions. The outrage over this would alone go a long way towards correction and healing. But if it is happening unconsciously, it may never be resolved. The fangs are in too deep. Unconscious racism is a shape shifter and has many ways of screwing up good, objective scholarship. Good luck to anyone who takes it on. Good miracle is more likely what is needed.

As for a definition of racism, I offered one in §1 of Chapter 3 where I explained that it is a belief that human races are disconnected. It can also be understood loosely as making allegations of the inferiority of other peoples. If I had to expand on that, I would say that racism, in any day and age, is a combination of the denial of political, voting, and other civil rights, along with assertions of intellectual, moral, and cultural inferiority. Certainly these things went on in the 19th century. Racism is intimately connected with imperialism which was always about more than just invading other countries and stealing land, resources, and labor. Imperialism was a whole system of thought in which *legal and scientific fictions* were invented to make the subjugation of natives seem moral and natural.

But expanding on the meaning of racism is not my point. Whatever the degree of simplicity or complication one sees in racism, there is a clarification that needs to be made. Whereas racism is usually understood as a set of

beliefs, I have to insist that racism is a set of actions, not beliefs. In general (not in every case), racists do not believe that certain other peoples are disconnected or inferior. They know very well that is not true, however much they declare that they believe this. When a racist says "You are inferior"---or even more effectively, "They are inferior," as when people hear themselves constantly spoken of in the third person, it is more unnerving---the racist is not making a statement of belief. He is rather performing an action which has the intended consequence of making targeted people feel inferior. And when people feel inferior, they will start acting inferior.

The same is true for that fundamental feature of racism, the supposed belief in disconnections between the peoples of the earth. The statement of this belief is really an action intending to create disconnections by making each people feel they are distant from other peoples.

I say 'intending' and 'intended consequence' even if it is a case of unconsciously intended. It's like a sport. Not every move an athlete makes is consciously calculated. Most of it is not. But even the unconsciously performed acts are part of a consciously orchestrated effort to reach a goal, to achieve a result, that is very much intended. Racists are the same. Every one of their actions, especially verbal pronouncements, is part of a conscious program of belittlement, domination, and destruction of other cultures. The statement 'They are inferior' plays its role in that, whether consciously or unconsciously formulated as such an action. The unconscious pieces are just as much a part of the overall conscious plan as anything else racists do. You could call it a trained unconsciousness, just as in sports.

To be blunt: I don't buy the idea (and I am making an extreme effort to be polite in calling it an idea) that 19th century scientists, like Darwin, and assorted intellectuals, literary figures, politicians, and community leaders, *believed* that various darker races and native peoples were inferior and becoming extinct. Their constantly reiterated "belief" was really an *action* that was intended or designed (consciously or not) to have a demoralizing effect on these peoples and facilitate their extinction. (I think the same was true of their racism towards Jews.) It was part of a campaign of subjugation and war. As a native, you cannot hear over and over that your people are fast disappearing, soon to be no more, a historical, dead artifact, without feeling ill, lost, and drained of the spirit to fight back. (Such was the intended effect for Jews too.)

I do not believe that oppressors have no awareness of the effect of their talk. If a people become listless enough, the colonizers can then claim they exterminated themselves. I do not mean to imply that *talk* of extinction is a knockout blow. It is not. A people can recover from this and fight back to

pride and victory. (For comparable points about Jews, see Susan Shapiro's revealing essay, "The Uncanny Jew", which discusses the ways 19th century writers treated the Jews as walking corpses, as a people who were already dead but did not know it yet. It is easier to commit murder if you are convinced the victims have been dead for a while. Jews, of course, maintained a lively culture, despite efforts to demoralize them. For examples of how modern-day Tasmanian natives have fought back, see Lyndall Ryan's *Tasmanian Aborigines*.)

Proving that discourse about extinction and inferiority is ultimately an action, not a belief, may be difficult. At the moment of writing this, I have no idea if I will discover enough evidence to establish it. It is as much a mystery to me as it is to you, dear reader. Only the further development of this book will tell, and for all I know, I may have to put it off to another book or leave it as a task for someone else to finish. In the meantime, it is a useful thought for setting in context any objections that scientists like Darwin were not consciously racist. Even if that response had some validity to it, it would be specious or worse because, as argued above, unconscious or unintended racism is far more serious, more deeply entrenched, than the conscious kind.

The entire matter can be approached from another angle. Racism as a system of beliefs is a misdirection and a very devious one at that. While we are misled into debating the truth or falsity of their so-called beliefs, we forget that these "beliefs" are not beliefs at all but very effective tools of power. That is the point of scientific racism. Racists don't believe in anything except power and control. Even if 'they are inferior' is completely false, demonstrably false, it still does a good job at making itself come true. The cleverness of the racist system is that they don't have to prove the truth of their statements. The mere accusation works devilish wonders.

Racists say 'they are inferior' not to tell us what they believe, even less to convince us of anything, but *to make it come true, and just saying it is all they usually need*. 'They are inferior' and 'they are doomed to extinction' are emotional battering rams that do their job (to achieve power by demoralizing the opposition) regardless of their objective truth, or actually their objective falsehood. When scientists like Darwin become obsessed with the extinction of "primitive" races, their obsession is pseudo-science because what they are really doing is emotionally battering the victims with their debate and the very terms of the debate. They are not out to discover whether or not certain groups are inferior and declining in number. They are out to make a dastardly idea come true. How's that for a thesis?

Thinking over all this made me aware of the significance of something I only recently learned. It is one piece of evidence for my thesis and I might as

well present it now. It is startling how scientists were so *eager* to proclaim the extinction of the Tasmanians and other peoples, and then "grieved" over the death of Truganini (or Trugernanna), the so-called last Tasmanian, in 1876. It is all the more startling considering that it never happened. The myth of the total elimination of Tasmanians (which I was taken in by for a long time) is one that scientists helped to create.

The story of this myth is a little complicated and not without controversy, but it is possible to outline its basic features. Most scholars today would agree that the forecasts of doom were basically wrong. The wide-scale extermination of all these races did not take place. Whether it happened to Tasmanians depends on how you define your terms. Russell McGregor points out that for most races for whom doom was anticipated, scientists did not have the demographic data to back up their predictions. "While the empirical evidence of imminent extinction was thin, so too the scientific pronouncements on how this process would be accomplished were notable more for their vagueness than for their precision" (McGregor, 51; he emphasizes their lack of data; see 17, 49-50). "[F]rom population decline to inevitable extinction required a long imaginative leap, with no detailed empirical evidence to bridge the gap" (50). It was a leap that Darwin was willing to take (declining numbers fascinated Darwin early on; "decrease in numbers or rarity seems to be the high-road to extinction;" 1844, 149-50).

In Van Diemen's Land or Tasmania, it is true that many tribes were eliminated. There were hundreds of tribes when Europeans first arrived. Only a handful were left by the mid-19th century. In that sense, extermination did take place. On the other hand, no one would deny that Aboriginal descent has continued in half-castes or mixed races. Estimates of the current population of descendants of Tasmanian Aborigines range from one to eight thousand (see Heartfield, 321 n18; Cove, 115, citing a 1975 census; also see Lyndall Ryan's extended discussion in Ch. 17 of *Tasmanian Aborigines*). McGregor argues that scientists of the time never denied mixed races would survive. They only predicted the disappearance of pure races (McGregor, 16, 53). Ryan states that even this they got wrong: "Truganini was not in fact the last 'full-blood', let alone the last of her people" (270). I do not have the expertise to form an opinion about who is right concerning this. At a bare minimum, we can say that even if present-day descendants are mixed with Europeans and other Australian Aborigines, Tasmanians have survived and inhabited some of the islands in one way or another.

It is also important to note that indigenous people do not see their history in the same way that Europeans do. In the case of the Tasmanians, they did not see themselves as a vanquished people so much as a free people who

surrendered and negotiated an agreement that gave them rights and a measure of justice, which they have continued to press for ever since they "disappeared" (both Ryan and Henry Reynolds, *Fate of a Free People*, are very good on this).

Extinction was something European scientists believed in, hoped for, relished, and lamented. *There was more wish fulfillment in it than objective analysis*. All things considered, the amount of extermination was greatly exaggerated. That the European expectation of this was higher than what actually occurred or than what could be justified by actual data does not speak well of European sensibilities or motives. They were bent on creating something, not predicting something. Henry Reynolds has written, "The ethnographers and social theorists needed Trugernanna, needed an extinction or two, to confirm their basic ideas ... If there was a struggle for survival, there had to be losers to make the story convincing" (*Fate*, 202). Almost no one realized that extermination was being promoted because they needed it to prove their thesis that 'survival of the fittest' was a valid idea. Whatever degree of extermination did take place was entirely the fault of Europe, which I will take up in Chapter 11. Only a relative handful saw extermination as an unqualified injustice. But this handful did exist and did try to get attention. We should remember that.

You can see the wishing in a casual comment tossed off by Lyell in his discussion of slavery in America which I referenced earlier. He observes that southern planters "envy the northern proprietor, who, now that the Indians have passed away, has the good fortune not to share his country with another race ..." (*Travels* 1.189; he then moves smoothly from this to the observation that the planters feel it is unjust to advocate emancipation of the slaves). First of all, the northern Indians had not entirely passed away (just think of the Mohawks in New York and the Mohegans in Connecticut). Commentators like Lyell were dreaming this extinction had taken place. Second, imagine calling genocide (fanciful or real) good fortune. I don't know whether Lyell was merely expressing the planters' conviction or he was also concurring (I think the latter was probably the case), but clearly some people held this view that the disappearance of one group to make room for another was a good thing. Recall that Darwin too could say (of the removal of the Tasmanians from their homeland) that a land "being free from a native population" was a "great advantage" (*Narrative*, 533). Only imperialist Europeans could think like this.

It would be tempting to say that there is one practical sense in which one could say the Tasmanians were exterminated. Their culture, way of life and language, was destroyed. But that is not quite true either. No one may live the

way their ancestors lived anymore, but some of the language has survived and there are memories of the life as well. Even in exile, the Tasmanians retained as much of their culture as they could (see Reynolds, *Fate*, Ch. 6). Maybe only bits and pieces of the culture have continued, but that is not total extermination. Sometimes I think that the reason so many westerners insisted physical and cultural extinction had taken place is the fear that if a living remnant had survived, they might somehow find a way to rebuild the culture--and demand economic justice and even claim rights to their ancestral lands. With the increase of people of mixed descent in Australia, "there was a growing realisation that the descendants of a dying race might continue to haunt a White Australia for generations" (McGregor, 134). Above all, no one wants non-western cultures to come back from the dead. That would be worse than being pursued by a ghost. Ghosts are melancholy, living people spell trouble. Extermination would remove the possibility of descendants laying claim to their ancestors' rights and land.

I don't believe Robert Chambers would ever have called genocide good fortune. I am pretty sure the very idea would have struck him with horror. It certainly struck Malthus as unthinkable, as we will see in the next chapter. Chambers was more fascinated by the potential extermination of Europeans than he was by what may happen to savages. If extinction is in some sense inevitable, it is inevitable for all races. "The present [European human] race, rude and impulsive as it is, is perhaps the best adapted to the present state of things in the world; but the external world goes through slow and gradual changes, which may leave it in time a much serener field of experience. There may then be occasion for a nobler type of humanity ..." (*Vestiges*, 276). That new type might be a "species superior to us in organization, purer in feeling, more powerful in device and act, and *who shall take a rule over us!*" (ibid.; emphasis added). Chambers does not single out the inferior races for the punishment of extinction. What fascinates him is that extinction will come for European Caucasians and that's great because who wouldn't love to be succeeded by something nobler than us.

Brantlinger mentions a number of reasons why the myth of extinction of native peoples became prevalent, one being that it was an outgrowth of pessimism over the idea that Aborigines could be improved (*Dark*, 122; citing the work of Russell McGregor; see, McGregor, 13, 18). Brantlinger also offers that scientists needed the usefulness of the myth to reinforce the belief that they were right about Aborigine inferiority and therefore more and more native groups would soon become extinct (130, citing an earlier book of Lyndall Ryan). One case of extinction meant more were coming. Ryan (in her revised book) quotes one scientist in 1904 who called Truganini a symbol of

"the failure of an inferior race to thrive in the presence of a civilized people" (*Tasmanian Aborigines*, 270). The myth would be particularly useful a century later when the (white) Tasmanian government denied special rights to Aboriginal Tasmanians on the grounds that you cannot grant rights to a people who no longer exist (see Cove, 123, and throughout his Ch. IV; but also see Ryan's book for how Tasmanian Aborigines have reversed this). It gives the appearance of such clever logic.

As for that pessimism over the possibility that Aborigines could be improved, Darwin *might* have reflected this as well as some impatience, when he wrote in his Notebook D 111, around September 1838, "How long will the wretched inhabitants of NW. Australia, go on blinking their eyes. without extermination, & change of structure." But I would not rely too heavily on this statement, as his full meaning is not very clear. (The immediately preceding paragraphs in this Notebook are missing. Also, 'blinking their eyes' refers to Aboriginal children blinking to keep flies off. See 1846 book by John Stokes, 1.99-100, for more on this blinking habit and knocking out their front teeth as another custom, which Darwin also mentions at D 112. Darwin could have been wondering about the possibility of exterminating the flies.) A less ambiguous sign of his pessimism might be his description of savages as "roasting his parent, naked, artless, not improving yet improvable" (Notebook C 79). That most savages were in fact not improving (from the European point of view), whatever they might have been capable of, seems to have carried great significance for Darwin.

What Darwin was dealing with in theory in his books was justified in practice in a number of different ways. Extinction may have become a fact of natural history for Europeans, but it had to be handled just right so that moral culpability would not stick to Europeans. I don't think they successfully kept the moral questions completely hidden---the humanitarians would not allow that---but they certainly tried.

This might seem like stating the obvious, but since it is so often avoided, it seems wise to explicitly point this out: There was a dream of racial purity inherent in the expectation of the extinction of those deemed to be lower races. If all the lower races in their pure form disappear, what is left? A pure white race and people of mixed color. The latter were a worrisome problem to European scientists and government officials. Some believed that half-castes were even more inferior than pure colored people and would die out too, and some believed the color in a half-caste could be bred out over the generations by constant intermarriage among themselves (with the occasional white man contributing his seed to a half-caste woman, but under no circumstances did anyone want to see unions between male half-breeds and white women). A

few thought mixed race descendants were the equal of whites and might even improve the race.

In Chapter XI of *The Last of the Tasmanians*, James Bonwick quotes a number of authors of his time who had a high opinion of half-castes, with one expressing the hope that a mixed race might help bring about a reconciliation between black and white (311). But Bonwick also admits that things did not go so well for half-castes. Pure white continued to be the ideal for most. "When it became apparent in the 1920s and 1930s that the part-Aboriginal population, contrary to expectations, was rapidly increasing, few white Australians applauded the dramatic demographic turnaround" (Reynolds, *Indelible*, 178). Most had hoped that extermination would mean only the purity of superior races would be left. They needed a belief in extermination to confirm their own sense of superiority.

The underlying hope in all these twists and turns was that one day only the white race will be left. There was no consistent agreement on how this would happen, except that all agreed on this: One piece of the program would be the immediate, or relatively quick, dying out of pure races of color. If all this seems excessively Nazi-like, even if a little less ruthlessly lethal, that's because it is.

The logic of total extermination is the logic of racism. It relentlessly marches to one conclusion. If racism does not always push for the end result of annihilation, that is due to lack of nerve and not any goodness of heart. This is also the logic of greed---the greed that demands total dispossession. If racism is one elephant in the room that scholars are reluctant to discuss, the other elephant no one is talking about is the pure avarice that operated. At the heart of any racism is a self-justifying greediness. Racism is never simply about declarations of inferiority and superiority. Something more is desired than mere theoretical beliefs. Racism is a quest to take everything from a people and that everything has to include their lives. Racism, as I have said, is primarily an action system, not a belief system.

The logic is inexorable and lethal. It can be broken down into many steps with greed as the driving motor: 1) we have the right to take everything from the natives (based on our superiority, and our simple ability to do so and get away with it, and also based on the fact that we can do more with the land and natural resources, thus bringing progress to the world which is a good thing); 2) being dispossessed of all they have, the natives are bound to feel depressed and not a little desperate; 3) we will deny them access to our courts for justice, not even allowing them to serve on juries or as legal witnesses; 4) consequently, we will have squeezed them into a corner where their only stab at justice is to occasionally retaliate with violence: 5) we have a right to

perfect safety and security; the killing of any white person is intolerable; 6) but as long as the natives are around, we will have to endure sporadic attacks, and that is unacceptable; 7) therefore, the only solution is to get rid of all the natives, to bring about their non-existence from where they can no longer threaten us (ghosts there may be, but ghosts are no real threat).

This was exactly the logic of Edward Curr's submission to the Aborigines Committee in Van Diemen's Land (not to be confused with the APS in London). Curr was the agent/manager for the Van Diemen's Land Company from the mid-1820s to the early 1840s. In that submission, he said, "The Crown sells us lands, and is therefore bound to make good our titles and possession against *previous* occupants and claimants" (quoted in Ian McFarlane's essay in Manne, 290; emphasis in original). He then argued that the government must either "submit to see the white inhabitants murdered one after another, or they must undertake a war of extermination," something he had previously advocated to the directors of his company (ibid.). In that earlier report to his directors (Feb. 1828), he said that "strife, once begun with any of these tribes, has never been terminated, nor will, according to present appearances, but by their extermination." What lies hidden in this last remark is that the strife was caused by European greed, so that it is greed which leads logically and inevitably to extermination.

Curr concluded his submission to the Committee by declaring that he did not advise extermination and did not condone bloodshed except in self-defense, but as McFarlane says "Curr also had rather a pro-active view of self-defence" (291). In an 1830 report to his directors, he expressed his regret that he had been unsuccessful in killing any Aborigines in an attack he had led: "although I feel a perfect loathing to the idea of shedding human blood and know no difference in that respect between white and black, yet I regret upon principle that I was not successful against them [i.e., in killing some of them]" (295). He goes on to say that killing them "would have done good, it would have alarmed the Natives ... made them keep aloof, given them a lesson they would long have remembered and really been the means of saving more of their lives eventually ..." Well, it would have saved lives on the road to complete elimination.

The same logic was succinctly expressed in various ways over and over again. In July 1837, the Australian *Perth Gazette* had this to say: "Our position is by no means a peculiar one; all newly inhabited countries have the same trying ordeal to go through. Why, it is the order of nature that, as civilization advances, savage nations *must* be exterminated sooner or later" (in Reynolds, *Indelible*, 94; emphasis in original). The unstated assumption or step, or almost unstated, is that we need to totally dispossess the natives:

"either the white inhabitants or the aborigines must obtain the mastery," as the editor also said, referring to the whites as "the new possessors of the soil." It's all there implicitly. An Australian frontiersman in an 1839 letter to the *Colonist* put it this way: It is "sheer nonsense to talk of apprehending them. You must either shoot a few of them by way of example or you must abandon the country altogether" (97). If "a few" was not a deliberate understatement, the author was fooling himself, but no one else, I suspect.

Not all the seven steps I listed above were consciously spelled out by Curr or anyone else. The first and the last were most prominent for Europeans. The rest were buried deep and out of sight. It does not really matter how many steps there were. What matters is the relentlessness and inevitability of the process. And it could all have been undone with one simple thought: Why not share the land? It was a thought no one had. It would have gotten in the way of their avarice, uh, I mean of course, their universal progress towards the elevation of mankind.

To be perfectly clear, I am saying that excessive greed is one of the causes of both extermination itself and the colonizers' obsessive belief in its inevitability. The desire to possess everything drove them to insist that absolutely nothing, not people or anything else, could stand in their way. The acquisitive instinct that never lets up can be fulfilled only if the disappearance of natives is fated to complete itself. As Napier said in 1835, "the system ... will end in war, and, consequently, in the extermination of a fine race of men" (147). He also frequently pointed out that national wealth was used to justify everything we do.

The logic of colonization is the logic of complete dispossession is the logic of greed is the logic of extermination. It has a number of steps as outlined above, but most of the steps are hidden from consciousness. There may not have been a conscious plan to orchestrate it all just so. But that could mean they were hiding their intentions from themselves. It doesn't mean the intentions and a corresponding plan weren't there unconsciously. For example, there may not have been a deliberately followed plan to go from step 2 to steps 3 and 4. The settlers may not have directly appealed to the government to disallow Aborigines as witnesses in court (step 3), but the government knew damn well what the white colonists wanted. The settlers would have regarded any attempt to give legal status or rights to the natives as detrimental to the interests of the colonizers. The government would have known this from the way white planters in Jamaica resisted any such efforts in 1831 to grant slaves the right to give testimony in court (Heuman, 83). Even before that, the British government was well aware of the long struggle (this is before the abolition of slavery was passed in 1833, becoming effective in

1834) of Jamaican free blacks and browns to attain rights such as serving as legal witnesses. The number of free coloreds in Jamaica had been growing for decades before emancipation. A petition for the ability to serve as witnesses and other rights was first circulated in 1793 in the Jamaican House of Assembly and was denied (Heuman, 23-24). In 1813, another petition was successful (28). More petitions for rights were presented in the years that followed. The free people of color did not attain full civil rights until 1830 (50).

Slaves and freed slaves were partly acculturated to British culture which was always a point raised in their favor when the free people of color demanded their rights. Their humanitarian supporters could argue that they would use their freedom well. For Aborigines who resisted the new culture and remained devoted to their own, it was far less likely that anyone was going to give them rights equal to British citizens. One very rare exception was the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand which actually had a clause that "imparts to them [the Maoris] all the Rights and Privileges of British Subjects" (see Appendix 2 in Orange, *Treaty*, for the full text), but that was more of a come-on to entice Maori chiefs to sign the treaty; it was never honored in practice.

One way or another, government officials knew that white Europeans did not favor any sort of equal legal status for dark-skinned natives. It did not have to be consciously spelled out. A kind of quiet, unannounced cooperation was practiced. In every culture, individuals and groups share assumptions, ideas, and values (for good and ill) and agree on how to carry them out without having to explicitly make known their intentions to each other. What they did in many of the colonies was something different from what the Nazis did. It was different, but no less horrifically genocidal. The Walrus is no less genocidal than the Carpenter in Lewis Carroll's poem. Excessive analysis and ranking of where each act belongs on the genocide scale would probably be offensive to the victims, if they could come back to speak to us. Can't we recognize viciousness when it happens? Do we have to make it into a legal game of convict or acquit, based on whether conscious intention was present? (In Ch. 11, I will return to this debate about the meaning of genocide and whether intention needs to be explicitly present.)

Some precision is called for in assessing blame, that I will certainly grant, but I cannot accept the idea that Nazi genocide is the only kind. Too many people think that anything less than Nazi calculation and organization of murder cannot be genocide. The consequence of using a standard like that is to blind us to genocides that are less organized, less designed, less deliberately schemed, but just as malicious and full of that special animus

towards a people. The lesson of history may be this: If you can be vicious in quieter ways and submerge your intentions, you can get away with it; even in the subsequent judgment of historians, you can continue to wrap yourself in innocence and the insistence that this is the natural evolution of mankind, not genocide, and thus, future historians will absolve you.

All these steps can be condensed into one principle as enunciated by Darwin: "All the aborigines have been removed ... so that Van Diemen's Land enjoys the great advantage of being free from a native population" (*Narrative*, 533). Totally free of the natives is the very essence of greed and the feeling of entitlement. Or, as he put it more blatantly in his *Beagle Diary* (181): "If this warfare is successful, that is if all the Indians are butchered, a grand extent of country will be gained for the production of cattle: & the vallies of the R. Negro, Colorado, Sauce [rivers] will be most productive in corn." We need it all, we are entitled to it all---which means we have to get rid of them all. Darwin was following the same logic (of greed, dispossession, extermination) that everyone else was following.

In *Origin*, the same thing is expressed in those statements that the organic productions of Great Britain are higher than those of New Zealand. It is clear that he means *all* such life forms, as he says "we may doubt, if all the productions of New Zealand were set free in Great Britain, whether any considerable number ..." could compete with "our native plants and animals" (376). How does a handful of known instances translate into all or almost all? Perhaps more than a few New Zealand forms could outcompete British forms. Why is Darwin so sure on the basis of very little evidence that all or most of Britain's productions would be so utterly dominant? (Never forget that this is competition to the death; on 375, Darwin says that "if all the animals and plants of Great Britain were set free in New Zealand," it would lead to the extermination of many of the New Zealand forms; here he does not say all organic productions in New Zealand, though I don't think he meant much less than all.) I see this greed too in *Origin* where Darwin gives us his belief that these laws of nature (which just so happen to be beneficial to Europeans) hold true throughout all time and all the universe (83, 454). There will be no sharing of land, or the universe or time, in Darwin's vision. In this, he was a perfect representative of his time and culture.

It needs to be said that none of this had anything to do with natural selection, though Darwin thought it did, even if you believe that survival is at the bottom of this form of evolutionary change. This was purely about greed and greed has nothing to do with survival. Greed is about getting much more than you need to survive. "I'm not just going to beat you, I'm going to totally destroy you" goes beyond natural selection, though not as Darwin interpreted

it.

Hoping for extermination may also have been a result of the greediness to possess all the memories. If we get rid of everyone, then no one will be around to challenge our memories of these events. Equally important, there will be no one around in the future to make a claim for rights to ancestral lands. Just as there is no such thing as a perfect crime, there is no such thing as perfect extermination of all memories. I believe they were very aware of that. Should they have happened to succeed in eliminating an entire tribe or people, there was always the possibility that sympathetic observers within the aggressive nation would have recorded some of the memories of the indigenous people. These sympathizers will be ostracized, discredited, and abused in many ways, but their information will linger. And if there is no perfect extermination of a people, then descendants may kick up a fuss about what their ancestors lost. The need of the settlers to convince themselves that extermination was inevitable would help relieve any residue anxiety that one day descendants might reclaim the land. (In Chapter 11, §4, I will discuss in detail John Locke's opinion in his 1690 *Second Treatise of Government* that descendants whose ancestors have been unjustly deprived of their land never lose their right to it. If no human court will hear them, they may appeal to heaven and keep it up until justice is theirs. So said Locke. Locke still makes people anxious.)

There is another slant to this business about memories. Extermination of a people will also mean we won't have to listen to their voices anymore. If they are exterminated, so are their stories. One of the dangers of listening to stories is that we will become very sympathetic to their point of view, and maybe we will even become like them. In a certain sense, a natural form of amalgamation is when two groups of people listen to each other and gradually come to resemble each other. What prompted me to add this paragraph and the next was hearing a report on NPR about an experiment demonstrating that when people listen closely to a story, close enough to remember many details accurately, parts of their brain come to mirror parts of the brain of the storyteller, but then, I think many of us instinctively suspected something like this was the case. Ever since my teenage years or possibly early twenties, I have noticed that every time I come out of a movie theater, the world looks and feels like the movie I've just seen---dark and dangerous, or happy-go-lucky, or people looking like they're about to sing and dance their way across the street. I have taken on the spirit of the characters in the film.

It is so much harder to take everything from a people if you start to feel their situation. It would be like stealing from yourself. The fear of becoming like the Other sets up a useful block to those simpatico feelings. If the survival

of a native people means that it is inevitable we will become more like them because they are just too good at telling their stories, then we can avoid that by making it inevitable that they disappear. One inevitability counters the other. And any guilt about what is being done to the Other will be reduced as long as they remain completely Other which will happen if they are all eliminated. It's hard to sympathize with ghosts. It's a perfect vicious circle of reasoning. James Stephen, under-secretary in the Colonial Office (1836-47), glimpsed something like this when he suggested that the "hatred with which the white man regards the Black" resulted partly "from the consciousness of having done them great wrongs and from the desire to escape this painful reproach by laying the blame on the injured party" (in Reynolds, *Indelible*, 90)---both laying blame and making their demise inevitable will keep them more distant from us. (Stephen accepted their inevitable destruction at the hands of white colonists; he deplored it, but said, "I can imagine no law effective enough to avoid this result;" *ibid.*, 89.) It is terribly ironic that one way to escape this guilt is by escalating one's actions to an even more guilty conduct, that is, getting rid of them all so we don't have to listen to them, to their stories, or our conscience. The extreme action of extermination enhances complete forgetting and blamelessness.

An outsider voice sympathetic to Aboriginal stories, which was suppressed for the longest time, can be found in the journals of George A. Robinson, kept from 1829 to 1839. They have been an invaluable resource of what happened to the Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land, but were not published until 1966 with a second volume in 1987! Thanks to N.J.B. Plomley. This is an incredibly fascinating period of history, but its lateness in publication is an indication of how little interest there was in this and how much desire and greed there was to suppress the counter-memories.

While no one considered sharing the land, one potential solution some people offered was that European and native races should be amalgamated. It was more talk than anything else. No one took it very seriously. I think it was offered more to appease the natives and make them think British intentions were good. In New Zealand, the amalgamation of races was talked about a lot as if it were a great experiment in racial relations (see Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*; and Alan Ward, *A Show of Justice*). Herman Merivale, a professor at Oxford and later appointed to a position in the Colonial Office in 1847, proposed it as the only solution that could save native lives. Merivale was one of the good guys, relatively speaking. He was an imperialist, believing in the civilizing mission of the British empire, but aghast at the brutality often practiced. From 1839 to 1841, he gave a series of lectures on colonization, published in 1842 and republished in 1861. Much of his

criticism was delivered in Lecture XVIII (2.150-82). He was a humanitarian who blasted Europe for its murderous pursuit of colonization, for its "ferocity and treachery" (2.150). But he too regarded what he called the "Euthanasia of savage communities" (2.181) as inevitable, made so by the irresistible, "encroaching tide of European population" (2.176; there is that metaphor again of Europeans as a tide, a current, an impersonal force of nature that cannot be resisted and for which no one can be held responsible). It is to Merivale and Georg Gerland, writing in 1868, that I now turn.

~ 5 ~

As Merivale saw it, there were only three possibilities for Aborigines: 1) extermination, 2) civilizing them, partially or completely, but insulating them from the main body of Europeans, or 3) "Their amalgamation with the colonists" (2.179). The second alternative was made impossible by the continual "advance of the European population" (2.180). In practice the choices were reduced to "native races must in every instance either perish, or be amalgamated with the general population of their country" (*ibid.*). It is interesting that he could refer to Europeans as the general population, an indication of how much they had taken over in everyone's minds. Amalgamation for Merivale included full citizenship with full rights and most likely plenty of intermarriage (2.179, 201). It was a dream and a quite limited one at that, which Merivale acknowledged as appearing "somewhat wild and chimerical" (2.181). Merivale, like others, was well aware that racism which he referred to as "that mutual repulsion which arises merely out of prejudices of colour ..." (2.201) would be a great obstacle. (Langfield Ward also observed in 1874, "No colonists have exhibited a greater repugnance than ours, to mingling freely with aborigines;" see Ward, 130.)

Most interesting to me is Merivale's assumption that the "Euthanasia of savage communities" was inevitable (again, he meant their cultures, not the individuals of these communities). The question was what was the kindest way to carry it out. Most 19th century humanitarians wanted to save lives, not cultures. They wanted to give the natives the best Europe had to offer and save them from the worst. They wanted the natives to go on living but in a whole new civilization. The inferiority of savage cultures was never doubted.

One of the most intriguing parts of Merivale's lectures is where he refers several times to Darwin (this is almost twenty years before *Origin*). In Lecture XIX (2.183-217), Merivale argues that the extermination of natives is *not inevitable*, contrary to what so many of his contemporaries, including the young Darwin, believed. All along Merivale has been proposing that natives do not have to perish under the onslaught of European colonialism; they can

learn to take to western civilization and become amalgamated with white people. Now he asks if this dream of amicable relations is a utopian dream, "Let us hear what an objector might urge against [these] views ..." (2.202). For starters, objectors would point out that civilizing natives has long been an ineffectual dream. "It has been a task always beginning, and never advancing" (ibid.). All such attempts have failed.

I have to stress that what Merivale is presenting for about three or four pages (2.202-05) is not his own beliefs but the views of his opponents. I emphasize this because I have come across two scholars, whom I respect, who have misunderstood Merivale's intentions here. They have attributed these ideas to him, when actually they are those of the opposition. He is trying out their ideas for a few pages to see what, if anything, they amount to.

Three particularly notable points (all on 2.203) made by these objectors are: 1) "All experience shows that the savage is irreclaimable"; 2) "the feebler race must yield to the stronger; the white is destined to extirpate the savage"; and 3) besides violence, destruction of food sources, the introduction of alcohol, and disease as causes of the disappearance of natives, "there are deeper and more mysterious causes at work: the mere contact of Europeans is fatal to him in some unknown manner." For this last point, he cites Darwin (from his published journal) and Mr. Poeppig, a German naturalist, in support (2.204-05; in German, the naturalist's name is spelled Pöppig, whom Gerland will also refer to). Merivale challenges all three statements. Again, this is about twenty years prior to *The Origin of Species*.

The second idea, even more than the last, is so Darwinian. One could slip these words about the feebler race and extirpating savages almost anywhere into Darwin's writings and they would not be out of place. Darwin would give us: "dominant groups ... supplant many smaller and feebler groups" (*Origin*, 472); "let the strongest live and the weakest die" (279); and "At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilised races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace, the savage races throughout the world" (*Descent*, 183). I have quoted these statements before. As should be obvious from the preceding chapter, many more examples could be given. The fact that Merivale could bring this up two decades ahead of *Origin* is another reminder of how prevalent such ideas were in Darwin's time. Darwin was attempting to give scientific underpinning to concepts of domination and extermination, but he wasn't delivering any ideas or conclusions to his readers that they weren't already familiar with.

The younger Darwin made the same point in the first published edition (1839) of his journal, in *Narrative* (520), so it is not surprising that Merivale would quote from it (2.204-05). From scattered references to Darwin (six

times in this lecture), it is clear that Merivale has a high opinion of this "philosophical traveller" (2.204). But this passage from *Narrative* he does not find appealing. He quotes a longer portion, but in part this is where Darwin says, "Besides these several evident causes of destruction, there appears to be some more mysterious agency generally at work. Wherever the European has trod, death seems to pursue the aboriginal ... The varieties of man seem to act on each other; in the same way as different species of animals---the stronger always extirpating the weaker. It was melancholy at New Zealand to hear the fine energetic natives saying, they knew the land was doomed to pass from their children." Merivale considers Darwin one of the objectors to his more hopeful views.

This is where Merivale quotes the German naturalist Poeppig who also believed that European civilization itself, without any help from war, epidemics, or alcohol, was a mysterious "poisonous breath" to the dark races. Merivale refers to this idea, somewhat derisively, I think, as "the notion of a noxious influence of race upon race" (2.209). It should be noted that Darwin never entirely gave up the idea of mysterious causes. In *Descent* (212), he would write, "It further appears, mysterious as is the fact that the first meeting of distinct and separated people generates disease ..." and in a note to this sentence (n34), he approvingly quotes Poeppig's remark about civilization's poisonous breath to savages.

Just to show how prevalent this idea was at the time, the 1837 *Report of the House of Commons Select Committee on Aborigines* also brings it up, even though it had spelled out some of the known causes of destruction of Aborigines, such as violence committed by convicts, free settlers, and the military, and not respecting the territorial rights of the natives. The *Report* nonetheless feels compelled to add, "but it is not to violence only that their decrease is ascribed" (10). It then quotes Bishop Broughton of Sydney: "They do not so much retire as decay; wherever Europeans meet with them they appear to wear out [this is so close to the way Darwin would put it two years later in *Narrative*, 'Wherever the European has trod'; see two paragraphs above], and gradually decay ... actually to vanish from the face of the earth ... [in] a few years, those who are most in contact with Europeans will be utterly extinct---I will not say exterminated---but they will be extinct" (10-11).

The Bishop will not say exterminated because there is too much responsibility in that way of saying it. It is just happening by mere contact, and hence by the will of nature, so the end result is natural extinction, with no human intention involved. Darwin had no hesitation in frequently using 'extermination', for which honesty he deserves credit. What I find noteworthy is that even the Select Committee which was so intent on exposing the

injustices inflicted on the Aborigines apparently also felt that this point of view of mysterious causes had to be heard. It was a widely held belief and the Committee wanted to acknowledge it. They certainly did not cite it because of a conclusion one could draw from it---namely, since contact with us is harming this people, let us withdraw, or at least slow down colonizing, to prevent further harm. None of them believed that. As the *Report* says, "Whatever may have been the injustice of this encroachment, there is no reason to suppose that either justice or humanity would now be consulted by receding from it" (83). The members of the Committee and the soon-to-be-formed Aborigines' Protection Society all believed in the civilizing mission of Christianity to be carried out through kindness, not violence. Few of them gave deep consideration to the suggestion (e.g., as made by the Rev. Montagu Hawtrey) that peaceful colonization with its strong commitment to competition could be just as deadly to the natives as violence.

This idea of the natives inevitably disappearing, and by the mysterious "cause" of mere contact, which was expressed by Darwin and Poeppig, drives Merivale to distraction. It is tantamount to *mysticism*. Merivale does not use this word (but Theodor Waitz did use it to describe the poisonous breath theory; see below), though Merivale does wonder how any rational person could believe such nonsense. He contends that when one race of animals or plants destroys another, we can identify the causes. Why do we make it such a mystery when it comes to human races? If it truly is such a puzzle in the case of humans, then "this is an anomaly in the laws of Providence ... wholly at variance with all the other laws by which animal life, and human society, are governed" (2.206). He asks his audience and readers to consider the known causes of native depopulation, since they have had contact with whites: European fire-arms, destruction of their food sources, effects of spirituous liquors, new epidemics, too great a change of habits, and too close restraint (does he mean restricting their travels by confining them to a smaller territory?) (2.207). But all these factors are controllable, changeable. The demise of Aborigines does not have to happen: "if he [the native] can be placed in safety from hostile aggression; if a sufficiency of food can be secured for him; if time can be given him to become fortified against the virulence of epidemic diseases ... if all these causes of death are removed, must he still perish?" (2.208).

Merivale was not alone in arguing this. Saxe Bannister spoke of giving the natives "breathing time" to adjust to European civilization (*Colonization*, 12; cf. "our cupidity gives them no breathing time" in *Humane* [1830], 104n). They were being subjected to immense pressure to change overnight---if only "we will abstain a short time from abusing our power" (*Colonization*, 12). I

quoted him in the second chapter (§2) as saying it was more the case of "a defect in the character of the more civilized race" than "an aggravated inferiority in the barbarian" (*Colonization*, 11). The potentially fatal consequences of being pressured to change in a short time was also a theme in Georg Gerland and, as we will see below, he *denied* that "vanishing peoples were dying out as a consequence of the inferiority of their race" (Gerland, 125; *dass die hinschwindenden Völker in Folge der Inferiortät ihrer Raçe ausstürben*).

In 1874, Langfield Ward added his voice in opposition to "the belief of some scientific men and travellers in various countries, that wherever the white man is brought in contact with the coloured, the latter gradually but inevitably disappears" (Ward, 40). I cannot help but think that he had Darwin in mind as one of those "scientific men and travelers." Ward here gives the example of an increase in population of Mexican Indians as a refutation of this belief and further on (116-18) the growth of the Cherokee population. Some statistics contradict the inevitability.

Regarding the diseases that were killing Aborigines, did Europeans have any obligation to offer medical help? Bannister thought they did and not enough was being done to provide it. "[T]he whole question [of medical aid to the natives] which is not so much new as neglected, requires further and careful examination" (*Colonization*, 262). Apologists for imperialism often point out that colonists did not deliberately inflict new diseases on indigenous populations. But disguise it any way you will, the failure to pursue medical treatment---neglect, as Bannister called it---was an intentional act. (The failure was not total. Some help was provided, but it was extensively neglected, especially in the early years.)

For all these writers, and many more humanitarians as well, it was the moral inferiority of Europeans---a defect in their character---that was killing off the natives, whereas for Darwin and so many of his fellow scientists, it was the superiority of Europeans that was causing native groups to disappear. The debate goes on today. Some insist that western civilization is superior and any cultures that cannot adapt to it are inferior. Others maintain that if our civilization is a crushing weight to other cultures, it is because we have carried it to the rest of the world in a morally inferior manner. The debate may never end.

Bannister moaned in 1838, "miserable indeed is the philosophy that declares destruction inevitable ... when reasonable efforts might avert it!" (*Colonization*, 200). But what were reasonable efforts to humanitarians was just too expensive to colonists.

Gerland, whom I previously introduced in Chapter 2 (§6) and to whom I

will return at greater length in Chapter 10 (§7), was no more fond of the idea that natives were perishing due to the mysterious poisonous breath of civilization than Merivale was. In his 1868 book, he points out that in New Holland (the original Dutch name for Australia), New Zealand, Africa, and America, the Europeans have been taking over all the best, most fertile and usable land, declaring that all the land is their property, and every day are pushing the Aborigines further and further back into the forests and wildest places, all the while destroying their food sources (opossums and kangaroos), "so that it is then not surprising that the natives by this means alone are decaying [or withering away] 'as if touched by poisonous breaths' (or so the cliché has it)" (Gerland, 87; *so dass es den gar kein Wunder ist, wenn die Eingeborenen schon hierdurch allein »wie von einem giftigen Hauche berührt« (oder wie die Phrase lautet) verkommen*; with those words he quotes, he is obviously referencing Pöppig). Gerland is mocking the idea of a mysterious poisonous breath. There is no mystery to what dispossession is and what it does; the resulting disappearance of people is no mystery at all.

It is not clear if Darwin was aware of Gerland's point, but likely he was. In Darwin's copy of the book, it is difficult to read all of the translation in the left-hand margin (closest to the spine) on 87, as the book was not pressed down flat enough when it was scanned, but I could make out snatches: 'increase pasture' and 'spreading [out?] of the whites' and 'natives [several words illegible] wilderness'. In the right margin, we get "they were soon in a very miserable condition owing to destruction of wild animals." Then at the bottom, the translator writes, "that is is not strange that they here disappear as if from a poisonous breath," but was the translator aware that Gerland was mocking or disputing this claim of a mysterious breath? The words 'not strange' and 'as if' seem to indicate such an awareness, and if so, Darwin did not take in Gerland's point, as he continued in *Descent* to approve of this idea that the mere meeting of civilized and savage can produce a poisonous breath, though he gave it a smaller role (see above).

On 88 of Gerland's book, the translator also renders one brief part of Gerland's long quotation of a Cherokee Chief, taken from a book by his teacher Waitz. The Chief remarked on how the white man has made himself a great father to his red children whom he loves and has many fancy speeches for his red children, but his words boil down to this: "You must go a little further out of the way [from me] so that I will not tread on you by mistake" (Gerland, 88; *ihr müsst ein aus dem Wege gehen, damit ich nicht von ungefähr auf euch trete*; on the same page, this thought is repeated, followed by "you are too near me;" *ihr seid mir zu nahe*). In Darwin's copy, the translation is: "The Indians say all the speech of the whites is---go a little

further out of the way.'" But this continual pressure of dispossession he would cover up with euphemisms in *Descent* (see my Ch. 10).

Darwin does not relate any of this information from Gerland's book in *Descent*. In fact, he actually does something quite misleading. In the quote I provided above where Darwin referenced Poeppig (*Descent*, 212, text and n34), he also included Gerland in the note (citing page 8 in Gerland's book). It is possible that Darwin only meant that Gerland quotes Poeppig here, but he also seems to imply that Gerland approved. Darwin is normally a very good and careful reader of other works. If he meant that Gerland too supported the idea that a native people could suffer when subjected to the breath of another culture, he was wrong. What Darwin does not make clear to his readers is that Gerland, much like Merivale twenty-five years earlier, strongly disapproved of this idea of the disappearance of primitive peoples due to enigmatic causes.

This early in his book (it's only Chapter 2, page 8), Gerland was merely quoting Poeppig, not agreeing with him. Later on, in Chapter 13, as noted above, he points to relentless dispossession as what was really happening but hidden under the expression "as if touched by poisonous breaths." In such circumstances, mass death was no mystery. Gerland believed that too much had been made of the idea that primitives have a diminished life force compared to Europeans. He actually finds the life force (*diese Lebenskraft*) equally distributed among all human groups and perhaps stronger among indigenous peoples (Gerland, 120); the tenacious endurance and survival of indigenes against great odds is more astonishing than their disappearance (94, 107). At the end of Chapter 16, Gerland uses the "breaths of civilization" (*Hauche der Kultur*) ironically by putting it in quotation marks after he has discussed at length and in detail the oppression of Mexican Indians by the Spanish (106-07). Darwin breathes not a word of any of this in his published work.

Moreover, even as early as Chapter 2, Gerland strongly hints that he is not big on the idea of mysterious influences. Besides Poeppig, Gerland reviews several writers, including Darwin, who have advanced this idea of the mystery of mere contact as at least a partial explanation for the eradication of natives. (For Darwin, he quotes the same passage that Merivale and everyone else were struck by, that is, in *Narrative*, 520, where Darwin speaks of "some more mysterious agency" and "death seems to pursue the aboriginal" and "the stronger always extirpating the weaker," etc.) Gerland implies that there is a hidden motive (though this is an expression he does not use) in all this scientific talk of the diminished capacity of life in primitives, their inability to improve, and their necessary decline, as he sees in all this that "in addition, they [westerners] feel no scruples about hastening to help along by all means

the downfall, to which these races were now doomed anyway, and thereby on their ruins the superior races can develop a better life" (Gerland, 9; *da man denn sich auch weiter kein Gewissen machte, den Untergang, welchem diese Raçen nun doch einmal geweiht seien, damit auf ihren Trümmern sich das bessere Leben höherstehender Raçen entwickeln könne, mit allen Mitteln beschleunigen zu helfen*). Westerners have selfish motives in interpreting the lives of the indigenous. In a similar manner, Gerland also argues that the savage ferocity of primitive peoples is a fable that was invented in order to justify the use of brutality against them (113).

In denying that the cause of the extinction of primitive peoples is mysterious or due to poisonous breaths, Gerland was following his teacher Theodor Waitz who said that "... we cannot subscribe the mystical and especially in America, popular theory, that the aboriginal race of the new world would, even without drunkenness, war, or imported diseases, have become extinct by the approach of civilization as 'from a poisonous breath, because nature has devoted it to destruction' [citing Pöppig in a note]" (Waitz, 147; this book too is in Darwin's library). Gerland (on 9 in his book) quotes this passage from Waitz:

The extinction of a people once healthy and vigorous cannot be explained by a denial of viability, or an original defective organization, or by the assumption of some mysterious cause; we must investigate and search for natural agencies, though we may be obliged to confess that our endeavours to trace them have hitherto not been perfectly successful. [Waitz, 157]

Gerland then goes on to demonstrate that we can be more successful in tracing the causes. This was precisely Merivale's point.

I think Darwin was aware of Gerland's opposition to mysterious ideas like a poisonous breath, but his remarks seem to be on both sides of this. In his Supplemental Notes on Gerland's book (on pp. 1-2 of the Notes, covering Chapter 2 of Gerland's book, in what is possibly the handwriting of Darwin's daughter Henrietta), we have "His theory to account for this [spontaneous illnesses among savages when meeting civilized races]---is not that there is some noxious influence emanating from the civilized races caused by their being shut up in ships etc." These Notes then go on to explain that Gerland believes Europeans have become inoculated since childhood "with the germs of all kinds of infectious disorders ... [which we] are able to process these germs in a latent state---These same germs being quite able to infect savage races." On the other hand, on p. 9 of Gerland's book, Darwin's translator has in the margin, "Unprejudiced naturalists see something mysterious in this

disappearance ..." Did Darwin realize that Gerland is here setting up a contrary view for the purpose of arguing against it?

Darwin also has in the translation on the same page that "there has been no pressure by the whites" in Polynesia (no such pressure at all) and in Australia (very little). Omitted is that Gerland was relating the opinion of Waitz (from Waitz, 156-57), not his own, and as becomes clear, Gerland does not agree with it. The marginal translation in Darwin's copy takes no notice of this. In fact, it does not even represent Waitz's full opinion. The word translated as pressure is *Druck*, which can also mean oppression; this was more likely the meaning intended by both Gerland and Waitz. The translator of Waitz's book uses oppression (Waitz, 157). Despite what Waitz says (on 156-57), he goes on to describe some of the actual oppression of the Aborigines in Australia (165-67).

Waitz mentions that one limited law in New South Wales accomplished almost nothing: "their oppression is but little mitigated by the favour accorded" (165). He also mentions "great injustice" (165) and takes note that the natives are friendly and peaceful when treated well (166), that "cruelties were committed on women and children" (166), "the crimes committed against the natives by the Whites" (167), that the "English Government has repeatedly in official documents acknowledged the wrongs done to the natives" (ibid.), and perhaps most shockingly, "In several parts of Australia a larger number of natives are said to have been poisoned when it became known that they would for the future be protected against oppression" (ibid.). Since Darwin read Waitz's book, it is surprising that he would not show more awareness of this and Gerland's similar stress on the cruelties committed by Europeans. "No pressure by the whites" is not an accurate representation of the complete beliefs of either writer. It looks like Darwin was a little too eager to latch onto any statement denying white oppression as a major cause of the demise of natives. (Of course, if the information at BHL is correct [see "Explanations", Gerland entry, at beginning of this book], someone else may have made this translation and thus misled Darwin, or it is possible Darwin assisted in this. Whatever the case, Darwin presumably read the entire book, with or without help, and would have known how much Gerland disputed any idea of a mystery about what was happening to Aborigines everywhere.)

Among the points Gerland makes in Chapter 2 of his book, he is highly suspicious of the claim that a race can be deemed inferior just because it has been devastated by a disease it did not have time to become habituated to. The expression "inferior [or, low] race" (*niedere Raçe*), Gerland says, explains nothing (12). His point, I believe, is that this is anti-scientific; it does not make the phenomenon explicable (*nichts ... der Erscheinung erklärt*), it is too

simplistic or empty a summary (*blosse Zusammenfassen*) (ibid.). Later on, at the end of Chapter 13, Gerland confronts a similar problem: What happens when a people face a sudden disruption and upheaval of their culture (which had stabilized over thousands of years), as a result of being invaded by a more powerful race? In both cases (disease and cultural disruption), Gerland argues (though in the case of disease, it is more of an implied argument) that it is not disease alone that threatens them with extinction and it is not culture shock alone that upturns their existence. The more significant factor is that it is disease *combined with the hostility of the invaders* and it is cultural upheaval *combined with the same hostility* that poses the real danger. *The elements of hostility, arrogance, and hatred are crucial in determining the fate of primitive peoples.* Disease and social disruption alone are not sufficient explanations. Though Darwin took note of some of these points in the margins of Gerland's book, he turned a deaf ear to all of it in his own work.

Inferiority, according to Gerland, is not an explanation for anything because inferiority (or concepts of higher and lower) is not a cause of anything. Inferiority is a European judgment. The causes of extinction could only be concrete things like germs or bacteria, or bloody violence, or starvation, or an atmosphere of hostility. But it cannot be inferiority because inferiority is not a real thing. "Inferior races" is an empty (*blosse*) expression, meaningless. Keep in mind that Gerland was taking this position when most scientists of his time, including Darwin, believed that inferiority indeed helped to explain the troubles facing Aboriginal populations. But Gerland knew it explained nothing and he was almost alone in this. Furthermore, he understood that belief in this imaginary idea blocks us from seeing the real causes.

In both the cases of disease and the collision of cultures, Gerland draws a comparison to Europe's own history. Europeans experienced epidemics which they gradually became inured to. Savages too need time. For cultural conflicts, Gerland gives the example of ancient German tribes confronted with Greco-Roman civilization (see last paragraph of his Ch. 13). Gerland identifies several factors that made it easier for the Germans to adapt. Two of these were: 1) the new civilization was *gradually* introduced over many centuries; the Germans did not have to make sudden, catastrophic changes; and 2) it was not forcefully imposed on them; for Germans, classical civilization "did not come in such a hostile degree as modern civilization has for so-called savages" (89; *kam sie nicht in solchem Grade feindselig, wie die moderne Kultur über die sogenannten Wilden*). Take a moment to relish that "so-called savages" (*sogenannten Wilden*) because you won't see it used too often in the 19th century.

Gerland was one of those rare, honest scholars who understood that the invasion of one culture by another was more a historical problem (or social or political) than a biological one. He could thus look for other historical parallels and ask why things had turned out differently for other peoples (he also does this in Ch. 19). The facts, the details---the external circumstances of each people---made it different and *not any inherent qualities or deficiencies in them as human beings*. Gerland simply will not buy the argument that primitives are less well organized (biologically speaking) than white Europeans and that this destines them by nature for destruction and succumbing to the whites (Gerland, 122; cf. 110 where he specifically rejects the argument of less well organized for the Mariana Islanders who had been treated cruelly by the Spanish). By taking the biological approach and indulging in the empty nonsense of inferiority, too many natural scientists of the time had dehumanized the modern-day, so-called savages. Gerland did a good job of exposing this. He also explicitly called it a false view (*wie irrig die Ansicht ist*) that "vanishing peoples were dying out as a consequence of the inferiority of their race" (125; *dass die hinschwindenden Völker in Folge der Inferiortät ihrer Raçe ausstürben*). But in the English speaking world, we have erased Gerland from history.

If Gerland was not more successful at convincing others of his arguments, that was not his fault. The blame is entirely on that sense of entitlement in Europeans which blocked them from seeing the rationality of his ideas---and Merivale's and Napier's and Rafinesque's and Bannister's and Wallace's and a handful of others. All the inferior, less developed capacities which mainstream scientists saw in savages should have been a matter of historical-political debate and should have been questioned as self-serving arguments by westerners; they should not have been biologized which is just what Darwin and so many others did.

~ 6 ~

Given all these points and the suggestions that can be found in these three authors, who proved himself the more perspicacious? Merivale and Gerland, or Darwin? Merivale also looked at population statistics. He did not have a lot of faith in the accuracy of estimates for the natives at the time of first contact with Europeans, as he had seen widely differing figures. But he took note that there have been cases of population increase for Aboriginal peoples; it wasn't all gloom and doom, for there have been some success stories. He is again critical of Darwin, this time for using Tahiti as an example of approaching extinction because while the numbers went down for a while, they then bounced back up (Merivale, 2.210; he also takes note of other Aboriginals

whose numbers have gone up, as for example the Cherokees and Choctaws in America). Merivale was also aware that exploration in North America had revealed that the Indians were once much more numerous and went into decline long before Europeans arrived. Many in his society used this to argue that the cause of the impending extinction of Indians began much earlier and that Europe has at worst only hastened a process already in progress. Merivale believed this to be perverse reasoning. Better reasoning would be that whites are "not the necessary cause of their destruction, but the only possible means of rescuing them from it. We are then not their pre-destined murderers, but called to assume the station of their preservers" (2.212). (Preservation also plays a big role in Gerland's thinking, as we will see in Ch. 10, §7.)

One could say it is like saving a drowning man. Merivale was arguing that a truly civilized person will rush to rescue anyone in trouble. Darwin thought so too---that is, in general he agreed that it was virtuous to save a drowning person. In the last chapter, I quoted him from *Descent* (134): "many a civilized man, or even boy ... has disregarded the instinct for self-preservation, and plunged at once into a torrent to save a drowning man, though a stranger" (saving a drowning stranger was often used by him as the highest example of moral behavior and comes up occasionally in his Notebooks). Darwin contrasted this to a savage who "will be wholly indifferent about a stranger." Based on Darwin's own standards, abandoning savages to inevitable extermination was the act of a savage, not a civilized human being.

More than a century and a half before Russell McGregor's book (and others have written on this too), Merivale was pointing out that empirical data does not back up the doomed race theory. His devastating conclusion is that if we can control all the factors of destruction he listed (see above) and the native population increases or at least remains stationary, "then the supposed law of Mr. Poeppig and Mr. Darwin is imaginary" (2.209). With equal justice, he could have said this law is a self-fulfilling prophecy. That is essentially the point he was making. If we have not had more success in reversing indigenous decline, it is because we have not *persevered* (his word) in positive efforts towards the natives. "Until the whole experiment has been tried, the language of despair is unreasonable and unjust" (2.216-17). "With these facts before us, we may perhaps dismiss, with little scruple, the theories of those who tell us that aboriginal races are hastening to an inevitable destruction" (2.211). Hardly anyone was listening. For the rest of the 19th century and well into the 20th, the majority of European intellectuals believed that Aboriginal peoples were destined to disappear. Destined by nature through natural selection or some other means. Darwin believed it to the end

of his life.

I don't know how many people endorsed Merivale's point, or made it on their own, that statistics did not back up the inevitability of extinction, but one more was again the German anthropologist Georg Gerland. A long portion from his 1872 paper was quoted by George Rolleston in his "Address on Anthropology" which he sent to Darwin (see previously in Ch. 3, §5). The first sentences of this extract from Gerland are: "The decrease of the Polynesian populations is not now going on as fast as it was in the first half of the century; it has in some localities entirely ceased, whilst in others the indigenous population is actually on the increase. From this it is clear that the causes for that disappearance of the native races [discussed in his previous 1868 book, *Aussterben*] ... are now less or no longer operative" (in Rolleston, 2.883). Nowhere in his career does Darwin show himself attentive to such information. He insisted on the inevitability of the widespread extinction of natives, no matter what anyone said about the statistics failing to support this. It is an understatement to say that Darwin's *Descent of Man* is pervaded by a sense of doom for indigenous peoples. In this aspect, it was an ideological work, not a work of science, not a work dedicated to evidence.

It should also be noted that if you read Gerland's 1868 book carefully, he was already arguing that extinction was not inevitable for many primitive peoples and that some tribes were doing well with an increasing population despite brutal treatment by the whites. The Cherokee Indians are one of several examples he gives in Chapter 20. In fact, in the margin on 126, Darwin's translator noted Gerland's observation that the Cherokee population had increased from 10,000 to 13,500 in the years 1819-1825. Gerland also pointed out that Cherokee villages, economy, and educational efforts were thriving. Waitz too argued (in a book Darwin read) that "under favourable circumstances, severely visited peoples may recover their losses" (Waitz, 147) and goes on to give many examples (148-49). But in his own work Darwin ignored such reports. In the same Chapter 20, Gerland also makes an important point about Samoa that can serve as a more general insight: if a people can get over the deleterious consequences of the initial impact of colonization, their population can begin to climb again (131). That initial shock, or reaction to it, was all-important in determining how well a people survived.

Gerland understood how profound was the disturbance, dismay, and despair caused by the prospect of annihilation, following first contact, and that Europeans were often guilty of taking advantage of that initial despair. But he also saw how strong was the vital life force of many native peoples which enabled them to overcome this disadvantage. In the right-hand margin on 131,

Darwin's helper condenses Gerland's first two sentences of the last paragraph of Chapter 20: "All these examples prove that savages are not by nature doomed to extinction. So soon as civilization presents itself peacefully they prove capable of elevating themselves." And at the bottom of 131: "But almost everywhere civilization has presented itself in an inimical form." Despite these notes and many more, Darwin was not taking any of this in. He refused to consider it in his own work. This is completely the opposite of his approach in *Origin* where he was willing and even eager to take on objections to his own views.

His own science should have instructed him to do better in *Descent*. Didn't he write "Natural selection acts only tentatively" (*Descent*, 167)? And even earlier, "But which groups will ultimately prevail, no man can predict; for we well know that many groups, formerly most extensively developed, have now become extinct" (*Origin*, 155). *Survival and extermination, by Darwin's own account, are not inevitable. Yet he was not listening, not even to himself.* His prejudices towards savages would not allow him to.

In the final rhetorical flourish of his amazing lecture, Merivale pulls off a spectacular turnabout regarding the sense of melancholy (i.e., tragedy) in all this. I don't know if Merivale did this consciously (in which case it really is brilliant) or if it was fortuitous, but he manages to give us an insight into melancholy which we do not find in Darwin. Having included Darwin's melancholy remark about the Maoris lamenting the loss of their land in New Zealand, in the passage he quoted earlier from Darwin's journal, Merivale at the end of Lecture XIX quotes a writer named Herder who had a very different idea about where we might locate the melancholy (2.217). They were writing about two different but related things. Merivale believes in "the great cause of aboriginal civilization." Herder was not writing about Aborigines, rather about the idea of progress in general, and Merivale uses his thoughts about the possibility of human progress. Both had to face the fact that so many were pessimistic about the cause (progress in general or the well-being of Aborigines) they favored. Whence this pessimism? It comes, said Herder, from "the eye of the melancholy traveller" who sees "only too small a portion of his road."

By implication, Merivale was saying that the melancholy (or as we would say today, the tragedy) is not in the poor native or his seemingly hopeless situation. It is in the invader, the traveler, the observer who sees only his own narrow interests (his small portion of the road) which demands the total eradication of the natives---just as the Walrus and the Carpenter in Carroll's poem can only see their own hunger and their need to sweep away the sand. It is the eye of the imperialist which maintains and creates a melancholy, tragic

view. If we could see the whole road (as earlier evolutionists insisted on, as we'll see in Chapters 8 and 9, and as Gerland too insisted, as we'll see in Ch. 10, §7), the native would not be facing annihilation. There is no self-gratifying melancholy for Merivale (just as there was none for Charles Napier). There is only facing the truth of the situation by looking to the whole of it and identifying the tragedy of the invaders' self-fulfilling prophecies.

I still regard Merivale's "Euthanasia of savage communities" to be both dangerous and callous, though I am glad that Merivale put it in such a brutally honest way, giving us a glimpse into an ugly part of his culture (as did Bagehot in his own unwitting way). But he made it clear that he was opposed to the genocide of living members of these communities. He exposed genocide as a self-fulfilling prophecy, emanating from "ferocity and treachery." It was immoral and illogical, and not based on empirical data purporting to demonstrate that it was a natural event as so many people proclaimed it to be. It is a wonder that mainstream scientists, including Darwin, remained deaf and blind to the more sensible arguments of Merivale, Gerland, and several others. One cannot say no one told them they were wrong. Voices of their time pointed out their folly. With Merivale's lectures being republished in 1861, they had a second chance to encounter his thoughts. Then along came Gerland in 1868. It should not matter to us that Merivale and Gerland were in the minority. Truth, scientific and otherwise, is not a popularity contest. It is a matter of logic and paying attention to the evidence, even if only one person does it. Darwin and his colleagues were scientific failures on this point. To put it any other way would be a lie and a cover-up.

~ 7 ~

Perhaps the most obvious reason for the imperialist belief that the eradication of natives was necessary, inevitable, and irreversible (so obvious it occurred to me last of all) was that this belief could be used to avoid moral responsibility for what was happening. Is this my haughty judgment from a later, modern vantage point? Or was it a contemporary criticism? I believe that immorality was implicit in Merivale's and Gerland's analyses. But for an even clearer moral vision, let us take a look at what J.L. Stokes, a Commander in the Royal Navy (later becoming an Admiral) and cabin mate of Darwin, had to say in 1846. It is worth quoting at length from volume 2 of his *Discoveries in Australia* (all emphases are added):

most men seem willing to content themselves with the belief that the event [extinction of the natives] is in accordance with some

mysterious dispensation of Providence; and the purest philanthropy [i.e., humanitarianism] can only teach us to alleviate their present condition, and to smooth, as it were, the pillow of an expiring people [the pillow metaphor became a common one; see McGregor]. For my own part *I am not willing to believe*, that in this conflict of races, *there is an absence of moral responsibility* on the part of the whites; *I must deny that it is in obedience to some all-powerful law*, the inevitable operation of *which exempts us from blame*, that the depopulation of the countries we colonize goes on. There appear to me to be the means of *tracing this national crime to the individuals who perpetrate it*; and it is with the deepest sorrow that I am obliged to confess that my countrymen have not, in Tasmania, exhibited that magnanimity which has often been the prominent feature of their character. They have sternly and systematically trampled on the fallen. [2.463-64]

Stokes also said, "I must say I regret that that page of history which records our colonization of Australia must reach the eyes of posterity" (2.462). Many colonists, he lamented, "cannot conceive how any one can sympathize with the black race as their fellow men. In theory and practice they regard them as wild beasts whom it is lawful to extirpate. There are of course honourable exceptions ..." (2.459). (As previously mentioned, Darwin congratulated his former roommate on the success of his book [CCD 3.373], and had read proof sheets of the book. When Darwin died, Stokes sent a letter to the *London Times*, recalling how Darwin persevered in his work on the *Beagle* despite suffering so much from seasickness [LL 1.224].)

Stokes was not the only one who worried what posterity would think. Henry Reynolds (in *Indelible*, 141) quotes one who identified himself as "A Gentleman in New South Wales" in an 1826 letter to the Methodist Missionary Society in London. Should total annihilation of the natives be achieved and the colonists, aware of the consequences of their actions, made no effort to prevent the tragedy:

Should such a state of things be realised, what will future generations think of our Christianity, of our landed Philanthropy, when our posterity read in the early page of Australian history the misery and ruin which marked our adoption of this land -- when they find recorded that our proprietorship to the soil was purchased at such a Costly Sacrifice of human happiness and life.

Many would argue that there is no need for posterity to say anything. Why think about it? Why remember it? What can we do about it now?

Another writer quoted by Reynolds, the Rev. John Saunders, a Baptist minister, delivered a sermon in 1838 in Sydney entitled "The claims of the Aborigines" or "The duty of the colonists towards the Aboriginal natives of this territory". He said we had a duty "to recompense the Aborigines to the extent we have injured them. It is true we cannot make an atonement for the lives which have been taken ..." (*Indelible*, 156). But, he continued, "we can at least bestow upon the survivors the blessings we enjoy [such as Christianity and its comforts]... which are comprehended in the expressive word civilization." The Rev. J. Beecham expressed the same opinion in his testimony before the 1837 House Select Committee (#4367). He posed the matter this way: "The mischief is done, and the question is now how far shall the error be rectified?" (Coates, 93). His answer:

I can see one and only one way by which our country can now place itself on something like the broad ground of justice, and make compensation to the natives whom we have thus injured; and that is by furnishing them with the means of Christian instruction and social improvement. Now that, I think, will be something like a fair remuneration for the loss of their lands. [ibid.]

This will "counterbalance the loss that they have sustained" (ibid.). The Committee more or less approved but more honestly referred to this recompense as "the only compensation we can afford" (#4370; Coates, 95).

There was a terrible irony in this. We used civilization to destroy the natives and if any survived, we will make it up to them by inculcating them with civilization, the very thing that devastated them. Greed killed your people and our gift to you survivors is to get you to adopt and adapt to this culture of greed. Don't we all believe something like that? While our civilization may do many awful things, it also contains benefits which more than make up for its sins. Who does not believe this? Who said logic cannot be terrible and ruthless?

~ 8 ~

No one person necessarily believed in all the reasons which led to the idea of the inevitability of the extermination of indigenous peoples (most of which I presented above in §4): self-fulfilling prophecy (the more we talk of their extermination, the more likely it is to depress the natives and bring about their

end), pessimism over European ability to improve the natives, confirmation of scientific theories of extinction, a desire for racial purity, a fulfillment of the greed to take everything, the need to control all memories and eliminate descendants who could remember and demand rights in the future, the need to rid oneself of stories that would make one too sympathetic to the natives, and finally, but not least, the need to evade moral responsibility. I think they were all in operation in varying degrees and at various times. Some people believed in inevitable extermination perhaps because so many others did. They did not think deeply about why it should occur. They were merely following what everyone else was saying.

In Darwin's case, I think it was a little bit of everything. Almost all of the scientists of his time believed in this unavoidable extinction. Darwin was happy to follow suit and promote this prejudice. We also saw an example of his pessimism over native abilities. This was not a deeply considered pessimism on his part or anyone else's. It was based on superficial observations. The question is not why they were pessimistic, but why they put so little thought into it. Why were they so quick to come to a devastating conclusion?

Besides the issues of self-fulfilling prophecy and greed, which combined explain a lot, the one point that hits the nail on the head more than any other was made by Henry Reynolds which I quoted above: "If there was a struggle for survival, there had to be losers to make the story convincing" (*Fate*, 202). 'Losers' definitely applies to Darwin's system of thinking. Throughout *Origin*, there is a mentality of all or nothing. A species either secures a dominant place or its unfitness results in the ultimate catastrophe---complete extinction, never to return again. Darwin seems to bring an *a priori* idea of perfect symmetry to his view of nature: You win or you lose, you live or you die, there is nothing in between or another category of thought. And the living and the dying are matched in perfect balance with species being born as gradually as they die. These antipodes must be adhered to.

I made this point in the previous chapter but it bears repeating. For Darwin, a species is either dominant or extinct or on the way to extinction, "the high-road to extinction," as he called it (1844, 150). It is adapt or die in Darwin's world of nature: "... those which do not change will become extinct" (*Origin*, 352; cf. 128, 353). The choice is that stark. There is no third choice of being small and weak and surviving---of which human life as actually lived gives us a lot of examples, but not for Darwin. If you are small and weak, you are on that high road to disappearing. "We need not marvel at extinction," Darwin told us (360). Extinction is normal and acceptable. The trouble, the deep trouble, is that he applied this to human beings, to the vast array of human

cultures on this earth.

What no one acknowledged, and still do not, is that we, the citizens of western civilization, have an existential or emotional relationship to the question of extinction. We did not want it to be us it happened to, but we got it into our heads that it had to happen to somebody. And it was quite suitable to our racism. We were happy to believe that the lower races were not destined to survive. We wanted the Other to disappear from the face of the earth. They were making us uncomfortable. Darwin's evolutionary theory did not change any of this. It only enhanced such ideas and feelings. We were happy to think nature would make it so.

Popular writers today still use expressions like evolutionary destiny or purpose, or evolutionary strategy (even in an article on the life of plants! See Michael Pollan, "The Intelligent Plant" in *The New Yorker*). This opens the door to some very wicked stuff. A theory that was supposed to have been a simple, mechanical explanation of genetic change with no direction known became burdened with all our hopes, fears, plans, recklessness, greed, arrogance. Starting with Darwin, we endowed evolutionary theory with the worst parts of ourselves and pretended this was revolutionary rather than counter-revolutionary which is what it really was. We pretended it relieved western civilization of moral responsibility.

When Merivale argued that we do not have to be the "pre-destined murderers" of the natives ("'Tis murder, even so, the worst of crimes," Rafinesque said in 1836), he was making what we would consider a very modern point: Life is about making choices. There is no inevitable process leading to a people's extinction. It is not destiny, providential or natural. It is a choice. We choose to help it along or we can choose to help them survive. We don't have to become murderers. Whatever happens, it will be the result of our choices and not a law. Stokes was making the same point when he denied there is "some all-powerful law" which brings about "the depopulation of the countries we colonize" and which creates "an absence of moral responsibility on the part of the whites." Certain people chose to make this happen and we have "the means of tracing this national crime to the individuals who perpetrate it." They *chose* to perpetrate or facilitate the extermination.

Napier made his contribution to this when he pointed out that we may be superior to savages in our ability to kill, but to exploit that one ability instead of others is in effect a choice. So "Savages cannot cast cannon; but in point of humanity, I confess, I have great doubts about our superiority" (Napier, 180). We could have chosen to enhance our humane qualities but we did not. We "boast of it [our humanity]," but we have chosen to develop our murderous abilities. We choose to be kind or cruel. We chose to "set up ... 'national

wealth,' as our God" (96). We chose to make enormous material success---as in the boast "we are the wealthiest nation in the world" (100, 172)---to be our chief form of happiness and there are consequences to that. No one forced us to make any of these choices. Not God, not nature, not the savages we encountered. We made all these choices on our own.

The main humanitarian criticism was not that colonizers (the settlers and the government) were choosing bloodthirsty extermination---to murder outright every last Aboriginal man, woman, and child---but that they were making *smaller choices which everyone knew were leading to extermination*. Our society was creating the circumstances making genocide a reality. This does not have to happen, but it is, and the way it is happening is by a multitude of small choices rather than by one big choice (although some of the steps---such as complete dispossession, for one, and not punishing murderers of Aborigines, for another---were not such small steps after all). (If it was not so offensive to literary taste, I would underline, italicize, and embolden in all caps, this entire paragraph. Maybe there are times when literary taste should be offended.)

The people making these arguments were in the minority, but they were not unimportant outsiders. Merivale was an Oxford professor. Stokes and Napier were high ranking military officers. Stokes's book was reviewed in important publications (CCD 3.373 n2) and, as mentioned above, Darwin congratulated him on its success. Saxe Bannister who noted the many ways that native rights were violated was an important lawyer of the time and had been Attorney General in New South Wales in the mid-1820s. Many academics had read Georg Gerland's book (see Rolleston, 2.883). John Locke was a major philosopher honored for centuries to come. Their voices were heard and rebuffed, or, more often, simply ignored. Many humanitarians, probably most, learned to be quiet. They voiced their criticisms once and moved on. A hardy few, like David Carley whom I quoted in the fourth chapter (§4), kept it up and could say with Carley that all they had accomplished was to ruin their own lives.

The imperialists, which included Darwin, were doing everything they could to manipulate the evidence to make it appear that *choice was not an option because the laws of nature were choosing for us*. But no one can say that they had not been made cognizant there was a good counter-argument to their view. Their position had neither evidence nor logic nor morality going for it. It did not matter. Greed and the spirit of the age and the majority culture were on their side. That is a winning combination in any day and age, no matter how bad and wrong your ideas are. In a way, this entire story is about how power trumps truth every time and there is not a damn thing anyone can

do about it. Of course, there could also be another story here that I am missing. Maybe there are beautiful, fragrant lemon trees growing somewhere in this history. I might have a tendency to see dark clouds everywhere. But the dark story I am telling really did happen. We should pay attention to history. Or we could just ignore it and keep repeating it.

Darwin once pointed out that there was a high proportion of speculation to facts in his grandfather's work (*Autobiography*, 43). He never noticed, however, that he himself was doing the same thing with the extinction of human beings. That betokens an effort to make it true rather than an objective fact that was discovered and believed. Darwin also knew something else about his grandfather's work which makes the sheer speculative nature of this extinction even more obvious. Erasmus Darwin was well aware of the bulk of speculation in his work and his grandson knew this. In his biographical sketch of his grandfather, "Preliminary Notice", published in 1879 in Ernst Krause's *Erasmus Darwin* (bear in mind that this is in the same time period when Darwin wrote his *Autobiography*, most of it in 1876 with additions over the next six years), Darwin (at 103 in "Preliminary") quoted from the Apology which Erasmus Darwin prefixed to *Botanic Garden*. Erasmus there ventures "to apologise for many of the subsequent conjectures ... as not being supported by accurate investigation, or conclusive experiments." But, he continues, "Extravagant theories ... where our knowledge is yet imperfect, are not without their use; as they encourage the execution of laborious experiments, or the investigation of ingenious deductions to confirm or refute them." All speculation is useful because it can lead to confirmation or refutation---that is, provided no one tries to pass off the speculation as fact. Charles Darwin pointed out in *Descent* (676) that even false theories (or views) can advance the cause of science (the full quote is provided immediately below). The humanitarians treated inevitable extinction as a theory and presented evidence to refute it. They were following Erasmus Darwin's advice.

But that is not what Charles Darwin and other scientists were doing with the claimed inevitability of the extinction of allegedly inferior human beings. They did not present inevitable extinction as speculation or theory to be further investigated for purposes of refuting or confirming it, which is what Erasmus Darwin would have insisted on. Instead, it had become a fact for them. They were so sure of it. It became a false fact. As Darwin well knew, false facts do great harm to the study of science: "False facts are highly injurious to the progress of science, for they often endure long; but false views, if supported by some evidence, do little harm, for every one takes a salutary pleasure in proving their falseness; and when this is done, one path

towards error is closed and the road to truth is often at the same time opened" (*Descent*, 676). This is precisely what Darwin and company were *not* doing with inevitable extinction. They were not opening any roads. They were closing them. The impending extinction of natives was not a fact, it wasn't even a good theory. They turned it into a false fact. That was very different from what Erasmus Darwin was doing with all his speculations.

Nor was Charles Darwin interested in the myriad ways a people employ to survive and how even a seemingly weak group can weave its way in and around the more powerful. I once heard Yiddish writer Isaac Bashevis Singer say in a lecture that, for the Jewish people, it is a long way from being sick to dying. For most 19th century scientists, there was no distinction. They fantasized their way from one to the other. That fantasy was implicit in *The Origin of Species* and openly expressed in *The Descent of Man*.

7

SOME LESSONS FROM MALTHUS

In 500 years how the Anglo-saxon race will have spread & exterminated whole nations; & in consequence how much the Human race, viewed as a unit, will have risen in rank.

---Charles Darwin
(1862)

[T]he right of exterminating, or driving [the natives] into a corner where they must starve ... will be questioned in a moral view ... To exterminate the inhabitants of the greatest part of Asia and Africa, is a thought that could not be admitted for a moment.

---Thomas Malthus
(1826)

~ 1 ~

In one of the last letters he wrote to Darwin, a year before Darwin died, Wallace expressed some misgivings that perhaps they had misapplied Malthus's population principle. Wallace had gradually come to embrace socialism and was recommending that Darwin read *Progress and Poverty* by an American socialist, Henry George. He reminded Darwin that "both you and I have acknowledged ourselves indebted" to the principle of Malthus (i.e., population growth outstrips food production) and then observed that "Mr. George, while admitting the main principle as self-evident and as actually operating in the case of animals and plants, denies that it ever has operated or can operate in the case of man, still less that it has any bearing whatever on the vast social and political questions which have been supported by a reference to it" (July 9, 1881; ARW 1.317). Darwin in response (the last letter he wrote to Wallace) made no reply to this point, but expressed a hope that Wallace would not "turn renegade to natural history" in favor of the temptation of politics (1.319). Darwin never asked himself whether injecting

competition into nature in *The Origin of Species* was itself not intensely political.

I am glad that Wallace came to this insight, even if it was very late in the day. He seemed to get younger as he got older, never ceasing to think and question ideas, even his own. But there is something very odd going on here, on both the part of Wallace and Darwin. The fact is that Malthus himself raised this objection. He specifically pointed out that his population principle could not be applied in the same way to human beings as to the wider world of nature. Odder still, he made this point in the very same pages that likely inspired Darwin to come up with the theory of natural selection. Applying the Malthusian population theory to human beings but denuded of all concerns for economic welfare for the poor and middle class, and stripped of the checks human beings could put on population increase, was something Darwin did, not Malthus. Malthus said, Don't apply the population principle to human nature in the same severe way it applies to wild nature, and then Darwin went ahead and did it anyway. I should back up quite a bit to explain this properly.

In the first pages of Volume 1 of the sixth edition of the *Essay* (the one Darwin read), Malthus began by approvingly citing the views of a Dr. Franklin (1.2-3), explaining them in his own words. "The germs of existence contained in this earth, if they could freely develop themselves, would fill millions of worlds in the course of a few thousand years" (1.3). It is nature's way that there is a "constant tendency in all animated life to increase beyond the nourishment prepared for it" (1.2). There is the germ of natural selection. Malthus then says:

It is observed by Dr. Franklin, that there is no bound to the prolific nature of plants or animals, but what is made by their crowding and interfering with each other's means of subsistence. Were the face of the earth, he says, vacant of other plants, it might be gradually sowed and overspread with one kind only ... This is incontrovertibly true [for animals too] ... Nature has scattered the seeds of life abroad with the most profuse and liberal hand; but has been comparatively sparing in the room and the nourishment necessary to rear them. [6th, 1.2-3]

It would seem obvious that it must have been these pages that prompted Darwin to realize just how intense the struggle for life is in the entire world of nature. (The first time I read it, I thought: So that's where the theory of natural selection comes from.) Neither Darwin nor Wallace remembered it that way, as we will see. They said nothing about these pages and claimed other parts of Malthus's *Essay* stimulated their insights. Malthus would sum it up in 1830 in

the first sentence of the *Summary View*: "In taking a view of animated nature, we cannot fail to be struck with a prodigious power of increase in plants and animals." What is not in dispute is that some of his words in the sixth edition of the *Essay* were responsible for Darwin and Wallace being struck by this prodigious power, but which ones exactly?

There is no doubt, as the above quotations demonstrate, that Malthus thought about how his population principle affects the lives of animals and plants. There is also little doubt that Darwin and Wallace did not point to this part of Malthus as having an influence on them. They presented the situation as if they read his theory only as it applied to human beings and then they drew the conclusion about how to apply it to nature at large. I find it hard to believe that they completely missed what Malthus said about nature. That's the part that I will have to explain more clearly as we proceed.

Very few scholars bother to point out what Malthus said about the struggle for life in the natural world. Most scholars present Malthus as addressing only the problem of population in the human world and then, they claim, Darwin and Wallace reached the conclusion that it is even more ruthless among animals and plants. Desmond and Moore write that after reading Malthus, especially on his statistics for human society, "Darwin saw that an identical struggle took place throughout nature, and he realized that it could be turned into a truly creative force" (*Darwin*, 265). More truthfully, Malthus saw the identical struggle in nature and Darwin adopted his insight wholesale. The usually very perceptive Robert Young explains, "Darwin again stresses the importance of removing moral restraint from Malthus's doctrine in order to arrive at his own theory" (Young, 41). Biographer Janet Browne chimes in with "... Darwin saw that what Malthus said about checks to fecundity in the human world rang emphatically true for animals and plants also" (*Voyaging*, 387).

All this is not quite believable. Malthus himself had already drawn the conclusion in relation to animals and plants. Darwin and Wallace did not so much draw an inference from Malthus as they relied directly on the conclusion that Malthus specifically emphasized, though it is possible they did this unconsciously. Browne pays this some recognition by adding to her above remark, "Actually, Malthus discussed animals and plants in some detail ..." but she does not provide any quotes and in failing to do this, she does not make it memorable. The confusion in part comes from Darwin himself. He never clearly explained that Malthus had made this point and that he adopted it from him. In his Notebooks and later writings, he gives the impression that *he applied* the Malthusian doctrine (on human beings) to the rest of nature and that *he saw* it applies with "ten-fold force" in nature (1844, 88). But Malthus

had already observed this prodigious power of nature, or, as he also put it (see above blocked quote), there is "no bound to the prolific nature of animals or plants."

I do not think Darwin intentionally misrepresented anything here. It is distinctly possible that the force of what Malthus said in the first few pages of the sixth edition of his *Essay* did not hit Darwin until he read the rest of the *Essay* with its descriptions of what the checks of "misery and vice" were doing to human population growth. But we do know that Darwin did pay attention to those early pages when he first read Malthus. When I went to BHL to check if he made any annotations here, I found that he scored some lines on page 3 of Volume 1 and wrote in the margin, "Malthus & Franklin saw the law of increase in animals & Plants clearly." Still, it is possible that he never went back to consult this comment as he continued to read Malthus's *Essay*.

Who is to say exactly how the influences on the human mind work? After all, Darwin could have given credit to his grandfather for expressing the very same thoughts, but did not. Darwin always gave the impression that Malthus alone inspired him with the idea of how severe the struggle for existence is. In the abstract of his theory which he sent to Asa Gray in September 1857, Darwin wrote, "The elder De Candolle, W. Herbert, and Lyell have written strongly on the struggle for life; but even they have not written strongly enough" (CCD 6.448). He nowhere mentions Malthus in this abstract or the accompanying letter, yet based on all our knowledge about this, it was Malthus who impressed upon him the severity of this struggle.

The contest for life was no less vividly depicted by Darwin's famous grandfather. As previously discussed (Ch. 5, §3), Erasmus Darwin had described nature in *The Temple of Nature* as "one great slaughter-house," and Charles remembered this (from another of his grandfather's works) in his biography of him. Even vegetables, Erasmus pointed out, were engaged in a war for nourishment, moisture, and air both above and below the soil. In another poem, nature impressed him as "wonderfully prodigal in her seeds of vegetables, and the spawn of fish; almost any one plant, if all its seeds should grow to maturity, would in a few years alone people the terrestrial globe" (*Economy*, note on IV, 367). That was precisely what Malthus would say. The truth may be that it was both Erasmus and Malthus who influenced Charles Darwin. His grandfather may have set it to simmering in his mind and then it boiled over when he found the same thought in Malthus. And even then, he would have to read many pages in Malthus before it really sunk in.

It is quite natural for influences to work out in this way. I seriously doubt that Darwin deliberately misstated what so affected him in Malthus. But he

almost certainly misunderstood exactly how this influence came about--- because Malthus's description of "the prolific nature of animals or plants" in the first three pages of the *Essay* is much too strong for it to have had no impact on Darwin. He did make that note on page 3 about how clearly Malthus and Franklin saw this (see above). Malthus's observations must have lodged in his mind alongside his grandfather's descriptions.

Even Wallace could not get it straight. Robert Young reminds us that in 1908, for the 50th anniversary of the original presentation of the Darwin-Wallace papers, the Linnean Society of London published *The Darwin-Wallace Celebration* to which Wallace contributed "Selections from Malthus's Essay on Population, which Suggested the Idea of Natural Selection" (111-18; see Wallace, "Selections", in Bibliography). These selections are from the 1826 *Essay* (6th edition), but remarkably he does not include and never mentions anything from the first few pages. He says, "what influenced me was not any special passage or passages, but the cumulative effect of chapters iii. to xii. of the first volume (and more especially iii. to viii.)" (111). Wallace's account is sincere and completely believable, and I suspect that for Darwin too it was the cumulative effect of Malthus that mattered. It was probably more true of Wallace since in 1858 he was relying on his memory of what Malthus said; he did not have the book in hand in the Malay Archipelago. Yet when he re-reads Malthus fifty years later, he still does not see those first pages on prolific nature? It is odd.

The selections from Malthus which Wallace presents recount the misery that savage nations live in due to war, famine, and disease, all of which keep down population by limiting their ability to increase food supply. Despite what he says about no special passage influencing him, Wallace must have been particularly struck by the idea of "how little population depends on the birth of children, in comparison of the production of food ..." (Malthus, 6th, 1.158; which Wallace includes on 113 of his "Selections") because he makes the very same point in his 1858 Ternate paper (S043): "Why is [one] bird so extraordinarily abundant, while others producing two or three times as many young are much less plentiful?" ("On the Tendency", S043, 55.) The answer he gives, like Malthus, is that it is the availability of more food. But Wallace says that it was thinking about all the human misery as Malthus described it which made him realize how much more intense this is among animals ("Selections", 117). Darwin and Wallace apparently extended the ruthlessness of the Malthusian population principle among humans to even more ruthlessness throughout nature.

The truth, though, is that Malthus had in fact already made this extension himself, which Darwin and Wallace seem to have completely forgotten.

Maybe it was because Malthus had done it so early in his book that it could have been easily and unconsciously forgotten, though how Wallace missed it in his re-reading, I am at a loss to guess (unless he was skimming the book the second time around). As noted above, it might have been only on reading all of Malthus that the point about the intensity of a struggle for life in nature really struck Darwin---the cumulative effect, as Wallace said. I just find it very hard to believe that those first three pages in Malthus completely evaporated from their minds. As for Malthus's warning not to use the population principle in the same way for humans as for animals, that will come up in §3 of this chapter.

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Malthus was sharp enough to come very close to the theory of natural selection. He understood that it takes time for creation to happen in the natural world (I am returning to the first edition of his *Essay*): "... ought we not to conclude that even to the great Creator, almighty as he is, a certain process may be necessary, a certain time (or at least what appears to us as time) may be requisite, in order to form beings with those exalted qualities of mind which will fit them for his high purposes?" (*Essay*, 201). It takes time to create. I cannot help wondering if Malthus read James Hutton who gave us the concept of the earth as incalculably old. Perhaps Malthus got it from Erasmus Darwin who was a friend of Hutton. Just before this remark about time, Malthus describes what we see in the book of nature: "a constant succession of sentient beings, rising apparently from so many specks of matter, going through a long and sometimes painful process in this world, but many of them attaining ... powers as seem to indicate their fitness for some superior state." That 'constant succession of sentient beings' is so (Erasmus) Darwinian as we will see in Chapter 8.

In another place, Malthus practically states the theory of natural selection, if you make allowance for a different vocabulary. Just substitute 'well-adapted' for 'lovely and beautiful' and 'ill-adapted' for 'misshapen' in the following: "Nothing can appear more consonant to our reason than that those beings which come out of the creative process of the world in lovely and beautiful [well-adapted] forms should be crowned with immortality [or more simply, survival, I would suggest], while those which come out misshapen [ill-adapted] ... should perish and be condemned to mix again with their original clay [or, become fossils of extinct species]" (*Essay*, 215). A few sentences earlier he referred to coming "out of this mighty creative furnace in wrong shapes." That too is not bad a way of capturing the essence of natural selection. One could say that Malthus almost inspired Darwin to discover the

theory of natural selection. But of course, he could not have done that because however Malthusian natural selection is, it is a theory to explain the transmutation of species, something Malthus was not interested in. (He does briefly discuss breeding or artificial selection in *Essay*, 127-28, only to conclude that there is a limit to improvement---the opposite of what Chambers, Darwin, and Wallace would conclude.)

What Malthus and Darwin had most in common was their dedication to scientific method. Malthus several times stresses that in general the laws of nature, like his law of population, go back to the beginning of time (*Essay*, 114, 126, 201), and that "the causes of population and depopulation have probably been as constant as any of the laws of nature with which we are acquainted" (*Essay*, 114; Darwin quotes this in Notebook E 3). This constancy is "the foundation of all human knowledge" (*Essay*, 126). Even more, Malthus, who was a clergyman (and later became a professor of history and economics) but identified himself as a Reverend only in the sixth edition of his essay, expresses what correct scientific thinking means as well as anyone ever has: "... it seems absolutely necessary that we should reason from nature up to nature's God and not presume to reason from God to nature" (201). In other words, we should reason from the facts and not from preconceived or *a priori* ideas.

We can never take God's point of view. Darwin would similarly write, "It is impossible to reason concerning the will of the Creator ..." (1844, 133). Malthus is, I think, making the same point Chambers would make when he attacked the arrogance of scientists who claim to be able to stand outside nature and invent or impose laws from their divine perspective. Said Chambers, "It is to the chilling repression of all saliency in investigation, which characterizes the scientific men of our country and age, that I object ..." (*Explanations*, 179). Once we depart from or close our eyes to the book of nature, as Malthus would put it, "We may return again to the old mode of philosophising and make facts bend to systems, instead of establishing systems upon facts" (*Essay*, 126). Malthus connects this to discovering the immutable laws of nature, but his emphasis here is that these laws must come out of the facts; hence, if a law does not account for the facts very well, it would have to be abandoned. Bending the facts to the system's view is thinking from God's viewpoint which, as the humble clergyman T.R. Malthus realized, is not a legitimate thing to do. Had he been interested in the matter of species creation, he would probably have said that special creation adopts the divine point of view and he would have rejected it accordingly.

If there is one utopian thing about Malthus, this writer who was known for his opposition to all things utopian, it is his lament, this fear of his that "We

may return again to ... make facts bend to systems" as if the dream of paying strict attention to fact had been achieved. He was dreaming here more than he knew. Making the facts fit the preconceived system has continued to plague every academic field. It is all-too-human, as human as population increase. I think it would have been painful to Malthus to admit that. He wanted to believe it could be different. (So did Socrates. He thought maybe people could become rational.) Everybody has to have one dream. It seems this was his--- that the days of preconceived thinking, taking God's point of view, or leaping outside the world in order to understand the world, were over. It's never over. Ramrodding facts to fit a system or a hero, and erasing any facts that cannot be made to do that, is a vice we have to continually watch out for---as well as the outraged reaction on the part of scholars when this is pointed out to them.

Malthus did not claim to be the first to identify the fact of 'an overcharged population' (as he calls it in *Essay*, 120), nor did Darwin claim to be the first to propose transmutation of species or descent from a common ancestor or a struggle for survival. But they did claim to have connected the dots in a way others had not done. Malthus noted that others put off the potential disastrous effects of an increasing population to a remote time (*Essay*, 120, 162; *Summary*, 247). They argued that there was so much land on earth yet to be cultivated that we did not have to worry about running out of food for many centuries. Malthus's reply was: That is a big mistake. "At every period during the progress of cultivation ... the distress for want of food would be constantly pressing on all mankind ..." (120). This has always been happening. It is never not happening. It is happening today: "... the difficulty, so far from being remote, would be imminent and immediate" (120).

This was hard to take for the contemporaries of Malthus. Having a large population was considered a good thing, a source of power. Some writers in England had taken note that the (European) population of the American colonies had been doubling every twenty-five years. They believed this was a sign of growing power and would eventually spell trouble for Britain, leading either to the colonies breaking away or the center of the British empire moving to America. (See Theodore Draper's outstanding *A Struggle for Power: The American Revolution* for a very lucid presentation of all this.) Now Malthus was telling them that population growth could be hazardous, if you did not take measures to make sure that there was enough sustenance for all. We think his argument is outmoded because we have better means to produce more food. Though his focus was on food supply, you could say his point is still valid when we realize that he was essentially arguing that if you increase population without increasing economic opportunity, you are asking for trouble.

A religious objection was also raised against Malthus. Some critics claimed that his warning about population increase went against the biblical command to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth (see Genesis 1:28). He responded in the Appendix to the sixth edition of his *Essay*. "It is an utter misconception of my argument to infer that I am an enemy to population. I am only an enemy to vice and misery ... I believe that it is the intention of the Creator that the earth should be replenished; but certainly with a healthy, virtuous and happy population, not an unhealthy, vicious and miserable one" (2.444-45). God, he argued, would not want us to follow his commands in an irrational way. Reason was always front and center with Malthus.

We should also remember that Malthus faced one particular objection, and did it well, which would later be lodged against the theory of evolution. The complaint was made that no one had ever witnessed the degree of population increase that Malthus claimed was taking place. If the population only doubled every twenty-five years, this "tendency ... [so his opponents argued] would fill the habitable globe with people in a comparatively short period ..." (*Summary*, 265). Of course, that was precisely Malthus's point. The actual rate of increase, as his opponents pointed out, is very different. Therefore, if Malthus were right, something would have to be reducing the tendency, which Malthus says is taking place, to the actual rate and that "must imply such an excessive degree of mortality and destruction of life as to be quite irreconcilable with actual facts and appearances" (266). Where is all this death and destruction? We don't see it.

Malthus's response was two-fold. Firstly, it may seem to be imperceptible to a careless observer, but if you pay careful attention to the facts, you can see it, and secondly, logic, applied to the basic facts we know exist, tells us it must be happening. Darwin would similarly point out that on the surface, we don't see the struggle for existence in nature, but look closely and it is there: "We behold the face of nature bright with gladness, we often see superabundance of food; we do not see, or we forget, that the birds which are idly singing round us mostly live on insects or seeds, and are thus constantly destroying life" (*Origin*, 86-87). Pay careful attention and you will see.

Malthus argues that nature operates in slight ways and nips the problem in the bud before it becomes too obvious: "The laws of nature ... prevent the continued existence of an excess which cannot be supported, and thus either discourage the production of such an excess, or destroy it in the bud, *in such a way as to make it scarcely perceptible to a careless observer*" (*Summary*, 266; emphasis added). In the sixth edition of the *Essay*, after describing how the population will oscillate between distress and happiness (as the population increases, there will be less food for all and the price of labor will fall because

there are so many people competing for jobs, but then the difficulties of raising a family will cause population to decrease again and the cheapness of labor will mean cultivators can hire more laborers to produce more food, until the population is well-fed again, which Malthus admits is oversimplifying a bit), he writes, "This sort of oscillation will not probably be obvious to common view; and it may be difficult even for the most attentive observer to calculate its periods. Yet that ... some alternation of this kind does exist [though less marked and more irregular than just described] ... no reflecting man, who considers the subject deeply, can well doubt" (1.19). Paying attention to facts and logic can reveal things we would be prone to miss because they happen almost invisibly.

Darwin would make the same point that the gradual changes required by his theory of transmutation or evolution are almost imperceptible, but that does not mean they are not happening. Something may be happening so slowly (as with populations and evolution) as to be practically unnoticeable, but we can still demonstrate that it is happening because this theory explains some facts that are otherwise impossible to explain. Simply put, imperceptibility is not much of a counterargument. Malthus was the first to provide this answer. It was a profound point and not merely a trivial anticipation of Darwin's later theory.

Darwin could also have been influenced by Jean-Baptiste Lamarck who stressed the gradual changes in nature and, consequently, their imperceptibility. Lamarck frequently referred to "the imperceptible changing of species" (43; "le changement insensible des espèces", 1.72 in the French edition). It is possible in natural studies to go from one species to a very different one "by slow gradations without having observed any noticeable distinctions" (38). Lamarck relied mainly on the evidence and not so much on logic which was a big point with Malthus. I will return to Lamarck's contributions in Chapter 8.

Herbert Spencer cleverly turned the argument of imperceptibility against the proponents of special creation, in his essay "The Development Hypothesis", first published in 1852 and later appearing in an 1858 book of essays (a year before *Origin*). Spencer's essay was heavily influenced by *Vestiges* even though he never acknowledges Robert Chambers. I should first note that Spencer's main point about development (or evolution, a term he uses once in this essay) is that "... we may pass to the most diverse forms by insensible gradations" (*Essays*, 392). Chambers had referred to "the links of an insensible gradation" (*Vestiges*, 148). It was a major point with him as he mentions or implies gradual, small changes many times over (see *Vestiges*, 145, 149, 153, 192-93, 210, 222, 276; he also emphasizes gradual change in

Explanations, 31, 33, 45-46, 72, 95-96, 122, 151). Darwin too would emphasize this and at one point uses the expression "insensibly small steps" (*Origin*, 499; he also uses gradations, e.g., 220, 244); in the first essay, he had "infinitesimally small differences" (1842, 8). The theory of regular gradation was one of the names that evolution went by prior to Darwin (see Secord, 311-17, *passim*).

Spencer in his essay also describes the development hypothesis in the following ways: "the origination of species by the process of modification" (*Essays*, 391); "slow in its action" but "in time ... produce marked changes" (392); "by small increments of modification, any amount of modification may in time be generated" (392); "a single process of insensible modification" (393). Spencer's response to the criticism that this creation by small gradations cannot be proven was essentially this: Has anyone ever seen special creation take place? Why is this perceived to be just a problem for the development theory? With this argument, we could prove that nothing has been created. His actual words: "... as in all our experience we have never known a species *created*, it was ... unphilosophical [i.e., unscientific] to assume that any species ever had been created. Those who cavalierly reject the Theory of Evolution, as not adequately supported by facts, seem quite to forget that their own theory [special creation] is supported by no facts at all" (389; his emphasis). Immediate invisibility is not the devastating critique that opponents of transmutation think it is, as the actual process of creation is never visible, no matter what your theory is.

Chambers too had treated special or independent creation as a theory, not a fact, and characterized it as "*a supposition which does not even pretend to have a single scientific fact for its basis ... seeking for miracle instead of cause ... a mere prejudice ...*" (*Explanations*, 181; his emphases). In 1853, the year after Spencer's essay originally appeared, Chambers added a long section to the tenth edition of *Vestiges* in which he once again took on his critics. Interestingly, at one point, he used the same argument Spencer had just used, taking note that whatever is said against the development hypothesis can also be turned against the "miraculous mode," relying on the same grounds that it cannot be observed now (xlviiii-xlix in 11th edition, as I do not have the 10th).

For all of them, logic carefully applied to the facts was key to their thinking. As with the early proponents of evolutionary theory, Malthus was impressed by the logical power of his own theory. In Chapter VII of the *Essay*, after presenting some tables of births, deaths, marriages, and proportions of births to marriages and burials for various localities in Europe, Malthus returns to his most fundamental point: "The great law of necessity which prevents population from increasing in any country beyond the food

which it can either produce or acquire, is a law so open to our view, so *obvious and evident* to our understandings, and so completely confirmed by the experience of every age, that *we cannot for a moment doubt it*" (114-15; emphases added). At the end of this paragraph, he reiterates, "Were there no other depopulating causes, every country would, *without doubt*, be subject to periodical pestilences or famine" (emphasis added). This law of checks acting to keep population down is "as *certain and obvious* as that man cannot live without food" (*Summary*, 243; emphasis added). What theory could be more overpowering? It is this self-evident, supremely lucid, logical inevitability that Darwin, Wallace and Spencer pressed for. This is what they saw in natural selection and in evolution, though they carelessly compressed the two theories into one.

Although there would be a need to appeal to a variety of facts in order to prove the theory, in both cases, for evolution and for the Malthusian law of population, it could be said that there are just a few basic facts and then logic takes over. For Darwin, Wallace, Spencer and others, the essential facts were: heredity is a part of life, variations occur, many of them are inheritable, some are more favorable to survival than others, and there is a struggle for existence. *Logic then dictates that natural selection must be happening and in fact creating new species*. How could anyone deny it? For Spencer, it was so obvious that one could authoritatively say natural selection must be *a priori* true.

Spencer was so taken by the theory of natural selection that he enthused "... the truth of his [Darwin's] hypothesis is so obvious as scarcely to need proof ... no evidence is required to show that natural selection has always been going on, is now going on, and must ever continue to go on. Recognizing this as an *à priori* certainty ..." (*Biology*, 1.445; this is in the same place where he coined the term 'survival of the fittest'). He gets a little carried away (no evidence is needed?), but essentially, he means what Malthus meant by obvious, evident, and certain. The only concession that Spencer would allow for the need for proof is that "... evidence may be required to show that natural selection accounts for everything ascribed to it ..." (*ibid.*). His early enthusiasm would wane somewhat in his later essay, "The Inadequacy of Natural Selection" (see Young, 118, for a discussion). It seems that his main objection was that he saw a need for more progress and a greater role for the inheritance of acquired characteristics (which Darwin was not averse to). Spencer wanted to allow for learning to be accumulated and passed on from generation to generation, but to begin with, he was impressed by the logical power of Darwin's theory.

When Wallace wrote to Darwin to convince him to adopt 'survival of the

fittest', he called natural selection "so necessary & self evident a principle" (July 2, 1866; CCD 14. 228). It explained so much that the traditional view could not. How could you not love it? In his autobiography, Wallace wrote, "... I greatly admired [Malthus's *Essay*] for its masterly summary of the facts and logical induction to conclusions ... its main principles remained with me as a permanent possession ..." (*My Life*, 1.232). At the meeting, which I have referred to several times, where Wallace presented his 1864 paper "The Origin of Human Races" (S093), he was concerned to emphasize the logical power of natural selection. "It is sometimes said that we have no direct evidence of the action of this selecting power in nature [recall that this was the same objection made against Malthus's theory]. But it seems to me we have better evidence than even direct observation would be, because it is more universal, viz., the evidence of necessity. It must be so" (clx). And why must it be so? Because to deny natural selection would be the same as asserting that "the strong, the healthy, the swift, the well clad, the well organised animals in every respect, have no advantage over ... the weak, the unhealthy, the slow, the ill-clad, and the imperfectly organised individuals; and this no sane man has yet been found hardy enough to assert" (clxi). Is it facts that make natural selection true or is it logic? It is very hard to tell. But once you see it, it is compelling. No sane man could deny it.

Darwin himself was true to this style of argument. For this, it was likely Malthus more than anyone else to whom he was indebted. Darwin had a neat little twist on the 'grant that' argument---the argument wherein you ask your opponent to grant some very obvious premises and then proclaim that your conclusion inevitably follows (which Wallace used in "The Origin of Human Races", clxi). It is the how-can-we-doubt-it series of propositions. Instead of introducing each premise with 'grant that', Darwin follows each one with 'how can we doubt it'. And please do recall that in his *Essay*, Malthus said of his law of population that it was so obvious "that *we cannot for a moment doubt it*" (114-15; emphasis added; Wallace in his 'grant that' argument used 'none of which propositions can be denied'). Darwin employs his variation of this in 1842 (20) and again in 1844 (108-09). Here is the one from 1844:

If slight variations do occur in organic beings in a state of nature; if changes of condition from geological causes do produce ... effects analogous to those of domestication ... and how can we doubt it ... If such variations tend to be hereditary; and how can we doubt it ... If we admit that every organism maintains its place by an almost periodically recurrent struggle; and how can we doubt it,---when we know that all beings tend to increase in a

geometrical ratio ... whereas on an average the amount of food must remain constant, if so, there will be a natural means of selection, tending to preserve [favorable variations] ... and tending to destroy any with deviations of an opposite nature. If the above propositions be correct, and there be no law of nature limiting the possible amount of variation, new races of beings will ... be formed.

It is simplicity itself. It is obvious. It is incontrovertible. The facts and logic point in one direction. In these essays, what Darwin is doing is convincing himself. He is constructing an airtight argument (by way of a summary capturing it in a nutshell) that bowls himself over in the first place, and then, in the second place, an ideal, sympathetic audience. In the long run, even opponents will have to give in.

In the 1842 essay, in his first attempt at this kind of summary, he is even more concise because when the theory is fresh and new, he is learning to see the argument at its simplest, reduced to its primal elements: "If variation be admitted to occur occasionally in some wild animals, and how can we doubt it ... If we admit such variations tend to be hereditary, and how can we doubt it ... If we admit selection is steadily at work, and who will doubt it ... then, if no law of nature be opposed, there must occasionally be formed races, [slightly] differing from the parent races" (1842, 20; square brackets are the editor's notation to indicate that this word was erased in the original manuscript).

The reason why so many points in Wallace's 1858 Ternate paper ("On the Tendency", S043) corresponded with Darwin's unpublished essays on natural selection is that they were both attentive to the same facts (heredity, variations occur, etc.) and followed *the same logic*. Logic was directing the inquiry. Malthus was the major influence for both of them. I am doubtful whether there is such a thing as pure logic. There may well be a cultural or value factor directing the "logic". But for the time being, I just want to emphasize their devotion to logic and the inevitability this gave their theory.

It is important to remember that it was Darwin and Wallace who made so much of this obvious, and before them, Robert Chambers. Spotting the basic facts and the logic of the situation is not really all that obvious until someone makes it so. It is obvious only in retrospect. Even to Darwin, it was obvious only in retrospect after he had done the work of figuring it out. It is simple, yes, as any good theory should be, but the simple is usually the least obvious thing. The Malthusian principle of population is also obvious, but only because Malthus made it so. Hutton's cycles of time and the ancient age of the earth is another self-evident idea, after he thought it up. It took some careful

thinking and observation to see what was going on. That is why something can be hidden in plain sight for so long, a fact that struck Darwin. "Is it not singular how long obvious phenomena remain unobserved! I never cease marveling at this" (Darwin to his friend W.D. Fox, Sept. 28, 1841; CCD 2.305). It was a point he could not forget even thirty-five years later when he wrote "how easy it is to overlook phenomena, however conspicuous ..." (*Autobiography*, 59).

Malthus was tackling the problem of how logic can be used to reveal the almost imperceptible before any of them. I am not sure if he was *the* pioneer of applying logic to scientific theory, but he was one of the pioneers and the one most directly connected to Darwin and company. Malthus constantly returns to the idea that this law of population inevitably (i.e., logically) follows from the basic facts that human beings procreate, that this sexual urge is not going away, that more are bred each year that can be fed (as Darwin put it), and *voila!* death in some form or other must be checking the population! How could anyone deny it? He will muster more evidence and statistics to establish how sensible the theory is, but the big revelation that he pushes with a fair amount of excitement is that logic heavily favors this insight into what is happening in nature and human life. Logic can help us see the facts we otherwise might not notice.

Nature's actions are sometimes exquisitely fine and thus unseeable or almost so. That is just a fact of life. Malthus would appeal to facts and logic. He could tell his opponents to take a pencil and paper and make the calculations yourself, as Darwin would do with robins (1844, 88; cf. *Origin*, 88-90). Human beings easily outprocreate the soil any time, any day of the week, at any period of history. 'Something's gotta give' is a logical consequence of that. A careful observer will be able to spot signs of this, such as "the natural tendency of the labouring classes of society to increase beyond the demand for their labour, or the means of their adequate support" (Malthus, *Summary*, 270). Malthus could point to the extraordinary increase of population in the United States where nature was more truly approaching its limits or the way births increased enormously after a plague had killed off thousands. He could note how ineffective our help for the poor was, and he could point to famine in other countries as nature's ultimate way of dealing with the problem. Facts back up what he is claiming, but logic plays a major role. In a sense, any good (accurate) law of nature must be logically obvious.

I have gone over all this to demonstrate how incisive Malthus was. Darwin and Wallace admired him as much for his ability to reason well as for his principle of how immense was the difference between population growth and food availability. Therefore, we should pay close attention to anything

Malthus has to say. We should especially wonder how is it that two thinkers like Darwin and Malthus could share so much and yet differ in their humanitarian concerns.

The crowing of how logically powerful natural selection is could too easily turn into dogma. The Duke of Argyll said as much when he complained that natural selection is "so elastic that there is nothing in heaven or on earth that by a little ingenuity [a little logic?] may not be brought under its pretended explanation" (quoted in Glick, *What about Darwin?*, 51). I previously quoted (in Ch. 3, §9) Hooker's criticism in a letter to Darwin that the theory "at first-sight seems overstrained; ie to account for *too much*" (his emphasis) and that "You ... probably ride it too hard," adding "that is a necessity of your case" (Dec. 20, 1859; CCD 7.437). Darwin admitted in *Descent* (82) that he might have "extend[ed] too far the action of natural selection" and "exaggerated its power." By the sixth edition of *Origin*, he had made so many modifications to natural selection that Robert Young only half-jokingly said the book should have been retitled *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection and All Sorts of Other Things* (Young, 119). (Two factors at work in evolution which Darwin added to the work of natural selection were "the inherited effects of the use and disuse of parts" and "the direct action of external conditions" [6th, 637].)

The question we must not escape asking is: Are there cultural assumptions operating here, whether in the powerful logic of the original theory or the later modifications? This brings us to the most interesting aspect of the dynamic between Darwin and Malthus.

~ 3 ~

Malthus was writing his essay in the first place to expose the optimism of writers like William Godwin (1756-1836), British, and the Marquis de Condorcet (1743-94), French. As he informed his readers in the sub-title (of the first edition only), this was an essay on population *as it affects the Future Improvement of Society, with Remarks on the Speculations of Mr. Godwin, M. Condorcet, and other writers*. These writers believed society was almost infinitely improvable. Godwin especially thought most social ills were due to human institutions which could be altered to fix the problem. Malthus did not believe this. It is easy to see why his essay was so controversial. The implications on the matter of poor laws alone, what we call welfare or social services, were tremendous.

Malthus thought the poor laws did more harm than good. Most of what was happening to the poor was due to nature and if so, we should not expect that more than a little could be done to help them. But thinking that little

could be done is not the same thing as believing nothing could be accomplished. He was very concerned about the poor. He criticized Adam Smith for not giving them sufficient attention and for not paying more attention to the phenomenon of an increase of the wealthy while the poor and the working poor were left behind. The true measure of how well a society was doing lay in how well the lower orders were doing, not in how the wealthiest were doing. (On all this, see Chapters XVI and XVII of the *Essay*. E.g., "it must be acknowledged, that the increase of wealth of late years has had no tendency to increase the happiness of the labouring poor," 189; and he considered luxuries, expensive items, and fortunes made in trade to provide "revenue only of the rich, and not of the society in general," 195.) Personally, I think this was one of his most brilliant insights.

Malthus favored a government that would decrease extreme wealth and extreme poverty: "... though we cannot possibly expect to exclude riches and poverty from society, yet if we could find out a mode of government by which the numbers in the extreme regions would be lessened and the numbers in the middle regions increased, it would be undoubtedly our duty to adopt it" (207). He did not believe that the interests of the wealthy and the middle class coincided. Perhaps it would not be a stretch to say that he hated favoring any one class over another, unless it was the middle class.

The early Malthus cannot easily be characterized as a political conservative or liberal. In later editions of his essay, his attitude towards all the lower classes may have hardened, but that is not the case in the first edition. It is perhaps noteworthy that the previous quotation is not found in the sixth edition. He did maintain his critique of Adam Smith for missing the fact that an increase in wealth often leaves the lower, laboring classes behind, though he softened his point somewhat by allowing that an increase in wealth could have beneficial effects for the lower classes (6th, 2.211-28). He also continued to argue that most histories are of the upper classes and that we lack good knowledge of the lower classes (6th, 1.19), and continued as well to express his concern that while farmers and capitalists were getting richer, the condition of the lower classes was getting worse (6th, 1.22; it is possible that he was just describing here an economic state of affairs, but I sense a criticism of this situation). Ultimately, he seemed to believe that only small improvements could be made for the poor (1st, 176, 179, 198). Utopian schemes of grand progress bothered him as being against nature. The poor, he believed, had no natural right to be supported (6th, 2.337). It should also be said in defense of Malthus that he understood that great harm would result if poor laws were changed too drastically and too quickly; he was in favor of their gradual removal: "no man of humanity could venture to propose their

immediate abolition" (6th, 2.336).

No wonder Malthus apologized in advance in his brief preface to the first edition for the 'melancholy hue' and 'dark tints' in this essay. As he says at the end of Chapter XVII, "It is, undoubtedly, a most disheartening reflection that the great obstacle in the way to any extraordinary improvement in society is of a nature that we can never hope to overcome" (198-99). When it came down to the question of whether the ills of society were caused by human institutions or nature, Malthus came down squarely for the latter and argued there was little one could do about nature.

So what does Darwin do with all this? He purifies, in a manner of speaking, the Malthusian theory of all social concerns. More significantly, for our purposes, he removes the preventive checks on population growth and any possibility of increase in food production (see 1842, 7; 1844, 88-90; and *Origin*, 88). These are legitimate steps for nature in the wild. Even if a species (besides man) were discovered which cared for its weaker members, manipulated food supply, and practiced birth control, it would be the odd exception. For most species, these factors are not relevant. Darwin was right to see an increased intensity in the fight for survival in the rest of nature. Malthus saw it too. As I previously quoted him, "In taking a view of animated nature, we cannot fail to be struck with a prodigious power of increase in plants and animals" (the first sentence of the *Summary View* published in 1830).

Then Darwin does something rather suspect. After taking this theory of population that originally was meant to apply to humans and extending it to the wider world of nature (just as Malthus pointed out could be done), Darwin then doubles back and reapplies the theory to humans but *without the social concerns that originally moved Malthus and without consideration of the checks that operate on human population and the human ability to sometimes increase food production*. (D & M, *Sacred Cause*, 368, acknowledge that Darwin did something like this, reappling the science of animals to human societies, but they pass over it quickly and fail to investigate it any further.)

This finally brings me back to the point I raised early on in this little essay on Malthus. In those same pages that likely inspired Darwin to formulate the theory of natural selection, Malthus had issued a warning which both Darwin and Wallace ignored (though Wallace finally saw the point in the book by the American socialist, even if he still missed it in Malthus). Malthus noted that "plants and irrational animals ... are all impelled by a powerful instinct to the increase of their species ... interrupted by no doubts about providing for their offspring ... [But in the case of man] Impelled to the increase of his species by an equally powerful instinct, *reason interrupts his career*, and asks him

whether he may not bring beings into the world, for whom he cannot provide the means of support" (6th, 1.3; emphasis added). He might as well have said (had he known about Darwin's future theory), reason interrupts natural selection. In other words an evolutionist has to ask him- or herself, when did *human* intelligence appear and when did it start taking measures which would have an effect on natural selection (or the population principle) in its own case?

It is possible that natural selection created human intelligence, but once it did, the future development of this intelligence might be beyond its scope, as the game has been altered. We do not know precisely when human reason first appeared, and even if we knew, we do not know what sorts of things it would have been doing. As soon as any intelligence emerged, it is possible that human beings already began manipulating food production and their birth rate. We really don't know how early humans began controlling family size and food supply. The whole premise of natural selection is the dual components of the fight for survival---sexual reproduction and food production---and even if only one side of that is acted on by humans, then it's a different ball game. If both factors are in any way changed by this new intelligent species, then all bets are off. We no longer have natural selection in the strictest sense. As Richard Dawkins has recognized, "modern humans [are] shielded from the cutting edge of natural selection" (*Greatest Show*, 69).

The way mankind manages its own situation is closer to artificial selection than natural selection. The extermination of native peoples far more resembles roguing (the destruction of unwanted plant varieties) than it does any natural process. Artificial selection does not produce the same results as natural selection because in breeding animals and cultivating plants, humans are affecting the circumstances that normally operate in nature. It is not the same fight for survival. In artificial selection, survival depends on the whim of the selector.

Put another way: An organism that would do well under natural selection probably won't make it in artificial selection (depending on the desires and needs of the breeder) and an organism that thrives artificially won't do well in the wild. Why would it be any different when human beings alter their own circumstances? You won't get the same results that pure natural selection would deliver.

Death is the operative principle in natural selection, as Darwin noted in his very first essay (1842, 10; "selection by death"). That is far less true in human society. Human beings can and do have an effect on when death takes place and can prolong life as no other animal can, and in some cases, shorten it for a vast number of people, as no animal does. Humans change the rules. There

may still be some sort of selection going on, but it ain't the natural kind. That's what Malthus was essentially saying about the difference between the way his population principle functions in nature and among humans.

Malthus was thus telling his readers of the sixth edition (which included Darwin) that the population principle does not act in the same way among humans as it does among animals and plants. It is so odd that Wallace did not see this, as he shared some of Malthus's social concerns, especially the one about how an increase in wealth does not do enough for the working poor. In *The Wonderful Century*, after detailing some of the accomplishments of the 19th century, Wallace devotes the last three chapters to the major failures of his time: "Militarism", "The Demon of Greed", and "The Plunder of the Earth". In that next to last chapter, he noted, as Malthus did, that an increase in wealth did not alleviate poverty---"if we take the whole class of manual laborers, little, if any, of the increase has gone to them" (344). He pointed to several writers who agreed that "our modern system of landlordism and capitalistic competition tends to increase rather than to diminish poverty" (357). This was deplorable according to Wallace and fixable. He did not approve of the usual mode of science which went to benefitting the upper classes and left the lower classes in the lurch (in a January 13, 1870 letter to the editor of *Nature*; "Government Aid", S157). He was only mistaken, like everyone else, about Malthus's contribution to this. Wallace did not see that Malthus too, as we saw above, argued that too much attention was given to the upper classes in the study of both history and economics and not enough to the lower classes.

Large scale human actions---that is, by governmental and other institutions, or by the first human tribes---which may be just or unjust, have a bigger role to play than natural selection. One might disagree with some of Malthus's reasoning about what can be done for the poor, but he was at least attempting to understand how the poor might be harmed or benefitted by certain policies. It is true that Malthus believed nature itself limited how much could be done for the poor, but he never said the limit was zero. He also believed that the poor could protect themselves from the worst effects of nature by living more rationally in the way they managed their family size and resources. Nature did not have to be the ultimate arbiter of their fate.

Wallace should have seen all this sooner. So should have Darwin. What happened was that Malthus was read through the eyes of Darwin. Everyone *assumed* that Malthus was harsh in all respects as Darwin said nature was in general. But Malthus had never said that. It was Darwin who put that spin on Malthus by applying his theory to nature and then doubling back, as I said, and reapplying it in the same way to human beings. They were both devoted

to a similar kind of logical reasoning, but they used it in different ways as applied to human beings.

There is another example of how Darwin was more harsh than Malthus. In the sixth edition of the *Essay*, Malthus discussed competition for survival among savages more or less as Darwin would and he seemed to assume that the possibility of extermination among savage tribes was natural. "In these savage contests, many tribes must have been utterly exterminated" (1.75). So far Darwin and Malthus would agree. But when it came to Europeans exterminating savages, Malthus stepped back: "the right of exterminating, or driving into a corner where they must starve ... will be questioned in a moral view" (1.7). He observed that the continued population increase of Europeans in America would have the result that "... the Indians will be driven further and further back into the country, till the whole race is ultimately exterminated ..." (1.8). He was quietly appalled.

Malthus *never* looked at the spread of the European population and its effect of exterminating natives and said to himself, Yes, this is entirely in accord with my theory. As far as he was concerned, his population principle in no way endorsed the genocide of faraway peoples or rationalized it. If we fail to remember that, we do a disservice to historical study.

Recall from the second chapter (§5) that Charles Napier in 1835 made the same criticism as Malthus: "when we oblige them to concentrate their population, they must perish ... We deprive them of a range of territory ... and without which territory they starve! This is not JUST---our first act is one of progressive extirpation, and, therefore, of great injustice" (Napier, 102). Malthus, like Napier, could not accept that this was right. "To exterminate the inhabitants of the greatest part of Asia and Africa, is a thought that could not be admitted for a moment" (Malthus, 1.8). Darwin on the other hand had no problem with it. He could countenance what Malthus could not. That is a sharp difference between them. One could argue that Darwin was being more logically consistent than Malthus in making extermination of humans as natural as for other species (an argument I would not make because Malthus had pointed out the illogic of applying the population principle in the exact same way to humans), but that argument, if it had any validity, only reinforces that Darwin *chose* to pursue a harsh logic that Malthus himself was unwilling to follow.

As important as logic is, it cannot solve all your problems. It cannot tell you what your first principle should be. It cannot tell you what the facts are and it cannot tell you how to choose among the facts---which are significant, which trivial. You need an attitude, a viewpoint, an emotional spirit that will decide what is *valuable* and what is not. Something inside us has to

manipulate the logic. Logic does not deploy itself. It is used by human beings who have decided, for whatever emotional reasons, what their first principle is and how they will prioritize the facts. We are animated by emotions and values that will determine how logic is used. Thinkers who may otherwise be very similar can end up using the same logic in different ways. Malthus, Darwin, and Wallace are three cases in point.

What justified Darwin making this leap of applying the problem of population in the way he did to the human species? I can think of only one answer: His *a priori* commitment to the idea. It certainly was not the evidence. Human beings are not, and have not been for a long time, facing the same dilemma that other organisms are faced with---which is to multiply without restraint (as nature dictates) against a backdrop of a fixed amount of nourishment. It might be said that Darwin was only trying to follow a dictum that he was fond of reminding his readers of: Nature does not make leaps. He wanted to make humans a part of nature as everything else is. But one implication of not making leaps is that neither should scientists. Darwin wanted to place humans within nature and not give them their own unique status. Granted that is an admirable goal. But the real point to scientists not making leaps is that they should not leap beyond the evidence. The evidence in this case is that humans removed themselves a long time ago from the strictest version of natural selection.

Yet Darwin would write to Lyell just before the publication of *Origin* (which I quoted in Chapter 1): "I can see no difficulty in the most intellectual individuals of a species being continually selected; & the intellect of the new species thus improved, aided probably by effects of inherited mental exercise" (CCD 7.345). This could be true up to a point. Low-level intelligence might develop this way, but once intelligence is able to make any changes to the foundational requirements of natural selection, then things have radically changed for that organic creature. If natural selection is all about the pressure to survive in a world of limited food supply and uncontrollable procreation, you cannot take away or alter that pressure and then claim natural selection is still operating. Human intelligence impacts the pressure to survive.

We don't know when human intelligence reached this new level, but it has certainly been so for a very long time, and yet, again, Darwin said in that same letter that he sees his idea of natural selection happening even *now*: "I look at this process as now going on with the races of man; the less intellectual races being exterminated" (ibid.). The facts do not support that this is natural selection. The process going on with the races of man was artificial selection. What happened with Darwin was that inevitable extermination had become another *a priori* principle.

Three years later, he is not shy about writing to Charles Kingsley, "In 500 years how the Anglo-saxon race will have spread & exterminated whole nations; & in consequence how much the Human race, viewed as a unit, will have risen in rank" (CCD 10.72). Near the end of his life, he is still affirming this in a letter to William Graham, "Looking to the world at no very distant date, what an endless number of the lower races will have been eliminated by the higher civilized races throughout the world" (LL 1.316). In that same letter, he also spoke of "natural selection having done and doing more for the progress of civilization." But it could not possibly be natural selection. An altogether different kind of selection is going on.

Natural selection was the view he promoted in *The Descent of Man*. I previously quoted his remark that "the wonderful progress of the United States, as well as the character of the people, are the results of natural selection ..." (*Descent*, 168). He modifies this slightly on the next page when he acknowledges that European nations have reached a stalemate of power and cannot exterminate each other: "With highly civilised nations continued progress depends in a subordinate degree on natural selection" (169). But he goes on to reaffirm that even in modern society the more intelligent are superior and "will succeed better in the long run than the inferior ... this is a form of natural selection." He was twisting the facts to make it appear to be natural selection. He had stopped paying attention to the evidence. Ideology had taken over. In the case of savages, he is even more sure that the ability of civilized nations to eliminate them is due to natural selection. He never stopped to consider for even an instant that this more closely resembles roguing or artificial selection.

It is very clear that, throughout his career, Darwin believed natural selection was still acting on human intelligence in our time and selecting character traits such as "energetic, restless, and courageous" which he lists in connection with the emigration from Europe to the United States. But the struggle in the modern world is more than just a struggle for survival in a world of limited sustenance. It is a struggle for status and comforts that go well beyond survival. Whatever that is, it isn't the natural selection that plants and lower animals face. The same is true of the ruthless domination of undeveloped countries by colonizing Europe. This is about more than mere survival. Darwin drew a simple equation here and in doing so he went beyond the evidence. Only an *a priori* faith could get Darwin to insist on the near universality of natural selection.

This is not the only time he relied on *a priori* logic. He also did it when he banished all catastrophes from the history of organic development and made slow, gradual development, one of the keystones of natural selection, the

exclusive explanation not only of the birth of new species, but the extinction of old ones. Extinction and birth had to be equally gradual. Somebody else might want to modify the theory to include occasional catastrophes or cataclysms as playing a role, but Darwin would have none of it. Even in his earliest approach to this, while he comments that sudden extermination may be possible (1842, 23, 26), he also says, "I shall doubt very sudden exterminations" (28). By the time he wrote the next essay, he no longer needed doubt. He was sure. Extermination is always gradual (1844, 145, 147, 180, 210, 245).

In *The Origin of Species*, he is forthright that catastrophes would never be incorporated in his thinking. "Natural selection ... will ... if it be a true principle, banish the belief ... of any great and sudden modification in their [organic beings'] structure" (*Origin*, 121-22). He extends this to extinction. In explaining how natural selection can help us figure out the length of time in the history of fossils, he comments, "... species are produced and exterminated by slowly acting and still existing causes, and not by miraculous acts of creation and by catastrophes ..." (533). In fact, Darwin believed that extinction is generally a slower process than the production of new species: "... species and groups of species gradually disappear ... There is reason to believe that the complete extinction of the species of a group is generally a slower process than their production ..." (355; cf. 359).

When we get to his later work on man, nowhere in the section on extinction or anywhere else in *The Descent of Man* does Darwin appeal even once to cataclysm as a possible explanation for what is happening to native populations. He writes as if this process of extinction of the natives were a normal outcome of natural selection. That is not how others saw it. Darwin's insistence on the gradualness of extinction was itself a belief in the miraculous. It gave his theory perfect symmetry which was too enticing to let go of. Species, he believed, had to go out as gradually as they came in. It was a result of his *a priori* commitment to the miracle and attraction of such symmetry. I do not at all mean to ridicule Darwin. The *a priori* can be extremely valuable in scientific thinking. But it retards progress when it becomes dogmatic. It should never be used to override evidence. That is a scientific sin. Unfortunately, Darwin's refusal to let go of this kept scientists for many decades from fully acknowledging that cataclysmic extinctions have played a significant part in earth's history. This attachment to the *a priori* also kept Darwin from acknowledging Malthus's point that the struggle between population and the provision of sustenance was not the same in the human world as it is in the rest of nature.

Desmond and Moore want to blame Malthus for the turn towards harshness

in Darwin's view of things. They try to imply that Darwin once had a more objective view of natural selection that did not emphasize the triumph of the stronger over the weak. According to them, Darwin ended up in a very different place from where he started: "Natural selection was now predicated on the weaker being extinguished. Individuals, races even, had to perish for progress to occur" (*Sacred Cause*, 151). But I would note: If Darwin started in a different, kinder place, it was because of the earlier evolutionary thinkers who had a kinder, gentler approach. Darwin was still searching. Desmond and Moore make Malthus his turning point. It was only "... *after* reading Malthus [in 1838], Darwin's imagery became much bleaker ... It galvanized Darwin into rationalizing the darker side of tribal contacts" (*Sacred Cause*, 147; their emphasis).

There are several things wrong with putting it all on Malthus. First, it was Darwin's choice to be influenced by Malthus. He was indeed young and perhaps impressionable to a degree, but he was not a teenager when he read him. He was almost thirty when he encountered *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. Second, Malthus did not tell Darwin to make the population principle as intense in the world of humans as in the natural world. Malthus in fact said you cannot do that. This was entirely Darwin's doing. It was his decision to read Malthus in the way he did and change Malthus's point. Malthus never made extermination or greed or competition into first principles as Darwin did. In fact, as we saw, Malthus was critical of trade which increased the wealth of the rich; this did not help society in general or the working poor.

Third, Wallace was influenced by Malthus too, but he did not take Malthus to the extreme that Darwin did, thus making it even more obvious that it was up to Darwin to interpret him as he did. In his first paper on this, "On the Tendency of Varieties" (S043), which was the result of thinking about Malthus, Wallace saw what Darwin saw: "The life of wild animals is a struggle for existence" (54) in which "the weakest and least perfectly organized must always succumb" (57); as he also says, this process of the occurrence of better adaptations of organs for existence "creates as it were a new animal, one of superior powers, and which will necessarily increase in numbers and outlive those inferior to it" (60). But all the language of colonialism and dominance that is in *Origin* and to some extent in Darwin's first two essays does not intrude into Wallace's thinking (Wallace's 'outlive' is not nearly as intense as Darwin's frequently repeated 'beat').

Under the influence of Darwin and the society they lived in, Wallace could be as hard as Darwin on native peoples and condemn them all to extinction because of their inferiority, as he does in that 1864 paper "The Origin of

Human Beings" (S093). He states his belief that Darwin's law of the struggle for life "leads to the inevitable extinction of all those low and mentally undeveloped populations" (clxiv-clxv) and this results from "the inevitable effects of an unequal mental and physical struggle" with Europeans who are superior (clxv). The lower races are doomed.

But in that same paper, he also sees some of the positive signs in native cultures. He recognizes that savages ("the rudest tribes") are "social and sympathetic" and take care of their sick and feeble, so that "The action of natural selection is therefore checked" (clxii). (Compare Wallace's 'checked' to Malthus's 'reason interrupts' the strict application of the population principle.) These last points of Wallace were something Darwin was unwilling to see. Darwin would never agree that natural selection was to any great degree checked and he objected to this positive assessment of savages as social, scribbling in the margin of his copy of Wallace's paper, "Does not act ... only civilized man!" Already, despite all they had in common, Wallace was thinking a little differently about human beings. He was not prepared to be as ruthless towards savages as Darwin was, regardless of what both got from Malthus. *If* there was a bleakness in Malthus, Wallace struggled against it, Darwin did not. Darwin chose to follow this bleakness and exploit it "with ten-fold force" (see below). Whatever Wallace took from Malthus, he did not feel bound to remain stuck there. In the following year, he was questioning the civilizing mission of colonialism in "How to Civilize Savages" (S113orig; 1865) and realizing that competition would unjustly destroy the natives in "On the Progress of Civilisation in Northern Celebes" (S104; also 1865). Darwin never followed this line of thinking. He chose to take Malthus to places Malthus was never prepared to go.

Fourth, I would remind Desmond and Moore that it was only *after* reading Malthus that Darwin, like Wallace, discovered the theory of natural selection. Before reading Malthus, there was no specifically Darwinian theory of evolution. Natural selection from its inception in Darwin's head was always about the stronger (or more dominant or better modified) extirpating the weak. There was never any kinder version of natural selection. Even in his two youthful unpublished essays, Darwin is explaining natural selection this way. Darwin's writings before Malthus (when he was a young naturalist and trying to eschew words like 'high' and 'low' in favor of 'more complicated') may have been on the way to the theory of natural selection, but he wasn't there yet. When Desmond and Moore write in the above quote (from 151 in their book) that "Natural selection was *now* predicated on the weaker being extinguished" (emphasis added), they imply that there was a gentler natural selection before. That is untrue. There was *never* a theory of natural selection

before Darwin read Malthus. The bleakness was always part of the theory itself as Darwin originally conceived it. Natural selection and its bleakness came into existence simultaneously with Darwin's reading of Malthus. Wallace struggled against that bleak vision. Darwin did not.

The bleakness would come out full blown in Darwin's first two essays and in *The Origin of Species* where he consistently maintains this view of the dominant supplanting the feebler (e.g., *Origin*, 155, 472, and dozens of other places in the book). In the essays of 1842 and 1844, he refers to De Candolle's 'war of nature' (e.g., 1844, 87). He called it "the doctrine of Malthus applied in most cases with ten-fold force" (88). That expression alone indicates a certain awareness on Darwin's part that he was doing something *more* with Malthus. He was self-aware about his own agenda. Desmond and Moore are trying to obscure that.

When man is doing the selecting, Darwin says, "He often grudges to destroy an individual which departs considerably from the required type ... Very different does the natural law of selection act ... the selection is rigid and unflinching" (1844, 95; 'rigid and scrutinising' in 1842, 9). 'Rigid and unflinching' is not what Malthus would say, as he insisted that human beings could and did put certain checks on what nature alone would do. In one example of foxes, Darwin states, "The less fleet ones would be rigidly destroyed" (1844, 92). The system as he originally conceived it, for humans and animals, was always ruthless. It was 'selection by death', as he bluntly called it in 1842 (1842, 10). From the beginning, it was about a struggle for existence with extinction being the booby prize for the losers. While Malthus would have agreed that the population principle was this rigid in nature as a whole, he never applied it this way to human society (nor did Wallace). Human beings can and do employ preventive checks.

But wait! There is more! A fifth point! Be it noted that Darwin's travel on the *Beagle* from 1831-36, where he became aware of colonial genocide and *casually accepted* it, took place before his inspiration from Malthus in 1838. Malthus, as explained above, did not accept European genocide of native peoples. None of this can be put on Malthus. Darwin rails against slavery here and there in the *Diary* and much of it was collected in the last chapter of *The Voyage of the Beagle*, but the *Diary* contains nothing comparable about the colonialists' extermination of native people. There never was a young, pure Darwin that Desmond and Moore imagine. They know this. They try to hide it from themselves by claiming, "Before that moment [reading Malthus], Darwin had envisaged the 'future destinies of mankind' more benignly" (*Sacred Cause*, 146). That is overly generous. They themselves quote the deleted passage from the original *Diary* where Darwin comments "... if all the

Indians are butchered, a grand extent of country will be gained for the production of cattle ..." (*Diary*, 181; quoted in *Sacred Cause*, 148). I discussed all this in the second chapter (§5). Darwin was formed by his society from the beginning. So too was Malthus, but Darwin made some choices here that Malthus did not. I think there was a purer naturalist somewhere inside Darwin, but he never fulfilled that potential, at least not towards human beings.

Malthus did not make Darwin interpret the struggle for life as ruthlessly as he did for human beings. Malthus's advice would have been to hold back from that. Humans are not like other animals who have no control over their situation. Malthus was very clear about that. Darwin took Malthus, or his principle, to a place not envisaged by Malthus. Darwin did this all on his own without any instruction from the great economic theorist.

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Considering how much Malthus's work meant to Darwin and how close they were in their use of logic, and considering too the harsher choices Darwin made and his more rigid ideas about the pressurized system of survival for all organisms, it should come as a big surprise that Darwin would say, "If the misery of our poor be caused not by the laws of nature, but by our institutions, great is our sin" (*Journal*, 500; *Voyage*, 431). Malthus would certainly not have said that. It turns out that it is not quite accurate to attribute this to Darwin either, though this sentence appears in his published journal. Neither Darwin nor Malthus would be likely to blame poverty on human institutions rather than on nature. If one checks the quote carefully, the surprise dissipates because Darwin was not using these words to register his own opinion, but the opinion of others.

I did not know that the first time I read this quotation in Stephen Gould's *The Mismeasure of Man*. I loved this saying and still do. I was ecstatic that Darwin could see such a thing and proclaim it so well. So was Gould. He quotes it at least four times in *Mismeasure* (on the title page, as the last line of the book on 424, and on 19, 27; and on 32, he alludes to it). He calls it "perhaps the greatest" line Darwin wrote (424). I wholeheartedly agree---that is, I would agree if Darwin really meant it. Never once does Gould give the context in which Darwin used it in *Journal*, nor did he give the deeper historical context for the remark. Attributing to Darwin this thought about the sin of making nature the culprit for the problems of the poor instead of human institutions is yet another way of enhancing the mythical Darwin.

The textual context is that long passage in the last chapter of *Journal of Researches*, or *The Voyage of the Beagle*, where Darwin is attacking slavery.

He considers and dismisses some of the arguments that pro-slavery advocates make in defense of the odious institution. One is that "self-interest will prevent excessive cruelty" to which Darwin responds "as if self-interest protected our domestic animals, which are far less likely than degraded slaves, to stir up the rage of their savage masters" (431). Then there is the argument that ropes in poor people. Some try to mitigate slavery by comparing the situation of slaves to that of the poor. This is where the 'great is our sin' line appears:

It is often attempted to palliate slavery by comparing the state of slaves with our poorer countrymen: if the misery of our poor be caused not by the laws of nature, but by our institutions, great is our sin; but how this bears on slavery, I cannot see; as well might the use of the thumb-screw be defended in one land, by showing that men in another land suffered from some dreadful disease. Those who look tenderly at the slave owner, and with a cold heart at the slave, never seem to put themselves into the position of the latter; what a cheerless prospect, with not even a hope of change! [Voyage, 431; originally in *Journal*, 500]

Note that the truth of the 'great is our sin' line is actually irrelevant to Darwin's argument. He never says he agrees or disagrees with it. Whether Darwin believes that it is true we mistreat the poor has nothing to do with his point. He is offering a hypothetical: *Even if* it is true that the poor are abused by us (by our institutions), this is not relevant to slavery. Whatever the truth of our responsibility for increasing the misery of the poor, that is no excuse for mistreating slaves. If we have not done well by the poor (creating or aggravating their plight by the way we treat them institutionally), that is no defense of the way slaves are treated---as if slaves have nothing to complain about just because we have not done any better with the poor.

To explain why the analogy to the poor is irrelevant, Darwin offers another analogy. This is his analogy within the analogy. Comparing slaves and the poor is, he says, like trying to defend torture in one country by pointing out that people in another land suffer a dreadful disease. His point is that both analogies are equally bizarre to him. Treatment of the poor is about as relevant to slavery as torture is to disease---which is a very strange thing to say (see below).

So does Darwin agree that we have sinned in trying to turn poverty into a natural event to be accepted and endured instead of criticizing its human cultural causes? I doubt it very much. He passed up a great chance here to give it his very strong assent, if that is how he felt. Instead *he is silent*. He

does not call this an important thought that deeply reveals our human failings. He says absolutely nothing in support of it and quickly passes over it. As far as I know, he never returns to it anywhere in his writings. Darwin really uses the saying in a limited way to argue that this statement about the poor cannot be used to defend or palliate slavery, without actually saying whether he agrees or disagrees with it. He is merely saying that *if true*, it has no bearing on slavery.

This is a very strange argument he is making. Slavery has no relationship to poverty? The inappropriateness of the comparison Darwin makes between the two analogies (the poor versus slaves and disease versus torture) decreases the likelihood that he had any sympathy for the poor which the first analogy, taken in isolation, would suggest. In the case of disease and torture, the two really have nothing to do with each other (assuming the disease is not man-made). It would be exceptionally absurd to argue that a natural plague in one country could justify the use of torture in another country. But it is terribly absurd of Darwin to argue that this crazy analogy is comparable to making one between slaves and the poor. Slavery is a type of poverty and when slaves are freed, they will immediately join the ranks of either the desperately poor or the working poor. Whatever one believes about the poor---that they are the result of our institutions, or the reverse, that they are a product of nature---it is not unreasonable to believe the same about slaves.

How the poor are treated by us may well be related to the same causes that produce slavery. One would have to investigate the matter. On the face of it, it would seem that both groups are powerless and under the rule of the economically powerful who manipulate their circumstances. It is a wonder that this could completely escape Darwin. The fact that Darwin could separate poverty and slavery as if they were totally different animals (as disease and torture are) does not help to make it believable that he sympathized with the poor as victims of human institutions. If he really believed in that saying, he would have stressed that slaves are in a situation similar to that of the poor and that *both* slaves and the poor are similarly mistreated. *Both* are created by human institutions. *But Darwin does not make that argument.*

The most obvious reason why Darwin drew no such comparison---why he saw poverty and slavery as different as night and day---is that poverty for him was essentially an economic condition, in which he saw no injustice, whereas slavery was not primarily an economic system, but rather an occasion for human cruelty, as when a slave stirred up the rage of his master. One was strictly a natural, economic situation, the other had the potential to unleash the bestial side of man. The two were as different to Darwin as disease and torture.

Think back to what Huxley said at the end of the American Civil War about how emancipated slaves were now on their own, the whites can have a clean conscience and wash their hands of it, and the fate of pauperized Negroes was now up to nature, that is, it will be determined by their own natural inferiority (see Ch. 4, §4). In short, no humans could be blamed for what happens from here on in. The most likely result will be that the former slaves will now live in poverty. Huxley was a perfect example of what the 'great is our sin' line was intended to expose---the sin of using nature to hide what human institutions were doing. What would Darwin have thought about this? We have no idea because there is no written record of any response to Huxley. Darwin avoided these issues in his personal correspondence.

While it is too risky to conclude much from Darwin's silence (not only his silence about Huxley's opinions, but his silence in never again addressing the 'great is our sin' idea), I think there is a minimum conclusion to be drawn: Darwin felt no big commitment one way or the other to the plight of the poor. He would not embrace them or demonize them. I also think he believed he was practicing pure science which had little or very few political implications. It is just a little astounding that a man who used so much loaded language in his work---dominance, the feeble, beating the small and weak, invading, and more---could not see how deeply political his science was. He was a Social Darwinist for other cultures, even if he was hesitant about following this at home.

As to the historical context of 'great is our sin', William Godwin in his 1793 *Enquiry concerning Political Justice* argued that most social evils are the result of human institutions. But it was another later essay by Godwin that inspired Malthus to write his famous *Essay* on population in 1798, and in that *Essay*, Malthus took strong exception to Godwin's position in the earlier *Enquiry*. He was convinced that human institutions made but slight contribution to human misery, the deeper causes coming from the laws of nature which we ignore at our peril---that is, he took the position and committed the sin that is criticized in the saying Darwin referenced. Malthus's critique of Godwin (on all his points, not just the one on human institutions) takes up six chapters in his original population essay, beginning with Chapter X. Just based on Malthus's reading of Godwin, it seems that Godwin was arguing that society could become more humane if we devoted our attention to how our institutions created our ills (e.g., he thought that punishment of criminals was counter-productive and that there must be a better way to reform them). At the very least, Godwin wanted us to take a closer look at the causes of our problems, even if some of his solutions were idealistic.

Malthus would have none of it. "But nothing is so easy as to find fault with

human institutions; nothing so difficult as to suggest adequate practical improvement" (*Essay*, Ch. XIII, 165). Malthus, while admitting that human culture can create abuses, was a defender of institutions ("the abuse of any practice is not a good argument against its use", *ibid.*), and saw most social evils as the result of nature. The pressure that growth in population put on access to limited subsistence is not something that human beings could overcome and make go away. He was convinced that society, and particularly the lot of the poor, was largely unimprovable. His arguments against Godwin's ideas about the perfectibility of mankind also applied, he believed, "... against any very marked and striking change for the better, in the form and structure of general society; by which I mean *any great and decided amelioration of the condition of the lower classes of mankind*" (172; emphasis added). The poor will always be with us and that is nature's doing, not social organization. He was even steadfastly opposed to *imagining* a utopian society because he believed that this would do more harm than good (Ch. XV).

On the other hand, to be completely fair to Malthus, he was concerned about the plight of 'the labouring poor' (189) and the poor in general. He wanted to be realistic about what was possible. He was critical, as I reported earlier, of Adam Smith for not sufficiently taking the poor into account when considering what made a nation wealthy (Ch. XVI). He thought that manufacturing did a lot for the rich and little or nothing for the poor, the most numerous and important part of society (Ch. XVII). He had an equally dim view of foreign trade. But the general impression that Malthus made was that class society with its attendant sufferings was natural, not institutional, and that the poor would just have to get along as best they could in this world in which nature devours the poor (which is why Marx and Engels hated him; Engels wrote, "Malthus declares in plain English that the right to live ... is nonsense"; quoted in Young, 197). Malthus acknowledged that his view was dark. "But the best directed exertions, though they may alleviate, can never remove the pressure of want ... It is, undoubtedly, a most disheartening reflection that the great obstacle in the way to any extraordinary improvement in society is of a nature that we can never hope to overcome" (198-99).

Though I cannot be sure about this, I would guess that the 'great is our sin' saying was formed in response to Malthus or his ideas as they were popularly repeated. One ardent Malthusian in 1833 (two years into Darwin's world trip on the *Beagle*) complained of the reaction against Malthus's doctrine of population, "of the hideous, the yet sustained outcry which has risen against it" (quoted in Young, 36). As far as I can tell, Godwin would have emphatically agreed with the saying Darwin refers to, Malthus would have disapproved it (that is, probably disapproved, but there is the qualification I

noted above of his concern for the poor). Where Darwin stood is a very hard to tell, but it is more likely he would have been on the side of Malthus than Godwin's. He admired the "common reasoning" of Malthus and lamented to Charles Lyell, "what a discouraging example Malthus is to show during what long years the plainest case may be misrepresented and misunderstood" (June 6, 1860; CCD 8.242). In 1866, he complained to Wallace that Malthus was "absurdly misunderstood" and added that he drew some comfort from this when his own views have been misstated (CCD 14.236).

Probably many others picked up on Godwin's point, particularly as applied to the poor and the causes of their suffering, because Darwin cites the 'great is our sin' saying as if it were the opinion of many. He is noting their opinion, not his own. This point on the poor and human institutions could have been the one exception where he agreed with Godwin, but that is very unlikely. Darwin does not disown the 'great is our sin' thought, but he does not endorse it either.

And here is a big, a really big, by-the-way: By the way, one could reformulate Darwin's sentences about the poor and slaves for the Aborigines. 'If the extermination of Aborigines be caused not by the laws of nature, but by our institutions, great is our sin ... Those who look tenderly at the colonialist, and with a cold heart at the Aborigine, never seem to put themselves into the position of the latter; what a cheerless prospect, with not even a hope of change!' I am pretty sure that Darwin would have winced if he had read those lines. My guess is that he would have chosen not to respond, but had he done so, I think he would have said that the author does not understand science or the laws of nature. Then if you pointed out to him that they are just his sentences about slaves rewritten for Aborigines, he perhaps would have been really embarrassed.

The important thing to note is that this criticism in essence was indeed made in Darwin's lifetime and he never did respond, as far as I know. Remember Herman Merivale arguing in 1841 that the law of Mr. Darwin and Mr. Poeppig is imaginary. Neither the mysteriousness nor the inevitability of native extermination made any sense to Merivale. It is humans who are responsible, not nature. So too Stokes, who had previously been Darwin's cabin mate. There were also others who attacked the doctrine of inevitability. Recall the unnamed author quoted by Bonwick, who accused the proponents of inevitable extermination of being the true barbarians (*Last*, 376; quoted here in Ch. 2, §6)---which is the equivalent of saying that 'great is our sin' for making extermination natural, when it is all due to our actions. If Stephen Gould believed that the 'great is our sin' line is such a wonderful thought (and it certainly is), then by all rights, he should have found and celebrated these

other authors as magnificent humanitarians, deserving of being memorialized for all time. But alas and alack, western scholarship has seen fit to erase them from the canon of established teaching.

With colonialism, Darwin was quite content to let a human institution get passed off as natural and thus confuse us about what is natural and what is cultural. As Tony Barta has said, Darwin gave us a "fateful confusion of natural history and human history [which] would be exploited fatally by others ... the legacy of Darwin promoted the idea that it is natural for beings with more power to displace others, and to intervene in nature for such ends" ("Mr. Darwin's Shooters", 118, 135-36).

Here is what genuinely puzzles me, not just about Darwin, but about so many writers who expound on Darwin and evolution. Wallace came much closer to fulfilling the promise of the 'great is our sin' idea than Darwin did. It could serve as the keynote of Wallace's entire professional life. He practically adopted it as a principle to live by, to be driven by. Darwin at best was a patchy fulfillment of it, and I am not sure even that much can be said of him. Yet Wallace is often denigrated by scholars to the point that they have driven him from public consciousness. Now there's justice for you, academic style.

If humanitarianism is the quality we appreciate the most in any scholar or scientist, Wallace had it in abundance. He always put justice ahead of science. As he once said in a letter to the journal *Nature* ("Government Aid", Jan. 13, 1870; S157), "... though I love nature much I love justice more." He was objecting to government funding of science (which would potentially have been of much use to him) because he perceived that it would benefit the upper classes most of all. "... if we once admit the right of the Government to support institutions for the benefit of any class of students or amateurs however large and respectable, we adopt a principle which will enable us to offer but a feeble resistance to the claims of less and less extensive interests whenever they happen to become the fashion." Wallace often takes my breath away.

He did not just oppose slavery. He spoke up for the colonized peoples, for working class children suffering the effects of air pollution, and for women who he believed should have more economic independence and more control over the institution of marriage. You want someone who would put justice ahead of human institutions and could distinguish nature from cultural practices? In Wallace, there walked such a man.

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We have three thinkers---Wallace, Darwin, and Malthus---all of whom saw the importance of the principle "Yearly more are bred than can survive" (as

Darwin phrased it in 1844, 91), yet each of them employed it in different ways with respect to humankind. How does one explain this? Different temperaments perhaps.

Of the three, Darwin was the harshest and most extreme. Not that you would get this impression from many scholars who try to soften Darwin's views. They prefer to see this harshness in later Darwinians. They might even like to stick it to Wallace who embraced the extinction of intellectually inferior human groups in that 1864 essay. But Darwin himself insisted on the inevitability of the extinction of so-called lower, inferior races from the beginning to the end of his career. He never wavered from this point. Wallace, on the other hand, even in the essay where he endorsed Darwin's views, had doubts about negative assessments of savages and the strict application of natural selection to human society. His doubts would only grow.

Fatal competition (*Origin*, 159) was at the heart of Darwin's system for both nature in general and humanity in particular. He could live with it if competition sometimes had devastating effects. Some form of the word appears about 70 times in *Origin*. It is not surprising that he would be unmoved by Wallace's suggestion (in that late letter to him) to reconsider how the Malthusian pressure of limited food production affects human population. That pressure creates competition which was key to his thinking. It also just so happens that competition was a major component of British society. Recall from Chapter 3, §6, that Darwin disliked trade unions and cooperative societies and thought they were "a great evil for the future progress of mankind" (CCD 20. 323-24). Wallace was capable of questioning his own basic social assumptions, like the value of competition. Darwin not so much.

All three were British and Christian, but those are broad categories. It means they shared some cultural context. Wallace in addition was working class and had gone to work at an early age. That does not necessarily mean one would have more sympathy for the downtrodden and powerless, but in Wallace's case, it did. Malthus has been interpreted as a mean-spirited economist, indifferent to the fate of the poor. But he was critical of Adam Smith for devoting too much attention to the wealthy and not enough to poor people. He believed there was little one could do for the poor, but little did not mean nothing. And he certainly disapproved of the extermination of native populations, a position Wallace also came to in his own way.

In some ways, Wallace was a more original and creative thinker than Darwin. Darwin stuck to the premises of his system and his culture. To a great degree, he ruthlessly followed these premises to their conclusion. But was it the only conclusion one could draw? Wallace never stopped experimenting in his thoughts, combining and recombining ideas and stretching their logic. He

never stopped paying attention to the evidence. He was not as trapped as Darwin. He had the capacity to connect things you would think could not be connected.

In the 1893 interview (S736) which I quoted from earlier (Ch. 5, §3), Wallace thought of a way to bring together natural selection and his concern for social justice, in this case for women as well as for society as a whole. In one and the same interview, he points out the negative role of natural selection---"The method by which the animal and vegetable worlds have been improved and developed has been through weeding out. The survival of the fittest is really the extinction of the unfit"---and yet manages to argue that by letting women become the selecting force in choosing marriage partners, human society will advance. Wallace looked forward to a future reformed society in which "no woman will be compelled, either by hunger, isolation, or social compulsion, to sell herself either in prostitution or uncongenial wedlock." He continued:

As things are, women are constantly forced into marriage for a bare living or a comfortable home. They have practically no choice in the selection of their partners and the fathers of their children, and so long as this economic necessity for marriage presses upon the great bulk of women, men who are vicious, degraded, of feeble intellect and unsound bodies, will secure wives, and thus often perpetuate their infirmities and evil habits. But in a reformed society the vicious man, the man of degraded taste or of feeble intellect, will have little chance of finding a wife, and his bad qualities will die out with himself ... I hope I make it clear that women must be free to marry or not marry before there can be true natural selection in the most important relationship of life.

There were not too many people who were capable of combining science and social justice like this. He also stressed that in this future society, women "will have remunerative occupation," thus removing the economic necessity which usually forced them to marry unwisely. Wallace was willing to pay attention to certain facts that others ignored (just as he pointed out to Darwin that the facts concerning human societies were more complicated than a simple application of natural selection could account for; see near the end of last section of Ch. 4, and Ch.5, §4).

I suppose the point to all this is that an idea like natural selection, or any idea, does not have to have just one logical path. It can be manipulated, It can have multiple paths. It depends on what your other premises or inclinations

are. Logic cannot tell you what your ultimate hopes and dreams are. And it cannot tell you which pieces of evidence to focus on. Those decisions come from somewhere else.

We have three thinkers who thought hard about the same principle, the population principle, which in one form is natural selection. Each used it in different ways. Darwin's theory was more than just a theory with a built-in logic. He was capable of using his own theory in ways that did not always match what strict logic would dictate. Some of these logical inconsistencies I have already pointed out and others I will return to in a later chapter, but to sum up here, they include: maintaining that natural selection is operating, even when its fundamental premises have been altered (as when human beings deliberately limit family size or improve food production); declaring the impending extinction of higher apes but lower human beings; expanding the reach of natural selection beyond local environments to European conquest overseas; countermanding the slowness of natural selection by claiming that the rapid extermination of indigenous peoples was also a result of natural selection; and ignoring that what colonialism was doing was much closer to artificial selection. Darwin adapted his theory to the process of colonization without so much as a glance at what he insisted were the proper features of his natural selection. Wallace at the same time was capable of using the same theory to promote socially progressive ideas.

The ultimate reason for pointing this out is to achieve a purer science (keeping in mind that human beings are incapable of reaching absolute purity). If "Science is what we have learned about how to keep from fooling ourselves," as physicist Richard Feynman once put it (quoted in Deutsch, 22), then we had better stop fooling ourselves that cultural values have no impact on science. The aloofness of science is a myth, a terribly bogus one at that. The investigation in this chapter is just one example of how this can happen. The evidence tells us that Darwin's use of natural selection was never pure.

In his own way, Darwin was holistic. He wanted one smoothly operating theory with no hiccups, no gaps, nothing left unsupervised by his one law. He forced human beings all over the world to fit a European hegemony, though it meant disregarding some of the facts. Natural selection as used by Darwin was an expression of a culture, or, I should say, one side of that culture. It was not pure science, though there was some of that too. It was science and culture---a powerful combination that was also a trap.

8

SOMETHING HAPPENED BEFORE DARWIN ARRIVED

Reference to the *Origin* erased the troubled past out of which this new order had emerged, so that debate about the meaning of the science could begin with a clean slate in 1859. It was, as George Eliot wrote in another context, "the make-believe of a beginning" [epigraph to Ch. 1 of *Daniel Deronda*] ... [Hero-worship of Darwin] obliterates decades of labor by teachers, theologians, technicians, printers, editors, and other researchers, whose work has made evolutionary debate so significant during the past two centuries.

--- James Secord (514, 518)

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There was nothing clean about the origin of evolutionary science or about the way its history has been told. The birthing process for this new view of nature began long before 1859 and many mainstream scientists tried to make sure it would be stillborn. But academic after academic has latched onto that celebrated year and transformed into an imaginary beginning.

It is still the considered opinion of far too many writers on this subject. In his 2012 book, Rudolf Raff claims that in *Origin*, Darwin presented a "completely novel idea, common descent" (Raff, 160). That is make-believe history. Creationism, writes Jerry Coyne in *Faith versus Fact* (2015), was "the only credible explanation, before 1859, for the remarkable fit of organisms to their environments" (92; making this point several times throughout the book). According to Coyne and most academics, that is the year everything changed and for the first time we were given something to challenge creationism. To make that case, they have to get rid of people like Robert Chambers, who did a superb job defeating the theory of independent creation,

and Jean-Baptiste Lamarck who was doing his own credible bit even earlier. Few and far between are the scholars who see that by the time *Origin* appeared, "the concept of gradual development over aeons of time had long ceased to be revolutionary," a welcome insight from Patricia Fara (*Erasmus*, 208).

The elevation of 1859 to a unique status is historically incorrect. That is the focus of this chapter and the next. I am picking up from a point I introduced in Chapter 5, §5, where I suggested that Darwin brought up the idea of the dominant becoming ever more dominant at the end of Chapter II in *Origin of Species*, before he gave evidence to justify it, in order to demarcate his theory of common descent from the ones that came before him. He wanted his readers to know that his theory of development or evolution was headed in a different direction. So what was the previous direction of evolutionary theory? Now is the time to become more familiar with the original spirit of common descent as it was enunciated by the developmentalists who put this theory on the map in the first place.

We should begin by reminding ourselves of the distinction between the theory of evolution or common descent and the theory of natural selection. The former refers to the general idea that species are mutable and are evolving out of, or descending from, previous species, while the latter is a specific suggestion as to the mechanism by which this is happening. Darwin's theory properly speaking is natural selection, not the theory of evolution. He does not own the general theory. The theory of evolution was not his personal discovery. He did not invent it. He was not the first to come up with it or promote it and push it into public consciousness. He did not create the excitement around this theory. He was not even the first to prove it is more probable than the theory of special creation. He joined a movement that others had started. The problem was what direction this theory would take and that is where Charles Darwin had something decisively different to say.

Darwin certainly was not the first to prove evolution by a preponderance of the evidence. That credit should go to Robert Chambers. Some would say it goes to Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, the French naturalist, and they are probably right, as he understood that changes in the environment were somehow inducing changes in the structures of organisms. It was possible to prove *that* this was happening, even if they did not understand *how* it was happening. The excitement over the development of life on earth, over the possibility that species were giving birth to new species, and even the possibility that human beings developed from previous life forms, preceded Darwin's *Origin of Species* by at least six or seven decades, maybe more. I have said several times already and will say it again further on that Darwin joined a controversy

and a revolution in progress. He was a latecomer to the field (through no fault of his own as he was born later). The year he was born, Lamarck was already arguing that humans evolved from apes and Erasmus Darwin had broached this even earlier (I will get to both further on).

As previously noted, for some time prior to Darwin's book, evolution was known as the development hypothesis or theory of development. Sometimes it went by other names such as the theory of the transmutation of species, or the mutability of species, and even the theory of regular gradation (for this last, see Secord, 311-17 *passim*). In the days of Erasmus Darwin, it was called generation. The theory had been kicking up a ruckus for well over fifty years before *Origin* was published, partly because freethinkers and atheist newspapers were reporting on it. The theory of evolution or development was offered as a contrast to the theory that God had created each species separately or independently from one another.

If you believed in the development hypothesis, that was automatically taken to mean that you did not believe in God's agency in creating each species. There were at least three major prior "first offenders" as Darwin liked to think of himself (see below)---his own grandfather Erasmus Darwin, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, and Robert Chambers, all three of whom I will review in this chapter. Darwin liked to call it the theory of descent or common descent (sometimes adding 'with modifications') and Herbert Spencer popularized it as evolution. It seems that Darwin first used 'the theory of descent' in his 1842 essay (40). In his Notebooks, there are constant references to "my theory" (both before and after he discovered Malthus), but he never gives it a name or describes it in detail. This general theory of descent or mutability of species had a very long pedigree to it and should not be confused with Darwin's particular theory of natural selection.

That the two theories are still often taken as one in people's minds is partly Darwin's fault because he did not carefully separate them in *Origin*. For example, he did not spell out which evidence proves only common descent and which natural selection. It is all mushed together in *Origin*. Any evidence offered in support of natural selection would also be evidence for the concept of evolution, but evidence for the general theory would not necessarily be evidence for natural selection. Similarities in structure (like the bones in human hands and the bones in a bat's wings), for example, tend to demonstrate a common genealogical origin, but would still leave open how this had happened. Most of the evidence in *Origin* is for evolution, the theory that Darwin did not originate; a smaller portion helps to establish natural selection.

Proving *that* evolution is happening and proving *how* it is happening are

two different things. It is possible to prove the former without proving the latter. Darwin acknowledged as much in Notebook E 69: "It is one thing to prove that a thing has been so, & another to show how it came to be so." Many scientists of the time objected to any theory of development on the grounds that until it was proven *how* it was happening, the proof of its reality was incomplete. That was nonsense. They just did not want to admit that reasonable arguments were being made which demonstrated species were not immutable but derived from previous forms. To forget the difference between proving *how* something is happening and proving *that* it is happening is to erase the accomplishment of people prior to Darwin who were doing a good job of the latter though they were at a loss to establish the former.

It was only twelve years later in *The Descent of Man* that Darwin finally pulled apart the two theories in an uncompromisingly lucid way: "... I had two distinct objects in view [in *Origin*]; firstly, to shew that species had not been separately created, and secondly, that natural selection had been the chief agent of change, though largely aided by the inherited effects of habit, and slightly by the direct action of the surrounding conditions" (*Descent*, 81). He says that some people forget this (82), but then he had helped them forget it by being unclear about it in *Origin*. He admits that, concerning natural selection, he might have "exaggerated its power, which is in itself probable, [but] I have at least, as I hope, done good service in aiding to overthrow the dogma of separate creation" (82). Yes, good service, following that of others, but he never maintained a full awareness of those other contributions. (Fascinatingly, he also admits in this paragraph that in writing *Origin*, he had "not, however, [been] able to annul the influence of my former belief, then almost universal, that each species had been purposely created" and because of this he may have gone overboard in looking for a special function for each structure in an organism. The overestimate of what natural selection does he thus attributes partly to a holdover of the belief in special creation. Old ideas do not die as quickly as so-called revolutions would have us believe.)

When people have huge emotional debates over evolution, it is usually the general theory that is at issue, not Darwin's specific theory. The idea that we are descended from lower life forms is the hot issue that still gets many people going. They may also be upset with natural selection, but in the first place, it is the claim of common descent that engenders controversy. It is important to keep the two ideas separate and remember that debates over evolution are not the same thing as disputing Darwin's theory. Darwin does not own the theory of evolution, it was not his invention, as I said, so that when anyone challenges it, this is not a narrow combat with Darwin. *Deniers of evolution are taking on a host of thinkers who preceded Darwin.* This also

applies to all those after Darwin who have championed evolution but disagree that natural selection is the explanation. My interest is in those who came before. *Fierce disagreement over evolution is not a fight with one man, it is a much larger intellectual battle with people who thought about evolution differently than Darwin did.*

~ 2 ~

The first evolutionists were not lightweights. Their work was profound in its own right. They were not less ingenious than Darwin. The term genius is thrown around too often, but if that label is going to be pinned on Darwin, the others deserve it just as much. They did not fail where he succeeded. *In particular, they did not fail to see the theory of natural selection, they simply were not looking for it, they were after something else, another view of life.* Their evolutionary ideas cannot be dismissed just because they were not obsessed with survival of the fittest. The differences between Darwin and the earlier evolutionists could correctly be called a conflict of worldviews, which I will return to in the next chapter. Darwin came up with his particular theory because in a sense he was geared to think that way. Malthus appealed to him because his population principle was what he needed to complete his ideas about the world and life.

It is incorrect to say of the thinkers prior to Darwin that they anticipated him. It trivializes what they did. It is meant to be dismissive of their work and assumes that whatever little bit they did awaited full completion in Darwin. Anticipation is properly said of slight comments that were tossed off but not fully investigated. It is improper to say this of deep analysis that achieved something valid.

So far, throughout this book, I have argued that there is a huge gap between the real, historical Darwin and the scholarly mythological Darwin. Did Darwin contribute to his own mythology? Mostly no, I would have to say. Others pressed him into service on issues he wanted little to do with, sometimes because he was too honestly confused to commit himself to one position. He gave no one a speck of reason to think he was an atheist. A materialist, yes, but even many a devoutly religious scientist could lay claim to that. Every scientist is a materialist to the degree that he or she examines and looks for answers in the material that life gives us. But Darwin made it very clear that he moved gradually from theism to agnosticism and never expressed any interest in atheism.

I have not addressed the issue of atheism, so I will quickly dispatch it here. It is to this day a part of the myth of Darwin that he was an atheist. There is no evidence to support that and plenty to contradict it. In his first draft essays

(1842 and 1844) for what would become *Origin*, references to the Creator or God appear frequently. They do not come up as often in the first edition of *Origin*, but they are still there. In *Origin*, there are about 8 mentions of the Creator; four are in reference to the theory of independent creation, but another four are positive references to God or the Creator (especially, see 199, 534). In his *Autobiography* (77), he tells us that when he wrote *Origin*, "I deserve to be called a Theist ... as far as I can remember ..."

That his memory was accurate is confirmed from a May 1860 letter to Asa Gray. This was written about six months after *Origin* was published and he there tells Gray that "I had no intention to write atheistically" and "my views are not at all necessarily atheistical" (CCD 8.224). In an 1879 letter to J. Fordyce, Darwin wrote, "In my most extreme fluctuations I have never been an Atheist in the sense of denying the existence of a God," adding that "generally ... but not always," agnostic would be a better description of him. His son Francis in a section on religion gives many examples from his father's communications of his belief that religious views ought to be private (LL, 1.304). In the *Autobiography* (77), he says that the one argument in favor of the existence of God which still impresses him as having any weight is the one that reasons from the "impossibility of conceiving this immense and wonderful universe ... as the result of blind chance or necessity" which leads to calling himself a theist.

Some people (like Dawkins in *Greatest Show*, 403-04) make a big deal of the fact that Darwin did not include "by the Creator" in the last sentence of the first edition of *Origin* (after 'breathed' where he speaks of life "having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one"---this is the sentence that begins "There is grandeur in this view of life ..."). He added "by the Creator" after "breathed" for the second and all subsequent editions. Dawkins claims that Darwin was "[p]resumably bowing to pressure from the religious lobby." Dawkins also points out that he wrote to Hooker to complain, "But I have long regretted that I truckled to public opinion, and used the Pentateuchal term of creation, by which I really meant 'appeared' by some wholly unknown process" (LL 3.18). All of this is a misrepresentation of the evidence.

In the first place, Darwin had in the first edition, as noted above, already referred to the Creator or God several times. No one pressured him to do that. In the next to last paragraph, *in that very first edition*, he had already mentioned "the laws impressed on matter by the Creator" (this phrase goes back to 1842, 51, and 1844, 253). It was no big deal to use "by the Creator" again in the last paragraph. In the second place, if this had really bothered Darwin all that much, he could have removed it in later editions, but never did. There is another sentence in the last chapter of *Origin* where Darwin

added "by the Creator" in the second edition and then rewrote the sentence in later editions in a way that removed the phrase. In the first edition, he writes, "Therefore I should infer from analogy that probably all the organic beings which have ever lived on this earth have descended from some one primordial form, into which life was first breathed" (530). In the second edition, he added "by the Creator" after "breathed" just as he did in the last sentence of the chapter. But by the third edition and for all the following editions, he rewrote the passage and "by the Creator" dropped out---something he did not do for the last sentence.

To quote the rewritten sentence from the sixth edition: "... we must likewise admit that all the organic beings which have ever lived on this earth may be descended from some one primordial form" (643). It would be hard to insert "by the Creator" here. It has, as it were, naturally dropped out. Darwin could have done the same for the last sentence of the book, if it really bothered him that much. He could have written something like: There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, and all the organic beings descended from a few forms or some one primordial form, etc. He never does this, though this is what he did for the comparable thought a few pages earlier. If Darwin was upset, as Dawkins claims, at having to insert "by the Creator" in the last sentence to satisfy some sort of religious lobby, why did he not ever remove it, as he did in the other line? It was Darwin's choice to keep "by the Creator" at the very end in all the editions right up to the sixth and last. We should respect that intellectual choice and not put it down to any religious pressure which he could have easily resisted.

In the third place, there are a few significant points to be made about the earlier variations of the famous "There is grandeur" line. In the 1842 version, the line begins "There is a simple grandeur ..." and it is true that Darwin does not use 'Creator' here. However, he does use it in the sentence *immediately before* the 'grandeur' sentence: "... the existence of such laws should exalt our notion of the power of the omniscient Creator." In the 1844 essay, the line begins "There is a [simple] grandeur ..." (the brackets indicate that 'simple' was erased) and this time in the sentence *immediately following*, Darwin writes of "the laws impressed by the Creator" (as in the next to last paragraph of the first edition of *Origin*). In the last paragraph of both essays, he mentions the Creator three times! Darwin did not need any encouragement from a religious lobby to refer to the Creator. He was quite capable of doing it without any encouragement from the outside. The 1842 essay especially was written for no one but himself.

There is another curious thing about the famous 'grandeur' ending of *Origin* which most people miss and which I did not notice for the longest

time. In both the 1842 and 1844 essays, Darwin uses the 'grandeur' line *twice*. The second appearance (containing 'originally breathed') is the one that corresponds to the line in *Origin*. But the first usage is this: "There is much grandeur in looking at the existing animals either as the lineal descendants of the forms buried under thousand feet of matter, or as the coheirs of some still more ancient ancestor" (1842, 51; it is almost the same in 1844, 253). He makes no biblical allusion here. It is straight science. It is fascinating that when Darwin came to write *Origin*, he chose the version with the biblical language of 'life ... having been originally breathed' and omitted the more scientific sentence. Perhaps he simply liked the poetry of it. Whatever it was, he *chose* to sound more biblical. No one forced him.

In the fourth place, Dawkins misconstrues what Darwin was complaining about in his letter to Hooker. He does not tell his readers what the next sentence in the letter was. Again, the sentence Dawkins quotes is this: "I have long regretted that I truckled to public opinion, and used the Pentateuchal term of creation, by which I really meant 'appeared' by some wholly unknown process." Considering that Darwin had so little problem with 'Creator' and 'creation', what could he possibly have meant? The context of his remark is that Darwin was responding to an anonymous review (typical for the time) in the *Athenaeum* of a book by William Carpenter, in which the reviewer pointed to Darwin's use of Pentateuchal terminology. Dawkins notes this, but leaves out the details so that he gives us only half the story. The reviewer was making the point that even Darwin had to acknowledge the mystery of creation by using Pentateuchal language. He was not, however, referring to the words 'Creator' or 'creation', nor was he even referring to the last sentence of *Origin*. He was referring to the previous paragraph. He meant Darwin's expression "life was first breathed" (*Origin*, 530; 'first breathed' became 'originally breathed' in the last sentence of the book). This implied, according to the reviewer, that there must be a creative force at the origin of life (see LL 3.18, note†). The reviewer's criticism pertained to what Darwin wrote *before* he added "by the Creator".

Why did this bother Darwin enough to complain about it to Hooker? He reveals that in what he said next to Hooker, which Dawkins does not quote: "It is mere rubbish, thinking at present of the origin of life; one might as well think of the origin of matter." He did not like making any highly speculative statements about the origin of life. His was a theory about how life developed, not how it began. This is a point Darwin often made. Darwin insisted that he was not that kind of thinker who speculates about origins (which might seem odd given the title of Darwin's book, but bear in mind that Darwin's title refers to a process of originating, not an origin in time or place). He is investigating

the processes of life, not its ultimate origin. For example, Darwin would argue that his theory could explain how simple nerves developed into the complex human eye, but, as he writes in *Origin* (219-20), "How a nerve comes to be sensitive to light, hardly concerns us more than how life itself first originated." He did not like entertaining the big questions like the origin of life or even the origin of organs.

Further confirmation that this was Darwin's concern can be found in Darwin's response to the review that criticized him (April 18, 1863; ESL, 78-80). Darwin rarely responded to comments about his work, but this time he did. The major bone of contention in his response to the *Athenaeum* was the reviewer's belief in spontaneous generation and why certain simple organisms remain simple in the process of evolution. But Darwin granted that the reviewer had one good point to make: "Your reviewer sneers with justice at my use of the 'Pentateuchal terms,' 'of one primordial form into which life was first breathed': in a purely scientific work I ought perhaps not to have used such terms; but they well serve to confess that our ignorance is as profound on the origin of life as on the origin of force or matter" (78). God or the Creator had nothing to do with this controversy.

His regret (as expressed to Hooker) in full context was that the language he used of breathing life into a few forms or into one was biblical (at Gen 2:7, God breathes life into man, though Gen 1:30 has "everything that has the breath of life" without specifically indicating that God did the breathing). The biblical allusion suggested he was concerned with explaining the origins of life. His regret is not really about a belief that God created organisms and the laws by which they develop (which he had already affirmed), only about the implication that he was attempting to say something about where life originally came from. He summed it up in the *Autobiography* (78): "The mystery of the beginning of all things is insoluble by us; and I for one must be content to remain an Agnostic." But never an atheist.

We must also not forget that Darwin was thrilled to have received a letter (Nov. 18, 1859) from clergyman Charles Kingsley who, having read the first edition of *Origin*, expressed his belief that it was a more noble conception of God that he created the world by beginning with a few "primal forms capable of self-development" rather than that God "required a fresh act of intervention" for each subsequent form (CCD 7.380). (Never mind that Erasmus Darwin and Robert Chambers had already promoted this idea.) Charles Darwin was extremely happy to tell others about Kingsley's letter (e.g., CCD 7.409, 433; in the latter, to John Lubbock, he called it a "grand letter from Kingsley with a capital sentence on the theological bearing of such notions as mine"). He eagerly included Kingsley's sentence in the second

edition of *Origin* in the last chapter (2nd, 481; in 6th, Modern Library, see 638). As he made clear to his publisher, it bothered Darwin very much that there were people "who may ... say that my Book is irreligious" (CCD 7. 410). Considering how many evolutionists and religious people today love to foment a bogus conflict between religion and science, it is ironic that Darwin himself embraced reconciliation between science and religion.

Similar confusions have reigned regarding Darwin's attitude towards chance and design because no one pays attention to the evidence of what he actually wrote.

Darwin never proposed a role for chance to the large extent that many would today. Most scholars portray him as believing that randomness is at the bottom of organic change. In reality, Darwin was far more a determinist and he was not shy about saying so. What he actually believed about variations could better be called purposelessness or without direction, and he was never fully convinced that this was the right view. He did not totally reject design, as so many claim, but expressed considerable confusion on this issue. His system in fact is riddled with, if not actually founded on, a design that grows out of the struggle for existence which favors the dominant. He was always a strict determinist and would severely limit the operation of chance, if it operates at all, which was a very big *if* for Darwin.

In a May 22, 1860 letter to Asa Gray, Darwin introduces his discussion of design versus chance with "I am bewildered" and concludes with "the more I think the more bewildered I become" (CCD 8. 224). He cannot make up his mind about these issues. On September 26, 1860, he considers that "All your [Gray's] arguments about Design seem to me excellent ... But I well know that I am muddle-headed on this subject" (CCD 8.389). Still later, November 1860, "I cannot think that the world, as we see it, is the result of chance; & yet I cannot look at each separate thing as the result of Design ... Again I say I am, & shall ever remain, in a hopeless muddle" (CCD 8.496). This was his confusion to the end of his life.

In February 1861, he tells Gray that with respect to Gray's beliefs about design, "I have no real objection, nor any real foundation, nor any clear view.-- As I before said I flounder hopelessly in the mud" (CCD 9.30). He brings up mud again in another letter to Gray in December 1861: "With respect to Design, I feel more inclined to show a white flag ... You say that you are in a haze; I am in thick mud" (CCD 9.369). To Joseph Hooker (July 12, 1870; ML 1.321), he writes, "My theology is a simple muddle; I cannot look at the Universe as the result of blind chance, yet I can see no evidence of beneficent design, or indeed of design of any kind, in the details." In the May 1860 letter to Gray he says the same thing but uses the expression 'brute force' instead of

'blind chance': "On the other hand I cannot anyhow be contented to view this wonderful universe & especially the nature of man, & to conclude that everything is the result of brute force" (CCD 8.224; note that there is here yet another hint that he regards man as a crowning achievement of creation). At the end of a July 3, 1860 letter to Gray (CCD 8.273-75), he says 'blind, brute force.' By 'brute' Darwin seems to mean what we mean by impersonal or perhaps thoughtless. Doubt everywhere you look in Darwin's writings on the issue of design versus chance.

In *Wonderful Life* (290), Stephen Gould tries to convince us that Darwin did assign a significant role to chance by quoting from one of those letters to Asa Gray (and Gould repeats part of this on 291): "I am inclined to look at everything as resulting from designed laws, with the details, whether good or bad, left to the working out of what we may call chance" (May 22, 1860; CCD 8.224). Gould calls this Darwin's "profound reply" (290) and "Darwin's proper solution" (291) (and it just so happens to be close to what Gould thinks). But Gould makes three serious misrepresentations regarding this quote.

The first is that he conveniently omits the very next sentence in Darwin's letter: "Not that this notion *at all* satisfies me" (Darwin's emphasis). Gould presents Darwin as if he were promoting this view, this 'proper solution', when in actuality he was informing Gray that this was for him an *unsatisfactory* solution. He was not affirming this division of operation between design and chance. He was saying it sounds good, but he cannot accept it.

Secondly, Gould completely misses that the whole point of this and Darwin's other letters on this subject was to express how he cannot make up his mind. He is confused and can form no final, definite opinion. This is not by any stretch an endorsement of chance.

Thirdly, even in the sentence that Gould quotes, he overlooks the fact that Darwin qualifies chance with the phrase "what we may call." It appears that he is referring to chance as a temporary designation until we learn more. That is quite typical of Darwin in all his writings and was standard thinking for almost everyone in the 19th century. They all believed that everything was determined and that the only reason we ever speak of chance or probabilities is that we are just admitting our temporary ignorance of all the factors and laws at work. If we knew every relevant force in the flipping of a coin, we could predict exactly whether it would turn up tails or heads. Some writers acknowledge this point with respect to Darwin---that by 'chance', he often meant temporary ignorance (e.g., Beer, *Darwin's Plots*, 78-79)---but they push it aside and fail to see its significance for Darwin.

In *Origin* (138), Darwin refers to "Mere chance, as we may call it," again in this qualified way. In the seventh chapter ("Changes of Habit or Instinct") of the fifth edition (261) he refers to "the selection of *so-called* accidental or spontaneous variations" (my emphasis). Again and again, he tells us that 'accidental' and 'chance' are not quite the right words. None of this is in any way an absolute affirmation of random contingency. In fact, Darwin often tells us in his work that 'chance' only denotes our ignorance of the laws that must be operating. It has no reality besides that. Near the end of Chapter III of *Origin* (99), Darwin explains: "When we look at the plants and bushes clothing an entangled bank, we are tempted to attribute their proportional numbers and kinds to what we call chance. But how false a view this is!" A little further on (100) in the same paragraph, he says, "Throw up a handful of feathers, and all must fall to the ground according to definite laws." Generally, determinism is his preferred mode of explanation for anything.

The first two sentences of Chapter V ("Laws of Variation") of *Origin* are these:

I have hitherto sometimes spoken as if the variations---so common and multiform in organic beings under domestication, and in a lesser degree in those in a state of nature---had been due to chance. This, of course, is a wholly incorrect expression, but it serves to acknowledge plainly our ignorance of the cause of each particular variation.

This sentence would remain the same in all six editions. At the end of the first paragraph of this chapter in the first edition, Darwin writes, "... we may feel sure that there must be some cause for each deviation of structure, however slight." A definite cause, that is, and not chance. In the last sentence of Chapter V, he explains, "Whatever the cause may be of each slight difference in the offspring from their parents---and a cause for each must exist---it is the steady accumulation, through natural selection ... [etc.]" (emphasis added). Darwin explained himself very clearly. This is pure Newtonian thinking.

Darwin was always looking for definite laws in evolution. He writes to Hooker, "The formation of a strong variety or species, I look at as almost wholly due to the selection of what may be incorrectly called *chance* variations or variability" (Nov. 23, 1856; CCD 6.282; his emphasis). There it is again: bringing together 'chance' and 'incorrect'. He never uses 'incorrect' to describe design or determinism. He will express doubts about design, but he never outright identifies it as incorrect. Darwin also made this parenthetical comment to Hooker: "(No doubt the variability is governed by laws, some of which I am endeavoring very obscurely to trace.)" Darwin is sure there are

laws (but not a law of probabilities as in quantum physics; such an idea cannot reasonably be assigned to Darwin's worldview).

Gould admits that there is a good deal of determinism in natural selection, but still tries to save the day for the random: "Randomness is a part of Darwinian theory, but it has a very definite and restricted role ... It operates only in the genesis of raw material---genetic variation. It plays no role at all in the production of evolutionary change ... the world's order could only be produced by a conventional deterministic cause---natural selection in this case" (*Richness*, 223-24). Does Darwin ever say that the mutations or variations, the raw material of evolution, are the result of chance?

Almost as if he were out to contradict Gould and everyone else who might suggest this, Darwin said the exact opposite, "In the same manner [as with the stones which an architect uses to make a building in an analogy Darwin makes here] the variations of each creature are determined by fixed and immutable laws ..." (*Variation*, 2.301). If I were nominating a sentence for the least quoted of Darwin's scientific remarks, this one would be my candidate. No one likes to remember that Darwin spoke of "fixed and immutable laws" in the production of variations. But he did. So scholars created a fictional Darwin who would never say that. Yet there it is, he said it, the real historical Darwin. It should not be a surprise. It is exactly how a Newtonian would speak. It is equivalent to what he said in the fifth chapter of *Origin* (162), which I quoted above: "... we may feel sure that there must be some cause for each deviation of structure, however slight."

The same thought can be found in the concluding chapter of *Variation*, where he returns to his analogy of a human architect building structures with stones (2.502): "each modification must have its proper exciting cause, and ... each is subjected to law, yet we can so rarely trace the precise relation between cause and effect, that we are tempted to speak of variations as if they spontaneously arose. We may even call them accidental ..." But that is only our ignorance speaking. In the last two pages of that chapter, Darwin is emphatic that "accidental ... is not strictly correct" (2.515) when it comes to explaining variations (or the shape of the stones in his analogy). What is accidental (he really means purposeless), according to Darwin, is the connection between the first variations of an organism and the end result tens of thousands of years, or more, later. He does not believe there is an overriding purpose or an intelligence guiding each step along the way of selecting variations to an outcome so many years ahead. But he is not certain about that conclusion. We can see why. If each step is predetermined and following natural laws, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that so is the end result no matter how far away in time it is.

While Darwin was a determined determinist, he tended to be ambivalent about teleology in nature. But it is fair to say he leaned heavily in that direction. He tries to declare that his system of nature is free from design with specific ends in view, but his analogy of a human architect undermines his point. The architect represents natural selection, the stones are the modifications or variations which occur in nature, and the structures being built are the organic beings. What Darwin avoids pointing out is that just as the architect may have a blueprint in mind and certainly some knowledge of gravity as he goes about constructing, so too could natural selection operate with similar ideas and knowledge. If Darwin wanted to drive home the point that natural selection operates according to no preconceived plan, he should have made the architect a mindless idiot who arbitrarily throws stones together (or he could have used as an analogy an octopus with no brain, but with thousands of arms randomly throwing stones around; that is how many conceive of natural selection, but not Darwin). With a mindless idiot or brainless octopus in charge, some structures will fall apart because they have no stability at all, some will last a little longer before collapsing (i.e., going extinct), and some will last a very long time through the sheer luck that they just happened to have the right balancing of stones. *That* would be the most appropriate analogy for a directionless natural selection. But that is precisely what Darwin did not offer. Hence, his deeply rooted ambivalence.

Darwin also tries to use human or artificial selection as an analogy and here too his point falls apart. When ancient man began unconsciously selecting, for example, the kind of dogs or pigeons he wanted, he "never dreamed," says Darwin, "that he had made the first step in the creation of" the carrier pigeon and the greyhound so many generations down the line (2.509). Early man did not have the later organisms in mind as the end product. That is true. In the same way, argues Darwin, natural selection cannot be said to have had an ultimate goal in mind when the process of selection began eons ago. He is essentially arguing that no supremely intelligent being could foresee so far ahead what evolution would lead to. But why not, if each step along the way is determined?

Darwin was making a presumptuous argument not least because it went against his own and Chambers's point that the difficulty of imagining immense time should not be an obstacle to understanding how evolution works. Those who argued against evolution would say, We cannot imagine incredibly gradual change leading to bigger results, and if we can't imagine it, it cannot be happening. Darwin correctly pointed out what a fallacious argument that is. But he was employing the same argument: I can't imagine an Intelligence planning millions of steps ahead; therefore, it can't be happening.

It is the same bad reasoning, no matter who offers it. It would indeed be preposterous to think that any human being could have foreseen where a very long trail of selection was leading. But why should Nature or a Supreme Intelligence suffer from the same handicap? Why could not such an Intelligence plan many moves ahead, many more than a human being could? Why should immense time block our ability to understand that a goal had been laid down long ago, or to put it another way, that the laws of nature, like natural selection, are following a vast blueprint? Darwin was falsely relying on this difficulty of seeing all the steps in "an almost infinite time" (as he sometimes liked to say). "Difficult for us to see" does not logically translate into "cannot be happening."

Of course, Darwin knew better. That is why he concludes *Variation* by calling it an insoluble problem. His analogies for natural selection were always full of ambivalence on this issue. (I am not arguing that a Supreme Intelligence is needed to explain evolution. I believe in looking for smaller, more natural explanations. Invoking God explains nothing. I am only pointing out that Darwin's arguments against a teleological blueprint in nature make no sense, as evidenced by the fact that he cannot even give the proper analogy for it. Also, he built in his own teleology when he made survival of the fittest the goal.)

Another sign of Darwin's aversion to seeing chance operating in nature was his reaction to those who accused him of this. Perhaps the most trenchant criticism of Darwin on this issue came from astronomer John Herschel who famously called natural selection the law of higgledy-piggledy. (I do not believe Herschel committed this to writing. Darwin told Lyell that Herschel's comment had come to him "by round about channel" [CCD 7.423].) Herschel might just as well have called it the law of no rhyme or reason. What he was doing was summing up what many scientists felt when they realized that there was a lot of trial and error in Darwin's view of nature. Others before Darwin had seen waste in nature, but Darwin had raised it to a higher degree.

And what was Darwin's reaction to this criticism? *He was quite annoyed by it.* He told Lyell (Dec. 10, 1859; CCD 7.423) he was not sure what Herschel intended by this, but "it is evidently very contemptuous," and Darwin considered it a "great blow & discouragement." I believe Darwin understood what Herschel meant more than he let on. It is not believable that he had absolutely no idea what Herschel was implying. A year later he himself used the same expression in another letter to Lyell (Sept. 26, 1860; CCD 8.392), telling him that "I am writing higglety-pigglety, as I reread your letter." He is writing hit-and-miss, out of order, responding randomly to this and that thought. With Herschel, more likely, he was embarrassed to say out

loud, or in a letter, what Herschel was getting at: Accusing Darwin's theory of being too open to a completely random development with no order to it.

Darwin clearly felt a strong repugnance for any characterization of his theory which wedded it to pure chance in a fundamental way. No one would have characterized the law of gravity or any other of Newton's laws as higgledy-piggledy. *Darwin wanted his theory to be treated with the same respect as Newton's theories.* Ironically---and herein lies the great distance between Darwin and modern scholars---Herschel's intended criticism would probably be taken as correct and a compliment today. Ernst Mayr (518) quotes a remark by H.J. Muller "that higgledy-piggledy can provide an adequate explanation of organic adaptations." But not for Darwin, and that is the point everyone misses. He needed more order than that, even though he saw the trial and error in the directionless variations which occurred.

Trial and error implies a kind of undirected development, in that there is competition for which will be the best fitted mutation, but that is not the same thing as random. Trial and error can still be a very orderly process, which is how Darwin saw it. In fact, trial, even with some error in it, strongly suggests that there are *rules governing this trial/contest.* Those, like Herschel, who feared that Darwin's system was random missed this point. But many more understood that a trial or contest for fitness or dominance was anything but random. Survival of the dominant is not directionless. With dominance as the goal, there is a definite blueprint in Darwin's vision of nature. In addition, as noted above, the variations or mutations in this competition are the result of definite laws, according to Darwin. Really, almost nothing is left to chance in Darwin's view.

In Notebook B 101 (from sometime in 1837), he compared the law of planetary motions to the laws of animal generation (son Francis used this passage as the epigraph for *Foundation*, containing Darwin's first two essays on natural selection). Here it is in full:

Astronomers might formerly have said that God ordered, each planet to move in its particular destiny.--- In same manner God orders each animal created with certain form in certain country, but how much more simple, & sublime power let attraction act according to certain laws such are inevitable consequen let animal be created, then by *the fixed laws of generation*, such will be their successors. [emphasis added]

Could someone with this Newtonian aspiration really embrace the random as an ultimate explanation of anything? That idea of "the fixed laws of generation" did not change when thirty-one years later he said "fixed and

immutable laws" in *Variation* (2.301).

In a way, it was silly and unscientific of Darwin to make these pronouncements. Since neither he nor anyone else had any idea of what caused mutations or how heredity in general worked, any definite belief about determinism or chance was pure speculation. How could someone possibly have a reasonable belief about something being determined or random if they are totally clueless about the causes? But it is not entirely unreasonable either. It fits what they knew of the world at that time. Darwin is confessing that if he were to lean in any direction, it would be towards determinism. This was still the era of Newton and no one, including Darwin, had any reason to be anything but a Newton man.

Late in life, Darwin wrote, "you have expressed my inward conviction ... that the Universe is not the result of chance" (LL 1.316; this is from the 1881 letter to Graham in which he said that the Caucasians have beaten the Turkish hollow). He adds that what gives him pause is that he feels none of our convictions are worth any more than a monkey's, if a monkey has convictions, but still his own conviction is that chance is not the operative principle. In his *Autobiography* (77), he mentions "the extreme difficulty or rather impossibility of conceiving this immense and wonderful universe, including man with his capacity of looking far backwards and far into futurity, as the result of blind chance or necessity." (I believe that he means to apply 'blind' to both chance and necessity, and by 'blind' of course he means not-designed.) Here too he adds that our minds, having developed from the minds of the lowest animals, may not be trustworthy when it comes to drawing grand conclusions. In a letter to Lyell (June 17, 1860; CCD 8.258), Darwin conceives that there might be "still more general laws i.e. the ordering of the whole universe." Grand this may be, but it is what every scientist of the time was looking for. Darwin was no different. He was not a modern (of our day) quantum physicist.

To Lord Farrer (Aug. 28, 1881), he wrote, "On the other hand, if we consider the whole universe, the mind refuses to look at it as the outcome of chance---that is, without design or purpose. The whole question seems to me insoluble ..." (ML 1.395). He stresses insolubility rather than what he is personally convinced of, and again in this letter, he adds that our convictions or intuitions are probably not of much worth, as our minds have developed from those of animals; this last was a point he obviously got a big kick out of making.

How, from all this information, can anyone extract the idea that Darwin believed in chance as a central component of his system of thought? There is not an iota of evidence that would allow anyone to conclude that Darwin

believed chance was an essential feature of organic change or evolution (yet so many like Alvar Ellegård believe this was the case; see, Ellegård, 260, 274, but he also acknowledges that Darwin never conducted any statistical studies to prove randomness of variations; see 259 where he also admits Darwin was likely a determinist; also, cf. Beer, *Plots*, 7, 146, 178, emphasizing the random element in Darwin's system, though she admits that it is not the only way to read him; I must add that randomness is not any way to read him, as she is reading randomness into his work). I have gone over this in some detail to make it clear that the majority of scholars keep busy creating myths about Darwin. In this case, they want to make us believe that Darwin somehow anticipated the randomness in quantum physics. Darwin, given his time and place, could never be anything but a Newtonian through and through.

Darwin grasped something that has eluded most of his followers: The idea of chance is as much a human point of view as the idea of design; it is not superior or more objective or more scientific, it's just another point of view. It is a philosophical position, or as Darwin would put it, theological or metaphysical. It is outside the bounds of proper science (as he said in *Variation*, 2.515, in speculating on these issues, "I am travelling beyond my proper province"). But Darwin stated his metaphysical leanings early on.

Darwin understood that it is not the case that design is human prejudice, while chance is more objective and truthful. *Both* chance and design reflect human bias. That is the point of his serious joke which he made in at least two letters and in his *Autobiography*: Since our minds have developed from that of the lower animals, none of our grand convictions are worth much; they cannot be trusted. He made this joke at the expense of his own belief in determinism and design, but it applies just as well to belief in chance. Sometimes he used the expression 'inner consciousness' as our guide, though a false guide, in these matters (as in a letter to Gray, CCD 9.369, and an 1866 letter to a woman, CCD 14.425). That he did not look for statistical evidence of randomness is another sign that he did not see this as a scientific problem. The world is as chaotic or as ordered as human beings want it to be, or as Darwin would say, as our convictions or inner consciousness would have it. It is a personal choice. The myth of Darwin as a pure believer in chance is not something he can be held responsible for. He was exceptionally clear that it did not apply to him.

And though this changes the subject, Darwin also never tried to convince anyone that he was one of the greatest humanitarians who ever lived. He mostly avoided political and social issues, with the one exception of opposition to legalized slavery. He never extended this concern to what was happening to natives in colonized countries or to other issues like the

continuation of slavery in illegal forms or combating the racism that would face slaves after they were freed. These are not necessarily faults in him. Every man's time and energy is limited. The fault rather lies with those who try to convince us that Darwin rose to greater heights than he did.

~ 3 ~

There is one sense in which Darwin did sometimes help to mythologize himself. He occasionally presented himself as being way out in front and having no predecessors. A lone warrior, a lone hero. He knew better but never fully corrected himself. It has to be remembered that the Darwin-Wallace papers on this theory of natural selection were presented at the Linnean Society in July 1858 and published the next month in its journal. Scientists had over a year to consider the matter before *On the Origin of Species* appeared at the end of November 1859. Before *Origin* came out, some were letting Darwin or his friends know that they would never go along with him. Darwin was not happy about it. He exaggerated the opposition he faced and sometimes considered himself a martyr. He admits in a letter to Richard Owen that this is how he presented himself in a previous conversation he had with him, "You smiled at me for sticking myself up as a martyr" (Dec. 13, 1859; CCD 7.430).

"H.C. Watson tells me that one Zoologist says he will read my book., 'but I will never believe it'. What a spirit to read any book in!---Crawford writes to me that his notice will be hostile, but that 'he will not calumniate the author.'" (to Lyell, Dec. 2, 1859; CCD 7.409). A week earlier he had written to Lyell (Nov. 23, 1859; CCD 7.392), "... the virulence of bigotry is expended on first offender, & those who adopt his views are only pitied, as deluded, by the wise & cheerful bigots." He was trying to reassure Lyell that Lyell's own works will probably not suffer much abuse because of Lyell's association with and approval of Darwin. It will all be aimed at Darwin. Then he wrote to W.B. Carpenter (Dec, 3, 1859; CCD 7.412), "as I told Lyell, I am well convinced that it is the first offender who reaps the rich harvest of abuse." In the same letter, he says, "I thank you cordially for taking the trouble of writing a Review for the National. God knows I shall have few enough in any degree favourable." And he reminds his friend T.H. Huxley on July 3, 1860 (CCD 8.277), after expressing regret for all the trouble he was causing his friends and how he has given them "good cause to hate me": "But remember if I had not stirred up the mud some one else certainly soon would."

What about Robert Chambers? Hadn't he stirred up the mud? And Lamarck too. And when did Darwin or anyone else make any effort to object to "the wise & cheerful bigots" who denounced Chambers and Lamarck?

As to having few favorable reviews, that is "hardly correct," as Alvar Ellegård (29) points out. Of the newspapers, only one took a stand against Darwin. The *Times* review by Huxley was of course positive. One literary weekly was hostile, "but the majority of the weekly Reviews were fairly favourable, though cautious and often non-committal" (ibid.). Two important monthlies supported Darwin. It was the quarterlies that first started attacking Darwin. Darwin was among the first to invent the myth that he faced uniform hostility, though Ellegård does not make this point.

Darwin was certainly not the original offender who stirred up the mud and he did not reap "the rich harvest of abuse" that others before him did. Even his own grandfather had already been there, suggesting that man might have been descended from lower life forms and taking it on the chin for such thoughts. It is remarkable that Charles Darwin could have described himself as the first offender. It is a kind of self-glorification. He knew better. One of the first to complain to him that he had given no credit to his predecessors was Baden Powell. Here is Darwin's reply, in which he also apologized to Powell that if he had taken anything from an essay Powell wrote, it was unconsciously (Jan. 18, 1860; CCD 8.39):

No educated person, not even the most ignorant, could suppose that I meant to arrogate to myself the origination of the doctrine that species had not been independently created. The only novelty in my work is the attempt to explain *how* species become modified, & to a certain extent how the theory of descent explains certain large classes of facts; & in these respects I received no assistance from my predecessors.

That is a mostly correct assessment of his work and its place in history. But Darwin was not always this clear about it and it is not quite true that he received no help from his predecessors. The theory of descent had been proposed many times before. I observed earlier that it went by many names before Spencer made 'evolution' popular. (The last word of *Origin* was 'evolved' and it was the only time it appears in that book. 'Evolved' also appears near the end of *Vestiges* [385] in 1844. Chambers used 'evolution' in *Explanations* [151] in 1846.)

The excitement of Darwin's work at the time was that he was the first to propose a theory that could plausibly explain, as he says in the above letter, *how* species were being created. No one had done that before. But development, soon to be called evolution, was becoming obvious to many. Freethinker and socialist Henry Hetherington could write in 1842 (two years before *Vestiges*), "That there is a power or energy in nature, by which new

species are brought into being, appears clear, but the nature of that power is as yet unknown to man" (quoted in Secord, 313, n33).

The qualifying phrase Darwin used in the letter to Powell, 'to a certain extent', both reveals and hides a lot. Others, notably Chambers, had also spelled out the 'large classes of facts' that the theory of descent explains. It had been done before and Darwin is alluding to that with that phrase 'to a certain extent'. But it is also true that Darwin had done a lot of this on his own in his first two unpublished essays *before* Chambers published *Vestiges* (the 1844 essay was completed a few months before the October publication of Chambers's book). To some degree, Darwin had done his work independently of his predecessors, but not as much as he sometimes claimed.

Charles Lyell was also aware of Darwin's insufficient attention to what others had done. Maybe that was because he hated transmutation theory so that everyone who wrote on it was vividly impressed on his mind. He pointed out to Darwin, even before Baden Powell did, that he was not being completely honest about prior work on this. Lyell had read an advance copy of *Origin*. One of the more minor points he made in his letter of October 3, 1859 was questioning Darwin's statement in the last chapter of *Origin* (on 480 in what Lyell read; on 526 in my edition) "that the most eminent naturalists have rejected the view of the mutability of species" (as Lyell quotes it; CCD 7.340). Lyell took note that Lamarck and Saint-Hilaire (both French naturalists) certainly believed in mutability. Perhaps Darwin meant *living* naturalists? Darwin agreed. "The omission of '*living*' before eminent naturalists was a dreadful blunder," he admitted (CCD 7.343). When the first edition was published, '*living*' was inserted after '*eminent*'. Darwin's first instinct, however, was to carve out a place that unrealistically belonged to him alone.

The first paragraph of the Introduction to *Origin* gives the impression that Darwin made all these fantastic observations on his *Beagle* voyage and contemplated these problems all on his own---"I was much struck with certain facts", "it occurred to me", "I allowed myself to speculate", "these I enlarged"---without any hint that anyone else had already done some speculating on the origin of species and had offered evidence in support thereof. *The Origin of Species* was written from the point of view that no one had preceded him.

He never let go of the idea that this theory somehow uniquely belonged to him. In his *Autobiography* (written in 1876), Darwin completely denies that, as some were claiming, evolution was "in the air" or "that men's minds were prepared for it" (101). He continues (101-02) that he tried sounding out some naturalists and "never happened to come across a single one who seemed to

doubt about the permanence of species." He says the same in the sixth edition (1872) of *Origin* (641): "I formerly spoke to very many naturalists on the subject of evolution, and never once met with any sympathetic agreement." Apparently only Darwin had doubts about the immutability of species. Darwin cannot find any naturalists who incline towards mutability, but Lyell can talk to young scientists in a club in April 1856 and become convinced that the fixity of species (which Lyell firmly believed in) was on its way out, though he noted that these upstart scientists had nothing concrete to replace it with. "I foresee that many will go over to the indefinite modifiability doctrine" (quoted in D & M, *Darwin*, 439).

Rather odd that Lyell could see this in 1856 and yet, as far as Darwin knew, no one had any doubts about the permanence of species. It may not necessarily be the case that Darwin was being deliberately untruthful. It might be that he spoke to older naturalists who were stuck in a rigid view. He adds (in *Origin*, 6th) that there might have been some who believed in evolution but were silent or expressed themselves ambiguously. The silence was not as total as he made himself believe. He never made much of an effort to set it all straight for the record. It could easily have been done and he avoided it. Apparently, he had also forgotten that the criticism he received on this score compelled him to add the "Historical Sketch", in 1861, to the third edition of *Origin*, in which he very briefly reviewed about thirty transmutationists who made a contribution to this subject, but that sketch was inadequate in conveying just how much evidentiary work had been done on this. Did he ever give any thought to the fact that it would have been impossible to publish the *Origin* twenty years before and that if by some chance he had, he would have caught hell for it? In 1859, things were decidedly different, the air was open to evolutionary ideas, making the "Historical Sketch" not only uncontroversial but necessary in order to tell the truth about the continuing work on this.

There is also this to consider: Of all the people that Darwin gave a public nod to in that "Historical Sketch", he was most generous to Lamarck. How did Darwin go from a letter in 1845 to Hooker, calling Lamarck's work absurd and having "done the subject harm" (CCD 3.253), as also had Mr. Vestiges, he adds, how did he go from this to the 1861 Sketch, calling Lamarck "the justly-celebrated naturalist" who performed "the eminent service of arousing attention to the probability of all change in the organic ... world, being the result of law, and not of miraculous interposition" and listing his specific insights of gradual change, the role of external conditions, the uncertain line between species and varieties, and more? Note his admission that Lamarck had made it more probable than not, something Darwin failed to credit

Chambers with. Did he ever think about what had blinded him in 1845? Or was he really all that blind to Lamarck's virtues in that earlier time? He indulges in what I think was false humility in the 1845 letter to Hooker by adding that he himself may also one day be accused of having committed the same harm. More likely, Darwin was hoping to gain favor with his friends by disparaging Lamarck. He knew better what Lamarck's contributions had been.

And he knew that it was not safe to talk about this in 1845, but it was in 1861, so something had changed, no? Something was in the air to account for such a transition.

There is plenty of evidence that the idea of evolution had become popular and that students in the universities had been much exposed to ideas of development. If history is revealed in the gathering of telling details, there is more than enough in this case. James Secord (301-02) provides one such fascinating item. Many of the British missionary societies kept records of their attempts to convert the down and out. One in particular from Manchester in 1841 is striking. They are trying to convince a young man who is dying and is an unbeliever that he already knows something about faith because he believes many things he could not possibly have seen or have knowledge of. They ask where he came from. He answers from his parents. Where did they come from? From their parents. And where did the first parents come from? He responds, "By some other race of animals---such as baboons or monkeys." And how did they get here? "By some other race of animals." This is in 1841. It had, before Darwin and even before Robert Chambers, become a part of the conversation in the streets and in the slums.

Milton Millhauser (74), in his biography of Chambers, briefly mentions two other details: "the University of Munich, in 1834, offered a prize for the best paper on the causes of the mutability of species; there is even a record of a German ecclesiastical newspaper, a few years later, publishing an article on the simian descent of man." In England, these ideas were often ridiculed as French or German which in itself was supposed to explain why no one should take them seriously. Nor should we forget that Rafinesque in his 1836 poem remarked, "The constant gradual progress of mutations and changes all over the world, *has long been surmised*" (*World*, Note 2; emphasis added), though I wish he had given examples.

Probably the best evidence for the popularity of the development hypothesis was the immense success of Robert Chambers's book *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*, first published in October 1844. It went through four editions in six months. Before *Origin* came out in 1859, there were ten editions. Throughout the 19th century, more people had read *Vestiges* than *Origin* (Abraham Lincoln preferred the Chambers book to Darwin's; see

Glick, *What about Darwin?*, 250-51). It was not until the 20th century that Darwin's book overtook *Vestiges* in total sales (Secord, 526).

Darwin had to read *Vestiges* in the library of the British Museum, when it first came out (ibid., 429) and did not have his own copy to mark up until the publisher sent him a complimentary copy of the sixth edition in 1847. He was very aware of its popularity and disparaged it. In the letter to Powell (cited above) and in a follow-up note written the same day (CCD 8.39 and 40), he makes reference to the book's "less highly endowed class of readers" and its "very inferior class" of readership by way of apologizing to Powell for inadvertently ranking Powell's essay in the same class as *Vestiges*.

From many sources, we know how popular *Vestiges* was with university students. Thomas Glick's remarkable anthology *What about Darwin?* is intended to give us a well-rounded picture of the impact Darwin's book had on many people. Glick's book succeeds admirably, but it also unintentionally provides evidence for the effect *Vestiges* was having (it comes up almost twenty times). Louis Agassiz, previously a professor in Switzerland, was the preeminent American geologist of the early 19th century and would be a staunch opponent of Darwin and his theory. Before that, he had to deal with his students who would occasionally bring up the propositions put forth in *Vestiges*. American clergyman Moncure Daniel Conway remembered, "When I belonged to the class of Agassiz (1853-54), he repeatedly referred to the hypothesis of continuous development of species ... Most of us knew about such a theory only through the popular *Vestiges of Creation*, to which he paid little attention" (in Glick, 76).

Little attention? Perhaps he meant that Agassiz did not like openly acknowledging the book because Conway continued, "At the end of every week a portion of the afternoon was given for our putting questions to Agassiz, the occasion often giving rise to earnest discussion. These repeatedly raised the theory of development in *The Vestiges of Creation*" (77). It would seem that after *Origin of Species* was published, Agassiz decided to attack *Vestiges* more explicitly. Nathaniel Shaler (1841-1906), American geologist and paleontologist, recorded in his autobiography that "Agassiz had given a large part of his lectures in one term to denouncing these works ..." (in Glick, 390-91), referring to *Vestiges*, Lamarck's *Philosophie Zoologique*, Darwin's *Origin*, and the joint Darwin-Wallace presentation of papers at the Linnean Society the year before *Origin*.

~ 4 ~

The joint was jumping long before Darwin came along. A latecomer, he joined a revolution in progress. He did not kick it off. He also joined a

controversy in progress. Are we descended from apes or monkeys? Technically, it is a question of descent from a common ancestor which itself was likely neither human nor monkey, but descent from monkeys was the popular way of putting it which Darwin himself would occasionally adopt (see *Descent*, 689). The young man who spoke to those missionaries in Manchester in 1841 thought our most ancient parents might have been baboons. That German newspaper (ecclesiastical, no less!) in the 1830s printed an article on simian descent.

Jean-Baptiste Lamarck had spelled out in some detail---in 1809, the year Darwin was born---how man might have evolved from monkeys or apes, or quadrumanous (four-handed) animals, as they were sometimes called, in his *Philosophie Zoologique* (*The Zoological Philosophy*, 170; 1.349-50 in the French edition):

... if some race of quadrumanous animals, especially one of the most perfect of them, were to lose, by force of circumstances or some other cause, the habit of climbing trees and grasping the branches with its feet in the same way as with its hands, in order to hold onto them; and if the individuals of this race were forced for a series of generations to use their feet only for walking, and to give up using their hands like feet; there is no doubt ... that these quadrumanous animals would at length be transformed into bimanous, and that the thumbs on their feet would cease to be separated from the other digits when, they only used their feet for walking.

Furthermore, if the individuals of which I speak were impelled by the desire [original: *le besoin*] to command a large and distant view, and hence endeavored to stand upright, and continually adopted that habit from generation to generation, there is again no doubt that their feet would gradually acquire a shape suitable for supporting them in an erect attitude ...

He did not see the cause of all this, but he certainly saw that what was happening was a gradual change in the body in order to adapt to a changing environment. In Lamarck's evolutionary ideas, change would come about, gradually over a long period of time, through "force of circumstances" (i.e., a changing environment). He goes on to speculate that man would continue to evolve. Mayr quotes most of this passage and comments, "Lamarck here presented his view on the origin of man with far more courage than Darwin fifty years later in the *Origin*" (Mayr, 352).

Paleoanthropologists and evolutionary biologists today might call

Lamarck's reasoning an oversimplification. But such simplicity is to be expected. Lamarck did not have access to the profusion of fossil remains we have access to and he did not have tools like electron microscopes and computers to analyze data and run algorithms. With much less available to him, he was able to set things on the right track. He could see that the various forms of life were related because they were descended from ancient progenitors. How complicated that lineage is, is not something we would expect Lamarck or anyone of this time to have foreseen.

We should also not assume that Lamarck meant that there was one sudden leap from an animal with four limbs to one with an erect posture and bipedal motion. As we will see a little further on, Lamarck believed that all complicated organs and structures (such as eyes and ears and even the power of flight) could only have come into existence as a gradual development from previous states. He would have been quite happy to learn that there were ancient hominids who perhaps split their time between trees and living on the ground and that there were apes that sat in an upright posture, thus freeing both forelimbs to forage and to use to feed themselves with. It would have made sense to Lamarck that a seated upright structure preceded bipedal movement.

Darwin very likely read this passage in Lamarck. He had the 1830 edition of *Philosophie Zoologique* (which is available at hathitrust.org) and underlined many parts, as well as making comments, as he did with most books he had, including his grandfather's works. In *The Descent of Man*, Darwin admitted, "Lamarck long ago came to this conclusion," that is, "that man is the co-descendant with other species of some ancient, lower, and extinct form" (19). Lamarck said more than that. It was typical of Darwin to understate a previous achievement. He would admit something, but still keep the full accomplishment hidden. He presents his own discussion of man gradually becoming "less arboreal" (i.e., descending from trees), transitioning to a more erect and bipedal state (*Descent*, 70-72), as if he owed nothing to Lamarck.

He also completely omits his grandfather's contribution to this. In *The Temple of Nature*, published in 1803, a year after he died, Erasmus Darwin presented a very similar argument by way of other French scientists (in the note on II, 122). He discusses the idea of Buffon and Helvetius "that mankind arose from one family of monkeys on the banks of the Mediterranean."

(Note: Rafinesque in his 1836 poem *The World*, in Note 48, mentions the "strange opinion" that "all men were once negroes." He agrees completely with this idea of "the unity of mankind", he only thinks that the original race was a more intermediate "tawny" color. He also observes, in Note 25, that

"some philosophers [i.e., scientists] have dreamt that they [seals] were the progenitors of mankind, as others have dreamt of Monkeys as such." Rafinesque does not think we can know any of this for sure, but he does believe in general in the "constant gradual progress of mutations and changes all over the world" [Note 2]. He is one more witness to the fact that, much before 1859, so many people believed mankind was not *sui generis* but had an origin in so-called lower forms of life. They argued fiercely over who the ancestors of man might have been.)

Erasmus Darwin describes (in the note on II, 122) the change to an opposable thumb in humans (at III, 124, he specifically mentions "the bending thumbs oppose") "and by this improved use of the sense of touch, that monkeys acquired clear ideas, and gradually became men." The physical change preceded the mental improvement. He also here reports how Buffon and Helvetius reasoned that man's body shows signs of once having been horizontal, that is, not erect. It was probably this passage that caused Coleridge to accuse Erasmus Darwin of advocating the "State of Nature or the Orang Outang theology of the human race, substituted for the first chapters of the Book of Genesis" (quoted in Barlow material in Charles Darwin's *Autobiography*, 122). Erasmus Darwin's follow-up comment in this note is: "Perhaps all the productions of nature are in their progress to greater perfection! an idea countenanced by modern discoveries and deductions concerning the progressive formation of the solid parts of the terraqueous globe ..."---in other words, geological changes tell us something about organic change.

What is impressive about all this is that they were looking at the human anatomy for evidence that it had evolved from a previous state. That is largely the method of *The Origin of Species* as applied to all organisms. It is exceptionally interesting that they saw a change in the human or monkey body as necessarily preceding a change in mental abilities. Erasmus Darwin's further comment that geological change inspires the idea of development in organisms is also noteworthy. It does not matter whether all their reasoning was correct and whether they spotted all the right evidence. The point is that they were on the right track. They understood that organisms were changing over time because of some need (as Lamarck put it) to deal with the environment. "Nature rises on the wings of Time" (*Temple*, II, 36).

Erasmus Darwin also indicated an unnamed naturalist's belief that insects acquired wings, claws, and fins "from their ceaseless efforts to procure food or to secure themselves from injury" (*Temple*, note on II, 302). Surviving in the environment was key. Referring to his own work *Zoonomia*, he says in *Temple*, "Many of these parts of animals are there shown to have arisen from

their three great desires of lust, hunger, security" (note to III, 103; in the note to II, 321, he carefully observes that there are sexual attributes quite distinct from survival attributes, a point his grandson took up). The needs of the animals in response to a changing environment were somehow driving physical changes. All that was needed was a clearer statement of the premise they were working from and a more thorough evidentiary argument. But all the elements of a general evolutionary theory were in place.

The reason I inserted the French term *besoin* (need) in the above blocked quotation is to follow up a point made by Mayr and to clarify Lamarck's meaning. British scientists of the time, including Darwin and Wallace, ridiculed Lamarck for arguing that animals and plants could *will* changes in their structure. Lamarck never said that. Mayr points out, "In part the misunderstanding was caused by the mistranslation of the word *besoin* into 'want' instead of 'need' and a neglect of Lamarck's carefully developed chain of causation from needs to efforts to physiological excitations to the stimulation of growth to the production of structures" (357). Scientists were working from their own translations. Lamarck's book was not translated in its entirety until 1914 from which the above quote was taken. When I checked the French original for the above, sure enough *besoin* was the word which the translator had rendered as *desire*. I can only guess that the reason why the translator used this instead of *need* is that he was under the influence of the popular misconception about Lamarck's idea.

The 1914 translation is not consistent in this. It does sometimes render *besoin* as need: "by the sole instrumentality of *needs*" (41) ("par la seule voie du *besoin*", 1.68; emphases in originals); "compelled by its needs" (43) ("besoins mettent dans", 1.73); and "the power of changes of conditions for giving to animals new needs" (43) ("le pouvoir des changements de *circonstances*, pour donner aux animaux de nouveaux besoins", 1.74; emphasis in original). Lamarck could not explain how new needs were produced, and he did not single out the need to survive, but he understood that environmental changes precipitated these changes, as in "the bird which is compelled by its needs to pass incessantly through large spaces in the air" (43). If the environment never changed, organisms never would. At the beginning of Chapter III, he poses the question: Are species of "absolute constancy" or is it rather that "as a result of changes in their environment, albeit extremely slow, they have not in course of time changed their characters and shape" (35)?

A more elaborate and typical statement from Lamarck is this:

Now I shall endeavor to show that variations in the environment

induce changes in the needs, habits, and mode of life of living beings, and especially of animals; and that these changes give rise to modifications or developments in their organs, and the shape of their parts. If this is so, it is difficult to deny that the shape or external characters of every living body whatever must vary imperceptibly, although that variation only becomes perceptible after a considerable time. [45; 1.78-79 in the French]

If this is not the theory of evolution, I don't know what would be. Sometimes he used the word 'mutations' (41, 42; *les mutations*, 1.68, 71). What is needed to produce new species is "much time and an infinite variation of environment" (40) and those needs of the organism to adapt to these changes (41). Had he specified the need to survive, he would have been very close to natural selection. As it was, he certainly understood that environmental change was the driving force of organic change and that the growing fossil record in museums established this. He gave the world all of this fifty years before *The Origin of Species*.

Lamarck's key accomplishment was that he proved that the evolutionary process (gradual environmental changes first, followed by gradual changes in the structure of organisms to meet the demands of the new environment) was a better explanation of the mounting evidence in natural science than the constancy of species---that is, it was more probable than not. Probability is all you need to establish a scientific case. Almost no one of that time was willing to recognize that he had proven this. That was their failure, not his.

I call environmental change, and not heredity, the key to evolutionary theory---or more precisely, the key to the *discovery* of evolution---because everyone knew about heredity and mutations. The knowledge that there are inheritable traits in all of organic life, including human beings, and that mutations also occur which are passed down, was as old as the hills. It led to the breeding of animals and plants. This was not news. The *key discovery* was that environmental change had an impact on changes or mutations, though no one knew exactly how this was carried out. The how or precise causal mechanism of evolution remained a mystery. But the fact that evolutionary change was indeed happening in a way that was linked to the environment, no matter the ignorance as to the exact cause, was the achievement of both Lamarck and Erasmus Darwin.

In a lesser way, this point about the importance of environmental change was also made by Robert Chambers. He did not deliver it with the incredible clarity of Lamarck, but you can see it come up in his work. Chambers realizes the environment comes first in development: "Where there is light there will

be eyes" (*Vestiges*, 163); "the adaptation of all plants and animals to their respective spheres of existence" (147); advances in development "have depended upon external circumstances" (203); "Give good conditions, it advances; bad ones, it recedes" (218); and "It may have only been when a varied climate arose, that the originally few species branched off into the present extensive variety" (262). It was, however, not perfectly clear in his own mind, as he was also capable of arguing that organic development and changes in external circumstances took place in "parallel steps" (223). Be that as it may, I suspect that either Lamarck or Erasmus Darwin, or both, was an influence on Chambers, though he would not have liked to admit that.

In fact, he would have and did vigorously deny any influence from Lamarck. Chambers's commitment to this aspect of evolution should not be exaggerated. Of all the early evolutionists, he did the least with adaptation to external circumstances. My guess is that this was because Lamarck made a big deal of it and Chambers wanted to put distance between himself and Lamarck---just as Darwin would distance himself from both Chambers and Lamarck in order to gain favor with establishment scientists. It seems to have helped Darwin, but it did no good for Chambers. Everyone could see how Lamarckian he was and despised him accordingly. One of the few things Hooker got right about Chambers was, as he tells Darwin, shortly after *Vestiges* came out, "After all what is the great difference between *Vestiges* & Lamarck, whom he laughs at" (CCD 3.103). (See 11th edition of *Vestiges*, lv, for Chambers's incensed response to a Dr. Hitchcock who confuses him with Lamarck.)

In 1856, Lyell expressed his fear that Darwin and his friends would soon "embrace the whole Lamarckian doctrine" (quoted in D & M, *Darwin*, 435). Darwin hated it when his book *Origin* was compared to *Vestiges*, asking Huxley, "Have you seen the slashing article of Dec. 26th in Daily News against my stealing from my 'Master', the Author of *Vestiges*" (CCD 8.5). They were all playing a game of "I may be a transmutationist, but don't mix me up with so-and-so." It was not until May 1863 that Darwin finally states in a letter to *Athenæum* that all of them, including himself, the author of *Vestiges*, Wallace, Lamarck, and St. Hilaire, were maintaining that "species have descended from other species, and have not been created immutable" (LL 3.22). Finally, it was no longer such a disgrace to have one's views linked with that of Lamarck.

Chambers was briefly dismissive of Lamarck in the first edition of *Vestiges* (230-31). Because of all the criticism he was getting about his Lamarckian theory, he expanded this in, I believe, the second edition, but I quote from the fifth (1846) where he sums it up: "The error of the theory [of Lamarck] is in

giving this adaptive principle too much to do" (5th, 235; 143 in 6th; 161 in 11th). In his rush to distinguish himself from Lamarck, Chambers never gave the idea fair consideration. In fairness to all who were concerned with this, it was difficult to accept Lamarck's point because no one could yet see *how* the adaptations were taking place. Lamarck could see that it was occurring, but he could not adequately explain it. He was essentially right that the needs of the animal were *somehow* bringing about better adaptations to the environment, but the 'somehow' was never precisely accounted for.

Chambers for all practical purposes abandoned, or never had, an interest in explaining how it was happening. Responding to one of Sedgwick's criticisms that the organic world cannot be explained solely by material cause and material effect, Chambers says, "Cause and effect of any such peculiar character are never once alluded to there [in *Vestiges*]" (*Vestiges*, 11th, li). It was not important to him and he felt he did not need it. Chambers was ecstatic to discover *that* species development had happened and was likely still happening---that creation was a gradual, never-ending process---how it was happening just did not matter (the knowledge of how would only be an extra added bonus). He was also thrilled that development was *provable*, that the facts clearly showed it was more probable than special creation.

As such, he only needed to clarify the *what*, though not the why or cause, of the transmutation of species---what the existence of organic development was like. All he needed for that was a good analogy or two. In the very first edition of *Vestiges*, he compared development or evolution to a pregnant woman: "the production of new forms, as shewn in the pages of the geological record, has never been anything more than a new stage of progress in gestation, an event as simply natural ... as the silent advance of an ordinary mother from one week to another of her pregnancy" (222-23). It is not "wonderful [i.e., amazing] or startling," he said, but simply natural. The world was pregnant with new forms of life, making both the development of each species and all of nature comparable to a fertile belly. It is a very good analogy. It does not make the cause of evolution any clearer, but it does help to conceptualize the fact of it, the process of it. The use of this tender, warm image of pregnancy and birth also helped to make this new idea about nature less frightening to people. As James Secord puts it, "The birth of a new species is neither more nor less to be feared than the birth of a child" (Secord, 108). Lamarck got much closer to understanding the causal mechanism, but I cannot blame Chambers for being so enthralled by the vitality of nature, by its constant creation of new things, that he got stuck in the excitement of pointing to the signs of its occurrence.

It must be said that if blame or judgment is going to be passed around here,

the primary judgment has to be laid against professional scientists of the time. If they had not created such a hostile atmosphere for debate about this and such a fear of looking at the evidence and a vilification of anyone who disagreed with the ruling ideology, then people like Chambers and Darwin would not have been so eager to separate themselves from the designated outcasts and so prone to misrepresenting the thoughts of these outcasts.

Another interesting choice the translator of Lamarck made was to render *la marche de la nature* as 'the procedure of nature'. I suppose that is not too bad. The phrase of course is literally 'the march of nature' which Rebecca Stott (189) captures nicely as *nature was on the move*. *Marche* can also be translated as procession, progress, movement. Lamarck sees a dynamism in nature, not a static or mechanical process. And how does he explain *la marche de la nature*? "... that in all nature's works nothing is done abruptly, but that she acts everywhere slowly and by successive stages" (Lamarck, 46). In the same place, he also states that this march of nature "suffices to account for all the facts which we can observe" and is to be preferred to the explanation of "a universal catastrophe." Later on, he says that nature "has never acted suddenly or by a single leap, but has always worked by degrees towards a gradual and imperceptible development" (304-05).

Long before Darwin argued that the human eye could have gradually evolved, Lamarck held that "the special organs [such as eyes and ears] in animals were formed one after the other ... [and] each of them was gradually compounded, completed and perfected in correspondence with the increasing complexity of organisation" (311). Nature, he argued, "invariably proceeds by gradual stages" and rhetorically asked how nature "could have endowed a nervous system at once with all the faculties which it possesses ...?" (312). Nature produces living bodies "one after another and not all in a moment" (129). The power of flight also developed gradually (174-75). Darwin's argument about the eye is famous in evolutionary circles, but few take note that Lamarck had made the same exact argument 50 years earlier.

It made more sense to Lamarck that nature created complicated organs gradually rather than fully completed in one shot. That was the best interpretation of the evidence. "[R]eason and all our acquired knowledge testify in favour of this probability" (129). He could see what the fossil record revealed as clearly as Darwin. It happened so slowly, you almost could not see it: "... we can never witness these changes ... we are naturally prone to believe that things have always been as we see them rather than that they gradually developed" (178). These insights are as lucid and beautiful as anything you will find in Darwin. Perhaps it was Lamarck's influence that caused Chambers to use a lovely phrase when he looked at the fossil record of

early life on this planet in *Explanations* (66): "this grand march of life through the morning time of the world."

What Lamarck saw was that there was an evolutionary process going on in which organisms were adapting to a changing environment. It was very gradual and if it went on long enough, a new species would develop as well as more complex organs. He got his basic insights from studying molluscs in their fossil remains and in their present form, and he had the sense to realize there was an organic law operating throughout nature. Organisms, even plants, were struggling to satisfy their needs to meet the demands of new environments. He never said they were willing these changes. Lamarck thought the struggle or effort to adapt to a new environment was producing change. He was wrong about the precise mechanism of transformation. But he was so close. You can feel that the idea of a struggle to survive was on the tip of his tongue. If you only added 'to survive' to 'need (*besoin*)', it would be so close to natural selection. Lamarck was just having trouble spitting it out. In spite of what he missed, he was right about an evolutionary process being related to environmental changes and organisms adapting to them; it all led to the origination of new species descended from previous species and to greater complexity.

This might not seem unusual or ground-breaking to us because we are so used to this kind of thinking. It seems perfectly normal now. But in Lamarck's day and Erasmus Darwin's day, this was shocking. Most scientists of that time would have put it that God specially created each animal and plant just so and then placed it in the world where it could survive. Lamarck and Erasmus switched that around. The environment comes first and then the organism develops organs and structures to cope or adapt or survive in that environment. The scientific community did not like it---and that is putting it mildly--- and looked for any way to ridicule these thinkers. Their mistranslation of Lamarck was not an accident. It came from a need to ridicule a good idea.

Looking back from our perspective, what is remarkable is how quick other scientists were to assume that Lamarck believed volition alone could produce adaptations, as if, for example, the forerunner of the giraffe could will itself to have a longer neck. Did it not occur to anyone how unlikely it was that a good naturalist like Lamarck could believe something so foolish? Did not anyone care to check whether a mistake had been made in reading Lamarck or translating him? In his Notebook C (119), Darwin said Lamarck "was endowed with what may be called the prophetic spirit in science---. the highest endowment of lofty genius." In the 1845 letter to Hooker, previously referred to, he called him "an accurate describer of species," but still

considered him absurd and one who had done the subject of species change much harm (CCD 3.253). The harm did not come from Lamarck, but from Darwin's own clan who felt compelled to ridicule and dismiss. Would a genius and accurate describer, like Lamarck, really have believed that plants and animals desired and willed changes to their organs? Darwin was as incapable as anyone else of putting the blame precisely where it belonged. The sole exception is Chambers who knew exactly who should be blamed and why and had no trouble saying so; he made it his business to clearly state that it was the established scientists who were holding back progress in understanding nature (see last section of this chapter).

Even if desire is a possible meaning of *besoin* in 19th century French (and I don't know French well enough to say if this is so), its basic meaning is need, and scientists should have asked themselves which translation made more sense in the context of Lamarck's writings. No one approached it this rationally. They just picked the meaning that suited their inclination to mock. I believe what happened was that the British scientific establishment had decided that any theory of transmutation of species was intolerable. They were only too happy to denigrate proponents of such theories. Once scandal and disrepute were nailed to a theory and its advocates, with an ensuing open season for mockery, it would have been unwise for anyone who wanted to make it in the scientific community to propose the rational task of actually examining the details of the theory and the evidence offered to vindicate it.

In his letters to other scientists, Darwin was unflinching negative about Lamarck and tried to distance himself from him. To his friend Hooker, he wrote (Jan. 11, 1844; CCD 3.2), "Heaven forfend me from Lamarck nonsense of a 'tendency to progression' 'adaptations from the slow willing of animals,' & c,---but the conclusions I am led to are not widely different from his---though the means of change are wholly so." In another letter later in the same year to Hooker, he calls Lamarck's books "veritable rubbish" (CCD 3.79). They were hardly that, but fear of being disrespected by mainstream scientists drove him to such extreme statements.

In 1854, Darwin told Hooker that he sometimes felt good about his own work, but "at other times I really feel as much ashamed of myself, as the Author of the *Vestiges* ought to be of himself" (CCD 5.248; this was after the 10th edition of *Vestiges* in 1853, which Darwin would later call the "much improved edition" in the "Historical Sketch" in *Origin*, 10, and of course long after Darwin's 1842 and 1844 unpublished essays in which Darwin had made substantially the same case as Chambers). And what should Chambers have felt ashamed of? Of arguing in favor of the transmutation of species or of being such a thorn in the side of distinguished scientists? Darwin might have

meant both.

Responding to Lyell's first comments after reading an advance copy of *Origin*, Darwin added in a postscript (Oct. 11, 1859; CCD 7.348), "You often allude to Lamarck's work; I do not know what you think about it, but it appeared to me extremely poor; I got not a fact or idea from it." It was a little disingenuous of him to say that he did not know what Lyell thinks, as everyone knew Lyell was opposed to Lamarckism and, in his *Principles of Geology*, had done his best to defeat this doctrine. As we saw, Darwin held a different opinion in his Notebook. Chambers too felt compelled to be harsh towards Lamarck in *Vestiges* (230-31), as discussed above. Even Rafinesque, more of an outsider than anyone, had to put down Lamark (his misspelling) in *The World* (1191-1203). If you wanted to be on the good side of professional scientists, you had to join the chorus of Lamarck disparagers.

Robert Grant, one of Darwin's teachers at Edinburgh, was an exception. He was an ardent admirer of both Lamarck and Erasmus Darwin. It may have been one reason Grant was always looked at as an eccentric. No respectable person wanted to be connected to Lamarck.

(On Robert Grant: He may have been the author of an 1826 paper, "Observations on the nature and importance of geology", apparently the first published piece that linked ideas about development to the fossil record [Browne, *Voyaging*, 81]; as Browne notes, its authorship is still in dispute. Erasmus Darwin made a brief comment on geology and gradual formation and improvement in 1794, which I will get to below, when I list his insights in *Zoonomia*. Charles Darwin mentions Grant in the "Historical Sketch" for another 1826 paper on a type of sponge and its conclusion that "species are descended from other species, and that they become improved in the course of modification" [*Origin*, 9]. Because there was more prejudice than open, honest, and curious dialogue in the time that Lamarck and Grant lived, their ideas and careers were left to founder. It is a terrible reminder of the power of academia to suppress.)

It has been difficult for Lamarck to posthumously shake the reputation assigned to him, even though Darwin for one tried to make up for it a bit in the "Historical Sketch" added to later editions of *Origin*. Lamarck certainly made some mistakes, but for the state of knowledge that existed in his time, he was able to reach some sound conclusions. Only read what he says about the development of man (above) and you can see how scientifically modern he was (from our point of view), how prescient, how rational---and courageous, as Mayr acknowledges. It doesn't matter that Lamarck or Chambers got some things wrong. What matters is that they got some important things right and demonstrated the sensibility of it. A really good

scientist should be able to separate the two, the good and the bad, when studying their works. Almost no one of that time was capable of being that good a scholar.

(It is a shame that Darwin too harped on their errors when he knew perfectly well that one could make mistakes and still be basically right. In an 1872 letter, he said, "I may have erred on many points, and extended the doctrine too far, but I feel a strong conviction that sexual selection will hereafter be admitted to be a powerful agency;" CCD 20.148. Picking on errors is a false way to appreciate the value of a theory, especially if the errors are slight; and Darwin knew this.)

When people suspected, after reading *Origin*, where Darwin was headed in respect to man, it was partly because Lamarck and other French scientists and his grandfather had already been there, and Chambers too. People knew that this is what development theory was leading to. For all the fireworks, it was no surprise when bishops and scientists ran into conflict over this. It had been going on for a long time. After Darwin, it was all about the human relationship to gorillas because gorillas had become the new sensation. Before Darwin, baboons and orangutans were the favorite primates of choice for our lovely if controversial ancestors. In 1871, anthropologist Edward Tylor noted, "Even at low levels of culture, men addicted to speculative philosophy have been led to account for the resemblance between apes and themselves ..." (*Primitive Culture*; quoted in Beer, *Plots*, 109). He also pointed out that sometimes the speculation leads to ideas of advance from ape to man as in development theory, and sometimes to ideas that apes are degenerated human beings.

So great was the fear among the keepers of presumed knowledge among religionists and scientists that development theory would establish that man is only a more perfect baboon or orangutan, that they saw this as the chief evil in the development hypothesis, even when such theorists were not dwelling on this. For both Erasmus Darwin and Robert Chambers, the real fascination was with the sea and its marine life. That is where life came from. But they were assailed for promoting a monkey view of human origins.

~ 5 ~

Though he wrote two treatises on natural science, *Zoonomia* in two volumes (1794-96) and *Phytologia* (1800), Erasmus Darwin was most famous for his epic scientific poems *with philosophic notes* (each poem had this sub-title; philosophic meaning scientific) where evolutionary thoughts make an appearance. *The Loves of the Plants* (1789) and *The Economy of Vegetation* (1791) were republished together as *The Botanic Garden. The Temple of*

Nature was published a year after he died in 1803 (six years before Charles was born). All three were collected as *The Poetical Works of Erasmus Darwin with philosophic notes* (1806).

An often quoted stanza from Canto I of *The Temple of Nature* begins: "ORGANIC LIFE beneath the shoreless waves/ Was born and nurs'd in Ocean's pearly caves;/ First forms minute, unseen by spheric glass, /Move on the mud, or pierce the watery mass" (I, 295-98). In a note on the first two lines, he observes that the embryos of all quadrupeds and mankind resemble aquatic animals (a favorite point of Chambers as well), and writes, "It must be therefore concluded, that animal life began beneath the sea." Erasmus Darwin added the motto *E Conchis Omnia*---All from Shellfish---to his family crest and on the seal he used for envelopes.

Most writers I have come across translate Erasmus Darwin's motto as "Everything from Shells." Of course, they mean seashells. But I have also seen *Conchis* translated as oysters, mussels, and cockle shells. A Latin-English dictionary I consulted has shellfish and oysters as possible meanings. I doubt that Erasmus had in mind the shells themselves as the ancestors of animal life on land, but rather the organisms living inside the shells, which is why I translated *Conchis* as shellfish (though I suppose it is also possible he believed the shells themselves gave birth to the lives within). In 1782, Soame Jenyns, in a brief essay on the chain of being, would write, "this animal life rises from this low beginning in the shell-fish" (*Disquisitions*, 9). Erasmus originally added the motto in 1770 to his family crest depicting three scalloped shells on the side of his carriage, thus publicly displaying it. When a neighbor strongly vented his disapproval, writing some poetic lines ridiculing Dr. Darwin for his belief that "all things rise from cockle shells" (see Fara, *Erasmus*, 229), he removed it and placed it on his bookplate. However one translates it, it seems clear that Erasmus Darwin held to a belief in life descending from the sea as early as 1770. Yet Coleridge, as noted previously, attacked his belief system as the "State of Nature or the Orang Outang theology of the human race, substituted for the first chapters of the Book of Genesis" (quoted in Barlow material in Charles Darwin's *Autobiography*, 122).

Chambers fared no better. It is true that monkeys and apes were humans' zoological companions for Chambers (*Vestiges*, 266-72), but they were never his main concern. He was a cosmological thinker. He wanted to explain the whole universe and its most ancient origins. The same was true for humans. It was the most ancient part of our origin that fascinated Chambers, and that meant fish and reptiles. It was his favorite line of descent for man. Like Erasmus, Chambers would write, "Life has, as it were, crept out of the sea

upon the land" (*Explanations*, 165; cf. 70, "the matrix of organic life is, speaking generally, the sea"). But that is not what critics wanted to see. Adam Sedgwick, a leading scientist of the day and later a fierce opponent of Darwin, charged that the author of *Vestiges* "thinks he can make man and woman far better by the help of a baboon." For Joseph Barker, it was "the monkey or the orang-outang." In another review of *Vestiges*, it was "a higher kind of monkey." (For the first and last one, see Browne, *Voyaging*, 464, 468; for Barker, see Secord, 319).

Both Erasmus and Chambers had their more astute critics who satirized their belief about life developing from the sea. Benjamin Disraeli deftly had some fun with *Vestiges* in his novel *Tancred* in a scene where an aristocratic woman preaches the new gospel from a popular book to Tancred, the hero of the novel:

You must read the 'Revelations;' it is all explained. But what is most interesting, is the way in which man has been developed. You know, all is development. The principle is perpetually going on. First, there was nothing, then there was something; then---I forget the next---I think there were shells, then fishes; then we came---let me see---did we come next? Never mind that; we came at last. And the next change will be something very superior to us---something with wings. Ah! that's it: we were fishes, and I believe we shall be crows. But you must read it. [Here the young man objects, "I do not believe I ever was a fish."] Oh! but it is all proved: you must not argue on my rapid sketch; read the book. It is impossible to contradict anything in it. You understand, it is all science ... Everything is proved---by geology, you know. You see exactly how everything is made; how many worlds there have been; how long they lasted; what went before, what comes next. We are a link in the chain, as inferior animals were that preceded us: we in turn shall be inferior; all that will remain of us will be some relics in a new red sandstone. This is development. We had fins---we may have wings. [*Tancred*, 1.225-26; also quoted in Young, 123]

If we did not know any better, this could read like a satire of *The Origin of Species*, though it was published twelve years before in 1847. (I might be off base on this, but that last line reminds me of Erasmus Darwin's "And breathing realms of fin, and feet, and wing" from *Temple*, I, 302. E. Darwin might have been describing different forms of life co-existing, but since a couple of lines earlier he mentions "successive generations bloom," it is

possible, though admittedly not clear, that "fin, and feet, and wing" was meant to sum up evolution. The reference to shells also reminds me of E. Darwin's motto [All from Shellfish]. Disraeli could have had both E. Darwin and Chambers in mind, when he wrote this passage.)

That Disraeli took the trouble to satirize the ideas of evolution and common descent tells us how important these had become before 1859.

The majority of scientific critics of both E. Darwin and Chambers chose to focus on baboons, orangutans, and monkeys. They were projecting their own fears on the new idea. Charles Darwin did not stimulate this debate. He did not inspire or re-inspire it. His book simply joined a debate that had been going on for decades, maybe longer. When Darwin finally let Lyell in on his theory of natural selection in 1856, Lyell immediately started worrying about man's origin 'from an Ourang' (D & M, *Darwin*, 438). Lyell was wrapped up in a concern that had been going on for a long time. It did not take a Darwin or any genius to notice that humans and apes looked startlingly alike. Europeans had been wondering about this ever since apes were brought to their attention, and they projected their concerns onto any book that even remotely touched on the subject of human origins. The evidence for the argument was irrelevant.

The scientific establishment was not paying attention to anyone who argued for the mutability of species. Not to the details at any rate. They noticed people like Erasmus Darwin, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, and Robert Chambers, enough to get upset and denounce them for suggesting that creation was not fixed and permanent but an on-going process, but not enough to coolly consider what exactly were the details of their argument. They did not want to hear the specifics because the *implications* of the argument came in *ahead of the evidence* like a freight train out of control. That train of implications knocked all the sense out of them, so they couldn't hear the evidence.

In Erasmus Darwin's huge medical treatise *Zoonomia* (Charles wrote the title on the front page of his Notebook B), his evolutionary ponderings are concentrated in section XXXIX.4.8 of Volume 1. Chapter XXXIX is the next to last chapter of that volume and is entitled "Of Generation", the word used at that time for both individual reproduction and what we would call evolution. Charles read it carefully, underlining many parts. In his *Autobiography* (43), he states that on reading his grandfather's book "a second time, I was much disappointed, the proportion of speculation being so large to the facts given." There is some truth to that. Erasmus does not offer a lot of evidence. But it is not totally lacking in details either. What he is doing is throwing out a hypothesis and pointing out a few bits that it accounts for. You

could say he was making a *prima facie* case, leaving a fuller proof to a future generation. One response is to shove his idea to the side and discourage any more thought about it. Another is to say: This is interesting, I wonder how much more evidence can be mustered in support. That was his grandson's response.

Here are some of Erasmus's insights from that section: he reviews many varieties of the breeds of domesticated animals (which he calls 'artificial or accidental cultivation'); he concludes that many horses, dogs, cattle, camels, sheep have "... undergone so total a transformation, that we are now ignorant from what species of wild animals they had their origin" (1.501; his grandson also pointed this out); how malleable is the human body which undergoes changes from exertions and disease; he believed in the inheritability of acquired characteristics (like Lamarck and his grandson who also accepted this to a limited extent); from the great similarities in warm-blooded animals, including mankind, he reasons that "they have alike been produced from a similar living filament" (1.502). He builds to this magnificent paean:

would it be too bold to imagine, that in the great length of time, since the earth began to exist, perhaps millions of ages before the commencement of the history of mankind, would it be too bold to imagine, that all warm-blooded animals have arisen from one living filament, which THE GREAT FIRST CAUSE endued with animality, with the power of acquiring new parts, attended with new propensities ... and thus possessing the faculty of continuing to improve by its own inherent activity and of delivering down those improvements by generation to its posterity, world without end? [1.505]

Insofar as Erasmus Darwin offered a definition of 'generation' (i.e., evolution), it comes in the Additional Notes (p. 6) to *Temple*: generation is "the production of new organization." This covers both individual reproduction and the evolution of species (following his grandfather, Charles would write, "... *generation of species* like generation of *individuals*" in Notebook B 63; his emphases). In *Zoonomia*, Erasmus points out, "Owing to the imperfection of language the offspring is termed a *new* animal, but is in truth a branch or elongation of the parent ... it may retain some of the habits of the parent-system" (1.480; his emphasis). It is a combination of a continuation of most parental features with slight mutations giving something new. The process, as he says, "is still involved in impenetrable obscurity" (1.484).

There are more suggestions in section XXXIX.4.8 of *Zoonomia*. After considering cold-blooded animals and even insects, worms, and vegetables,

he comes to the conclusion that all organic life may have arisen from "the same kind of living filament" (1.507); he refers to it as "this idea of the gradual formation and improvement of the animal world" and notes that geological observations support this (1.508); he brings up the importance of sexual selection, so that the strongest animals propagate the species (1.503); "all animals undergo perpetual transformations" (1.502).

The last is a statement about the changes in individuals from conception to death, but as he proceeds, it is clear that he believes this to be also true of the organic life of species from generation to generation. In the recapitulation of this chapter, he reviews conception and birth and how "the outline or miniature of the new animal is produced gradually, but in no great length of time" (1.526) and what is true of individual life may also be true of how the inheritable characteristics of an animal were acquired, "which may have been gradually acquired during a million of generations, even from the infancy of the habitable earth" (ibid.). He calls this "the gradual generation of all things" (1.529). Gradual transformations or evolution, in other words. Animals "have constantly improved, and are still in a state of progressive improvement" (ibid.). As he says in *The Temple of Nature* (in a note on III, 411), "... the great globe itself, and all that it inhabit, appear to be in a perpetual state of mutation and improvement." This is probably his clearest statement of perpetual transformations in organic forms or species. That means we are linked to previous forms of life on this planet. The first sensations, motions, or volitions (all these terms are used in the same poem, especially in Canto III) probably arose "in some primeval site" (line 427): "They link the reasoning reptile to mankind!" (432).

I should make a comment on his reference to 'millions of ages' in the above blocked quotation. In academia where the term 'revolutionary' is bandied about much too easily, one of the rare people who really deserves that adjective is Scotsman James Hutton, a friend of Erasmus Darwin. He was the first to see how slow were geological processes and to draw the conclusion that time was immense and the earth incalculably old. No one had ever suggested this before. His views were disregarded by the majority who were still stuck on a timetable of 6,000 years. Hutton had actually proposed a brand-new thought. Neither Darwin nor Chambers nor anyone else in this history can claim to have done this. They were all working with ideas handed to them, whether it was the struggle for survival or the resemblance of one form of life to another. They were doing something creative with these ideas, but they did not think up something never conceived of before. Some ancient Greeks had suggested that time might be infinite, an idea that some incorrectly ascribed to Hutton, but he never said that. He believed time was

finite, only immensely long, incalculable---an idea so new, most had trouble even getting what he was saying. He was plagued by sickness and could not bring it all together as he would certainly have done had he been healthier.

To briefly review his career: Hutton delivered a paper on his ideas before the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1785 (published as an Abstract the same year), later published as an essay in 1788 and then he worked on an unfinished book, *Theory of the Earth*, published in 1795 (two volumes done, with a third planned which Hutton did not live to write and for which he was saving most of his evidence). He may have formed his theory as early as the 1760s when he was working on his farm and wrote an essay at that time, but it has been lost. The 1785 paper was delivered in two parts on separate occasions, the first half being read by his friend Joseph Black, as he was too ill to attend. Hutton emphasized the importance of underground heat and gradual, not catastrophic, changes in the formation of the earth's layers. His famous concluding words in the 1788 essay were: "The result, therefore, of our present enquiry is, that we find no vestige of a beginning,---no prospect of an end." With this line, he was summing up his theory of immense cyclical time. He would not even presume to calculate the age of the earth. Charles Lyell would shore up Hutton's arguments with more evidence a few decades later, but Hutton was there before anyone else. I agree with Janet Browne that "Without Lyell there would have been no Darwin" (*Voyaging*, 186). It is even more true to say that no Hutton, then no Lyell, no Darwin (Erasmus or Charles), and perhaps no Lamarck either who also relied on the idea of long, slow change.

One clear sign of Hutton's influence on Erasmus Darwin is in a note on I, 347 in *The Loves of the Plants*: After describing the growth of moss on rocks, he writes, "In this manner perhaps the whole earth has been gradually covered with vegetation, after it was raised out of the primeval ocean by subterraneous fires." Underground heat, one of the key elements of Hutton's theory, comes up a few more times. Further on, in another note (on III, 90), he mentions "Dr. Hutton's Theories of the Earth." The most references to Hutton appear in *The Economy of Vegetation* in the Additional Notes (about nine times from Notes XVI to XXV).

Erasmus Darwin finishes up his section on gradual development in *Zoonomia* by summing up the views of Scottish philosopher David Hume who, he says, "... concludes, that the world itself might have been generated, rather than created; that is, it might have been gradually produced from very small beginnings, increasing by the activity of its inherent principles, rather than by a sudden evolution of the whole by the Almighty fiat.---What a magnificent idea of the infinite power of THE GREAT ARCHITECT! THE

CAUSE OF CAUSES! PARENT OF PARENTS! ENS ENTIIUM!" (1.509).

Note what appears to us as the very odd use of 'evolution' in the exact opposite way we mean it today, while he uses 'generation' in our sense of 'evolution'. The word 'evolution' obviously had nuances in his day that it no longer has. He uses 'sudden evolution' on other occasions---as when he discusses electric shocks and sparks (*Temple*, Additional Notes, p. 59) and earthquakes and vapors (*Economy*, note on I, 105). (Maybe it should not surprise us that his work was one of the sources of inspiration for Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.) Evolution here seems to mean production. But Erasmus Darwin was also capable of recognizing gradual evolution in the 1791 *The Economy of Vegetation* (in a note on I, 101): "From having observed the gradual evolution of the young animal or plant from its egg or seed ... philosophers [i.e., scientists] of all ages seem to have imagined, that the great world itself had likewise its infancy and its gradual progress to maturity." In the same poem, he also gave us "And the great seed evolves, disclosing all" (IV, 418).

(About David Hume's work: In *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Part VII, Hume reasons that the world resembles an animal or vegetable more than it does a machine or work of art and that of what he considers the four main principles operating in the world---reason, instinct, generation, and vegetation--- it is probably generation that best explains the world: "the world ... resembles an animal, therefore it is an animal, therefore it arose from generation." The word 'generation' would soon be replaced by 'development' which in turn gave way to 'evolution', though at the beginning of each stage the previous word never went entirely out of use.)

There is more than just an analogy going on here. Erasmus Darwin was using individual generation/change to make an argument for the *reasonableness* of generation/change in species based on the available evidence. The major objection to the idea that all organic life on this planet developed by gradual changes from a common ancestor, "the same kind of living filament" (in Erasmus Darwin's phrase), was to ask: Look at the diversity of life we have---mammals, insects, plants and more---how could all these very different forms of life have come from the same source? (In *Descent*, 185, Charles Darwin notes that many still entertain this objection and consider it "monstrous" to believe that animals so distinct could have the same parents, but that, says Darwin, is because they "have not attended to the recent progress of natural history.")

Erasmus Darwin's answer was to say: Yes, let's look at the diversity of life, let's really look at it, let's see how fantastic is the entire life of almost any individual organism. One and the same organism is now a tadpole and now a

frog; now a caterpillar and now a butterfly; now an embryo living in a fluid, or even earlier a mere germ, now an adult human with so many organs; now a seed, now a full-grown plant. If anyone had *only* a frog or butterfly or adult animal or beautiful orchid, to study, could you guess how it started? No, you could not. It is all just too wonderful, too amazing. (Cf. Charles Darwin, Notebook D 62: "The change from caterpillar to butterfly---is not more wonderful than the body of a man undergoing a constant round." That is pure Erasmus Darwin.) The development of widely different species from one ancestor is no more or less fantastic. As an argument against gradual development, diversity is no argument. It is rather a point in favor of the development of species as it parallels what happens in the life of so many individual organisms.

It is also worth mentioning that the chain of being, which most naturalists believed in, also supports the idea that very different species are related. If each link is related to the next, then no matter how far apart two pieces may be in the chain, they must be ultimately related too. But I will get back to this in the next chapter (§1).

One concise statement of his argument in *Zoonomia* runs thus (1.507):

Shall we then say that the vegetable living filament was originally different from that of each tribe of animals above described? ... as the earth and ocean were probably peopled with vegetable productions long before the existence of animals; and many families of these animals long before other families of them, shall we conjecture, that one and the same kind of living filaments is and has been the cause of all organic life?

And why should we engage in such conjecture? What is the evidence that makes it reasonable?

His basic evidence was the commonality of features and structures. Even something as apparently distinct from each other as vegetation and animals have much in common: Both breathe, both imbibe nourishment, both reproduce, both engage in a struggle for life---to acquire food and secure themselves from enemies---both begin as seeds or germs or eggs, some animals and plants use the same technique of camouflage to fool enemies, and most importantly, both have a system of heredity to pass on their traits to future generations, with both experiencing mutations as well. (Cf. Charles Darwin, Notebook D 68: "What takes place in the formation of a bud---the very same must take place in copulation.") That is quite a lot of evidence to make it a reasonable hypothesis (though not proof beyond all doubt) that all life on this planet comes from a common source.

Both animals and plants seem to acquire beneficial adaptations for survival. As Erasmus Darwin puts it for vegetation: "Many other changes seem to have arisen in them by their perpetual contest for light and air above ground, and for food or moisture beneath the soil" (*Zoonomia* 1.507). The sound conclusion appears to be that there are general laws of nature applicable to all forms of life and that would include a law of generation or evolution. There is certainly more than enough evidence to establish a *prima facie* case.

For good measure, as Erasmus noted, there is also the fossil record showing that there were similar but slightly different organisms in the past, rudimentary organs like male nipples which suggest that male and female sprung from a common source, and the artificial breeding of animals and plants which shows that malleability is a feature of living things. The more we look, the more evidence there is that life flows and develops from previous life forms and, indeed, can probably be traced back to an original life form. This was an exciting discovery to Erasmus and other early evolutionists.

I would not argue that Erasmus Darwin made his case beyond all doubt. But he certainly, absolutely, for sure, made it an extremely reasonable hypothesis worthy of further investigation. And that is the real sticking point in the history of this science: Mainstream scientists refused to recognize this accomplishment---just as they refused to admit that Robert Chambers made the development hypothesis more probable than not. They still refuse to see what Chambers and the first Darwin did. And Charles Darwin did no better on this score. He never acknowledged that his grandfather demonstrated the reasonableness of the hypothesis and Chambers the probability of it. To do so would have been tantamount to accusing establishment science of failing to see a rational argument and carrying out good science. That is not a bag of worms that Charles Darwin wanted to open. He was always ambitious to join the ranks of establishment science (as he tells us several times in his *Autobiography*, 67, 68, 115). He would do nothing to rock that boat. However good a scientist he was, he was always an even better politician of science. He would play down any accomplishment that might be upsetting to professional scientists.

It is all the sadder when you realize that Charles Darwin was quite capable of reasoning just like his grandfather. He knew in his own work the value of demonstrating reasonableness by pointing out the general common features shared by organisms. Here he is in Notebook C 154 proving to himself (that is, rehearsing an argument he desired to bring to public attention one day) that man is descended from, or genetically related to, lower animals:

Animals have voice, so has man ... [s]hare of sickness, ---death, unequal life,---stimulated by same passions---brought into the world same way ... Man has expression.---animals signals. (rabbit stamping ground) Man signals.---animals understand the language, they know the cries of pain, as well as we.

So much of the Notebooks and later works is like this: Arguing that a proposition is reasonable because a not insignificant pattern of evidence supports it. That is precisely what his grandfather was doing, yet grandson never, as far as I know, would publicly acknowledge this. Interestingly, in the same Notebook (C 123), he worries about being too far ahead of one's time: "Mention persecution of early Astronomers.---then add chief good of individual scientific men is to push their science a few years in advance only of their age." Erasmus Darwin was like one of those early astronomers. Too far ahead, not just a few years. Charles Darwin, while immensely admiring him, would not defend him, not even in retrospect.

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There is a lot there in the work of Erasmus Darwin; it only needed to be fleshed out with more evidence, but the evidentiary outline of the argument was in place. Contemporary scientists might have been reluctant to do that with *Zoonomia* if only because it was placed on a list of forbidden books, something his grandson was evidently proud of, as he wrote that it "was honoured by the Pope by being placed in the 'Index Expurgatorius'" ("Preliminary", 102). He was proud of his grandfather but not eager to follow him by presenting too great a challenge to his fellow scientists. Charles himself underrated his grandfather's and Lamarck's influence. He said he had read *Zoonomia* "without producing any effect on me" and listened to his teacher Robert Grant's praise of Lamarck (he also loved Erasmus Darwin) "without any effect on my mind," but then Darwin admits "it is probable that the hearing rather early in life such views maintained and praised may have favoured my upholding them under a different form in my *Origin of Species*" (*Autobiography*, 43). In his Notebook B, he constantly alludes to his grandfather's observations about generation and resemblances and variations between parent and offspring.

It is impossible to believe that Charles Darwin read his grandfather's reasoning about men developing from monkeys (as taken from Buffon and Helvetius), with its sophisticated treatment of anatomical features indicating a previous non-erect state, of bodily changes precipitating mental changes, and linking geological transformation to organic change, and yet it had no impact

on him. It is impossible to believe that lines like "Each new Descendant with superior powers/ of sense and motion speeds the transient hours" (*Temple*, II, 33-34) did not inspire a definite view of nature in Charles Darwin. Or this note from *The Loves of the Plants* (I, 65): "Other animals have marks of having in a long process of time undergone changes in some parts of their bodies, which may have been effected to accommodate them to new ways of procuring their food." In *Economy* (note on I, 101), Erasmus offers useless appendages in animals and plants as more evidence which points to a previous state of existence.

Moreover, Charles Darwin well knew that one did not go into the field observing facts empty-minded. One is always accompanied by some theory or other. People like Jean-Baptiste Lamarck and Erasmus Darwin certainly gave Charles Darwin some very specific ideas to take with him into the field. After remarking on the recent empirical trend in geology, he said in a letter to Henry Fawcett (Sept. 18, 1861; CCD 9.269): "How odd it is that anyone should not see that all observation must be for or against some view if it is to be of any service!" His wife Emma often repeated one of his sayings (quoted in Barlow material in *Autobiography*, 128-29; also in a letter, CCD 16.512): "It is a fatal fault to reason whilst observing, though so necessary beforehand and so useful afterwards." And what would reasoning beforehand mean except to ponder various *a priori* approaches or theories to a problem?

He is even stronger about this in a letter to Lyell (June 1, 1860), commenting on the stand that William Hopkins took against his work. "On his standard of proof, *natural* science would never progress; for without the making of theories, I am convinced there would be no observation" (CCD 8.233). That is a very startling way to put it. You cannot even see without a good theory to guide you. A few years earlier, he had written to Wallace, "I am a firm believer, that without speculation there is no good & original observation" (Dec. 22, 1857; CCD 6.514). To discover the undiscovered, you go into the field with pre-formed knowledge and ideas. "I have an old belief," he says in a letter to H.W. Bates (Nov. 22, 1860; CCD 8.484-85), "that a good observer really means a good theorist." The key is learning to see, and you need a lens to do it well, but you have to be ready to toss away any lens that does not respond to the evidence. Tying theory to the evidence is necessary because otherwise, "Any fool can generalise & speculate" (to Hooker, July 13, 1856; CCD 6.179).

It is impossible to believe that Darwin studied the question of the transmutation of species and collected facts to prove it without his grandfather or Lamarck having any influence on him. He did not look at the facts through a blank mind, but through a lens provided to him by previous thinkers. Even

Charles Darwin's use of artificial selection was not unprecedented. Lamarck and Erasmus Darwin may not have examined artificial selection at great length as Charles did, nor did Chambers who also pointed out the importance of what we can learn from the breeding of animals, but all three of these predecessors did see that in principle the changes that could be produced in domestic animals pointed to the malleability of species. This principle was given to the author of *The Origin of Species*. He confirmed it, he did not invent it.

In general, the theory of evolution---the theory that species descended from previous species because changes in the environment were forcing them to adapt---was given to Charles Darwin. He took it into the field with him when he collected facts. It is impossible to believe that Darwin came up with the theory of evolution as the result of his own observations (which is the way Coyne, 32, and so many other scientists tell it), not least because the evidence does not support this ridiculous suggestion. Another myth about Darwin is that he made all these fantastic observations on his *Beagle* voyage and then came home and formulated his theory of natural selection (a specific theory of evolution). Coyne has it that Darwin gathered facts which "helped Darwin concoct the theory of evolution." That is not what happened.

What did Darwin do *after* that voyage? He started keeping Notebooks in which he wrestled with the observations and theories of his grandfather, Lamarck, and other naturalists, as well as presenting his own observations, particularly in the second half of the Red Notebook (from 113 on), starting around January 1837, and in Notebook B (about mid-June 1837 to early March 1838), which he entitled "Zoonomia". Their ideas were stimulating his thoughts. He was familiar with their writings before the voyage and took their ideas with him, and he still felt the need *to return to them* after the voyage, as if he had not quite gleaned from them all that he could. This indicates a deep influence.

Darwin himself contributed to the myth by writing, as the first sentence of the Introduction to *Origin of Species*, "When on board H.M.S. *Beagle*, as naturalist, I was much struck with certain facts in the distribution of the inhabitants of South America, and in the geological relations of the present to the past inhabitants of that continent." This idea that he was a lone naturalist out searching for facts never really changed for Darwin. Despite his adding the "Historical Sketch" to the third (1861) edition of *Origin*, this review of previous contributors never really penetrated his own conscience. He only added it to appease those who had criticized him for taking too much credit and maybe because he genuinely felt a little guilty about it. But in the years to come, he still saw it the way he did in that first sentence of *Origin*. In an 1877

letter, he asserts, "When I was on board the *Beagle* I believed in the permanence of species, but, as far as I can remember, vague doubts occasionally flitted across my mind. On my return home in the autumn of 1836 I immediately began to prepare my journal for publication, and then saw how many facts indicated the common descent of species" (ML 1.367). There is the myth in all its glory: Darwin takes a trip, is tantalized by doubts, comes home and assembles the facts he had gathered and sees the theory of evolution.

If Darwin had doubts about immutability on his voyage, it is because his grandfather and Lamarck put them there. If he was struck by certain facts (as he says in that first sentence of *Origin*), it was because his grandfather and Lamarck had in effect told him to be on the lookout for such facts. He was gathering a wider range of facts, but he was looking for them because both these natural scientists alerted him to a basic pattern of evidence for the transmutation of species. Yet he keeps silent about that in *Origin* and in subsequent writings.

While he often seems to be distancing himself from Erasmus Darwin and Lamarck in the Notebooks, he is actually often repeating their ideas. Charles Darwin writes, "... in course of ages. & therefore changes. every animal has tendency to change" (B 16). That is just Erasmus Darwin's "all animals undergo perpetual transformations" (*Zoonomia*, 1.502) all over again, which was also expressed in his poetry and the accompanying notes---"... the great globe itself, and all that it inhabit, appear to be in a perpetual state of mutation and improvement" (*Temple*, note on III, 411). When Charles Darwin writes, "... generation of species like generation of individuals ... If individual cannot procreate, he has no issue, so with species" (Notebook B 63-64; his emphases) and "If species generate other species, their race is not utterly cut off" (B 72; his emphases), this is his grandfather's language and ideas; he writes like this even though 'development' was in the process of replacing 'generation'.

After his discovery of Malthus, Darwin still sees things this way: "knowing from analogy, that all these very animals are descended from some one single stock,---one is led to suspect that the birth of the species & individuals in their present forms, are closely related" (E 83). And if births can be compared, so can deaths. One of the insights that Darwin would draw out of this, even before Malthus, was: "There is no more wonder in extinction of species than of individual" (RN 133; cf. B 22, 153). Both individuals and species have to die because both came into being through generation which yields mortal beings with limited life spans. After he discovers natural selection, extinction becomes even more important: "The more I think, the more convinced I am, that extinction plays greater part than transmutation" (E 122; his emphases).

But it begins with his grandfather's thoughts about species being born like individuals.

Charles Darwin writes, "why to be sure there were a thousand intermediate forms" (B 216). Lamarck knew that as well as anyone from his studies of molluscs. Darwin writes, "I should say the changes were effects of external causes" (B 217) and "We know world subject to cycle of change, temperature & in all circumstances which influence living beings" (B 2; his emphasis) and "therefore generation to adapt & alter the race to *changing* world" (B 4; his emphasis). These were all the ideas of Lamarck and Erasmus Darwin. In one place, Darwin does acknowledge that "depends on external influences" is Lamarck's insight (B 129). That is a rare moment for him where he gives credit to a predecessor for seeing an important factor of the evolutionary process.

Darwin puts down Lamarck's supposed idea of organisms willing changes to their bodies (B 21, 216; C 63), calling it absurd. He points out that plants cannot will changes (C 63). Never mind that Darwin should have questioned whether Lamarck really said this. What Darwin kept missing, or refused to acknowledge, was that Lamarck correctly saw that both plants and animals were changing according to the same process of adapting to circumstances. He saw the organic unity in all of life and Darwin never gave him credit for that. So when Darwin himself speculates, "Prove animal like plants [animals of one species are like buds of plants]:---trace gradation between associated & non associated animals.---& the story will be complete" (B 73), he is proving himself to be in part rather Lamarckian.

Not to mention these examples as well: "Even plants have *habitual* actions" (B 236; his emphasis); "the consciousness of the plant" (B 238; that is, in reacting to human touch, as if trying to protect itself) and "How except by direct adaptation has such a change been effected" (ibid.); "I suspect some valuable analogies might be drawn between habitual actions of plants ... & memory of animals" (B 241). This is all so much like Lamarck's thinking. (The editors of the Notebooks supply abundant and lengthy quotations from Lamarck in the original French, but I do not believe they ever point to any place where Lamarck said organisms will changes to their structure. They do make an interesting observation that Darwin's "changes not result of will of animal, but law of adaptation as much as acid & alkali" [B 21] echoes Erasmus Darwin's analogy of chemical affinities in *Zoonomia*, 1.499.)

Even after he discovers natural selection, he does not mind speculating along these lines: "have plants any notion of cause & effect, they have habitual action, which depends on such confidence when does such notion commence?" (N 13) or this, "With respect to free will, seeing a puppy playing

cannot doubt that they have free will, if so all animals ... & a plant in some senses ..." (M 72) and this too, "... plants have instincts ... & intellect is a modification of instinct" (N 48; in this passage, he specifically refuses to limit instincts only to bodies that are capable of locomotion). He also attributes memory to plants (N 50). It is rather odd to see Darwin condemn Lamarck for foolishness in letters to friends, while he has no trouble speculating in Lamarckian fashion in his Notebooks---the speculations arising because he sees the reasonableness of many of Lamarck's ideas.

These speculations are reasonable because Darwin adopts Lamarck's idea of the continuity of life. There are no leaps, or *saltum* (the Latin term Darwin often used). Both saw that nature creates in gradations. Even "language had a beginning, which my theory requires" (N 39). It did not leap into existence all at once. Same goes for the human eye, which might have had an origin in plants! "The eye being formed in Mollusca, Articulata, & Vertebrata, & Planaria, & light affecting plants" (Mac 29^v). For Lamarck and Darwin, there cannot be a leap from total unconsciousness to thinking and willing in animals. There are always missing links, even if some of them are right under our noses. We miss them because we don't look for them. Darwin would follow these thoughts in his Notebooks, but would not publicly defend such speculations as worthy of further investigation.

He was often worried about losing status with his fellow scientists because of going too far. He expressed such fears to Hooker about their colleague Edward Forbes. "It is really a pity that Forbes is quite so speculative: he will injure his reputation, anyhow on the Continent; & thus will do less good" (CCD 3.300; Mar. 13, 1846). Ironically, Darwin states about Forbes's speculations that "to a limited extent I fully believe they are true: but his boldness is astounding." The really decent thing to do would have been to publicly say that he cannot go along with unsubstantiated speculation, but these particular ones have a chance of being correct and are worthy of more study. But Darwin would never say that. He would not openly risk disapprobation from the mainstream community. A month later, he is awed by how much Forbes is attacked and "how well Forbes stands it" (CCD 3.311). I think he admired it too in his grandfather, but he knew he could never do it. As late as 1872, he was still anxious about displeasing fellow scientists. He expressed a fear that it may have been "a mistake on my part to publish it [*Descent*]" if "hardly any naturalists" were going to approve it (CCD 20.63).

In the early Notebooks (RN and A through D 133), Darwin constantly mentions "my theory". Since this is before natural selection, it cannot be that to which he is referring. He never spells it out, but it is clear that he is referring to a theory of transmutation of species and it is not very different

from what Erasmus Darwin and Lamarck offered. There is a note in the Darwin Archives where he lists books he has read "since I thought of my transmutation theory" (see Notebook C, editors' note C 276-1 on p. 320). The theory insofar as we get glimpses of its details involves sharing a common ancestor, gradual changes, inheritable characteristics, and adaptations to the environment---all of which you can find in the two main previous transmutationists. Darwin confesses at one point, "State broadly scarcely any novelty in my theory, only slight differences ... the whole object of the Work is its proof" (C 177; he also inserts this remark, "the opinion of many people in conversation," which seems to indicate that the theory was gaining currency; or perhaps he meant their opinions were an obstacle to the new theory?). At another point, where he references Lamarck among a couple of others, he writes, "I pretend to no originality of idea---(though I arrived at some quite independently & have used them since)" (D 69).

It was more than just a general feature his version of the theory had in common with previous versions. The details of gradations, descent from a common origin, and adapting to a changing environment are there in all of the early evolutionists. Darwin contributed to this a great desire to really prove it by an abundance of evidence and, if possible, to discover the primary cause, which would add considerably to the proof. It was mainly proof that was needed, not a new idea, and proof meant *additional* evidence because some had already been provided.

Also noteworthy is that after Malthus inspires his new idea of selection under the pressure of survival, he still refers to "my theory" (e.g., D 159; E 4, 6, 23) and *not* "my new theory". That is because there is more continuity than break after the inspiration from Malthus takes hold. Darwin never conveys any sense that Malthus or natural selection gave him a revolutionary new outlook. The revolutionary idea of species adapting to their circumstances had already come from Erasmus Darwin and Lamarck. As for Charles Darwin's emphasis on the importance of extinction, he was doing that before Malthus. Adapt or die was in place before his reading of Malthus (as discussed in Ch. 3, §2).

One specific idea that Malthus helped make clearer for him was that the process of selection for creating species in the wild was very similar to selection for domesticated animals. Before Malthus, this was implicit in some of his thoughts: "The changes in species must be very slow, owing to physical [i.e., environmental] change, slow & offspring not picked.---as men do. when making varieties" (C 17; my square brackets; cf. C 34). It is implied that nature is also selecting but more slowly. *After* Malthus, this becomes much clearer: "It is a beautiful part of my theory, that domesticated races. of

organics. are made by percisely [*sic*] same means as species---but latter far more perfectly & infinitely slower" (E 71; by 'perfectly', he means in adaptation to external conditions, whereas man does not manipulate domesticated animals to fit their physical environment but rather to fit the needs of men). Again, he does not say 'my new theory.' Basically, Darwin continues along the road he was already on, but now he could do a better job of proving how it was happening.

It is striking how much was in place before Darwin read Malthus. He considers it "Absolute knowledge that species die & others replace them" (B 104). If that was absolute knowledge, it was because of people like Erasmus Darwin and Lamarck. So too "We now know what is the natural arrangement, it is the classification of relationship; latter word meaning descent" (C 155). And when he compares the idea that similarity in individuals implies they are children of one parent to the idea of similarity in races of animals implying same (C 219), or says "species may have had their infancies, as well as men" (C 235), these too could be his grandfather speaking. "[T]he wonderful power of adaptation" (C 175) was an idea given to Charles Darwin. "Changes in structure being necessarily excessively slow, they become firmly embedded in the constitution ... The constitution being hereditary & fixed ..." (C 153) was also given to him by Lamarck and his grandfather.

Where Darwin gives these ideas his own distinctive spin is when he stresses the role of extinction and adapt or die in this process of transmutation, and this too was somewhat in place before natural selection. Suppose a climate turns colder or warmer (see B 245, C 168, and D 37-38). Those animals that can migrate, south or north, to keep up with the climate they are used to will remain unchanged (C 184). Those animals that cannot migrate (e.g., because of a barrier like a body of water, or a mountain range, or a desert) will either adapt to the new climate and survive, or not adapt and perish: "... certain physical changes at last become unfit, the animal cannot change quick enough & perishes" (C 153); "not distance, make species but barrier" (C 21).

Darwin comes very close to formulating a theory of natural selection, before the idea of it specifically hit him: "Whether species may not be made by a little more vigour being given to the chance offspring who have any slight peculiarity of structure. hence seals take victorious seals, hence deer victorious deer, hence males armed & pugnacious (all order; cocks all warlike) ..." (C 61). But then Erasmus Darwin was also very close to this, as quoted above: "Other animals have marks of having in a long process of time undergone changes in some parts of their bodies, which may have been effected to accommodate them to new ways of procuring their food" (*Loves*,

note on I, 65). Also recall that Erasmus described the constant warring of all species, animals and plants (discussed in Ch. 5, §3). The role of extinction in changing life forms on the planet was a new emphasis given by Charles Darwin, but being forced to adapt when the conditions of existence become different was not.

It is clear that the theory of evolution (species changing and adapting over time to a changing environment) was inherited by Charles Darwin.

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Comparisons are often made between Charles Darwin and those who preceded him like Chambers, Lamarck, and his grandfather. And of course, his predecessors always come out looking the worse for it. I do not believe in making comparisons, but if I were forced to do so, I would have to say that the accomplishments of Erasmus Darwin or Lamarck or Chambers were far greater than that of Charles. They labored in very different worlds, which inclines me to reinforce my original opinion that making comparisons between any of them is an extremely superficial thing to do, but then again, if I am compelled to make comparisons, it has to be said that the difference in their worlds highlights how much more difficult were the accomplishments of Darwin's forerunners and how much more abuse they got for their efforts. To focus on his grandfather for a moment:

First, Erasmus was more attuned to political and social revolution than Charles who was more aligned with conservative attitudes at a time when British imperialism was reaching its peak. It took the French Revolution to give Erasmus the courage and inspiration to publish *Zoonomia*, which he originally was going to leave for another day, after he died (Browne, *Voyaging*, 39). It took the possibility of being preempted (by Wallace) to get Charles Darwin to finally publish. Not something Erasmus had to worry about. No one else in his time would have been eager to put out a work like his. To plunge into a world of thought that puts you in solitary confinement is not an easy thing to do. Charles did not have to worry about that. Erasmus did.

Second, they lived in very different intellectual cultures. Erasmus lived in a more restrictive time, despite the fact that a hardy few in Edinburgh were living out their own Enlightenment period. Charles had encouragement from Lyell and Hooker, even though Lyell was very nervous about the implications of his work for human beings. Encouragement was another thing Erasmus did not have to worry about or look forward to. I suspect that he had to teach himself not to rely on it.

Third, the two were working in different states of scientific knowledge. In

Charles's time, it was well settled for most scientists that some, even many, species had become extinct and that the earth was millions of years old. In the time of Erasmus and Lamarck, both these facts were still in dispute. Not everyone agreed that extinction was a fact of natural history. Thomas Jefferson, for example, believed that the mammoth must still be roaming around somewhere. He could not accept that any links in the chain of being could be lost. God would not discard anything he had created. Jefferson was not alone in thinking like this. But extinction is an essential element of the theory of evolution. Evolution also needs a great amount of time to unfold and, despite the noble efforts of James Hutton ("immense time" being his contribution), the age of the earth was still hotly contested. That Erasmus could see so far ahead based on a less secure state of knowledge than would be available to Charles is remarkable by any measure. (Though this has nothing to do with evolution, it is striking to learn that even something like water being composed of hydrogen and oxygen was still debated by those who claimed water was a simple element: "all the most celebrated chemists of Europe [are not] yet converts to the new opinion of its decomposition [into oxygen and hydrogen]," wrote Erasmus in *Economy*, note on III, 204.)

Fourth, the sum total of these three points is not just that this made it easier for Charles to publish. His more favorable surroundings made it easier to think and speculate. He was more free to try out different ideas and gather evidence for them. Erasmus worked in a more hostile environment. Few people realize how incredibly difficult it is to think straight when everyone is against you, let alone think a new thought, let alone to follow up and see where it leads. Charles deserves credit for taking advantage of his better circumstances, but not for creating those circumstances. His better situation was handed to him as his cultural milieu, a legacy that Erasmus helped create along with Lamarck, Chambers, and others.

Charles cannot be fairly described as a lone genius who single-handedly invented everything himself. Erasmus and company cannot be held responsible for the way their work was undervalued in their own time. Only consider how a little positive reinforcement about how interesting his ideas were might have prompted an Erasmus Darwin to think more upon it and look for more evidence. If he did not accomplish more, it is because his society made it impossible. The work of Charles Darwin's predecessors does not deserve to be belittled as less influential and world-changing, which it often is by the know-it-alls of academia who never had to live with the kind of opposition that these people faced. If anything, their work deserves to be celebrated as ground-breaking against all odds.

Here is a specific example of what I mean. This comes from the note to III,

66 in *The Economy of Vegetation*. Erasmus Darwin observes that there are examples of common fossils of shells which are not in existence today, while some shells which are plentiful today are rarely found as fossils. He asks: "do some genera of animals perish by the increasing power of their enemies? Or do they still reside at inaccessible depths in the sea? Or do some animals change their forms gradually and become new genera?"

He was asking the right questions. That is not as easy as it looks. It is false to say he did not get as far as his grandson. It is true to say Charles Darwin started from a more advanced position, in part due to his grandfather. Extinction was still an open question in the late 18th century. Erasmus Darwin had to look at all the possibilities. There was not enough solid information in his day to narrow them down. So extinction was one hypothesis. New evolved forms was another. A majority found these hypotheses literally unthinkable. What is great about Erasmus Darwin is that he can come up with these hypotheses. The confirmed opinion that transmutation of species could not possibly be taking place does not inhibit him from asking the right questions. He poses all the right hypotheses no matter that contemporary scientific opinion automatically precluded some of them. How many really understand what an incredible accomplishment that is? It is almost impossible to think that clearly when the social pressure of established science is telling you to drop it.

Remember what Gertrude Stein once said: "No one is ahead of his time." True enough and it is no less true for Erasmus than it is for Charles. But she added: "it is only that the particular variety of creating his time is the one that his contemporaries who also are creating their own time refuse to accept ... and the things refused are only important if unexpectedly somebody happens to need them" (*Masterpieces*, 27). They didn't need it when Erasmus was writing, they needed it when Charles was there. *That* is the essential difference between them, and not any inherent value in their work.

~ 8 ~

They didn't need it when Chambers was writing either, though he compiled enough evidence to prove the probability of his case---that is, that the theory of species development from a common progenitor was more likely than not. Chambers made some mistakes (so did Darwin) but he got a lot more right than he did wrong (so did Darwin). Scientists of the time lambasted him for his few errors and refused to see what was so spot-on in his work. I do not believe it was his mistakes that really bothered them. That phony outrage was just a ploy. It was rather what he got right that really unnerved them. Chambers was at least as far ahead of them as Darwin was in front of him. In

the course of arguing that all of life is a development or descent, according to natural laws, from prior generations of life, Chambers availed himself of the evidence that was then available. He saw the importance of fossils (the vestiges referred to in the title of his book), the commonality of structure in various organic beings, intermediate forms and gradations (which he often calls 'links'), variations like monstrosities and sports (individuals born with marked differences from their parents), embryos and more. I want to review a number of these by focusing on several elements which demonstrate how close he was to Darwin, point for point. If this is not a case of great minds thinking alike, then nothing is.

The importance of time and gradual change. "Time is the true key to difficulties regarding appearances of determinateness in species," Chambers wrote in *Explanations* (158). The period in which mankind has been carefully recording natural facts "is not sufficient to allow more than a chance of any transition of species being or having been observed ..." (160). But if we have noticed any changes at all, "may we not well suppose that much greater have taken place in the course of the vast series of ages here described?" (161). He had made the same point in the very first edition of *Vestiges*: "... the gestation (so to speak) of a whole creation is a matter probably involving enormous spaces of time" (*Vestiges*, 210). In historical time (which is "only a small portion of the entire age of our globe"), "the limits of species have been, to ordinary observation, rigidly adhered to" (211). Like produces like---that's what we observe in our small space of time. It would take an immense amount of time to see feet developed, internal lungs come about, tail erased. "Precisely such may be our difficulty in conceiving that any of the species which people our earth is capable of advancing by generation to a higher type of being" (211).

By comparison, here is Darwin in the concluding chapter of *Origin*: "But the chief cause of our natural unwillingness to admit that one species has given birth to other and distinct species, is that we are always slow in admitting any great change of which we do not see the intermediate steps ... The mind cannot possibly grasp the full meaning of the term of a hundred million years; it cannot add up and perceive the full effects of many slight variations, accumulated during an almost infinite number of generations" (527; almost the same exact words, from 'we are always slow' to 'number of generations', can be found in the 1844 essay, 249). Here again is Chambers: "... the stages of advance [from species to species] being in all cases very small ... so that the phenomenon has always been of a simple and modest character" (*Vestiges*, 222; cf. 276, "the external world goes through slow and

gradual changes ...").

The implications of variations, both artificial and in wild nature. After noting "a remarkable persistency in national features and forms", Chambers goes on to observe that "... it would also appear that nature has a power of producing new varieties, though this is only done rarely" (*Vestiges*, 281; in his early essays, Darwin also thought that variations occur rarely in nature, but often enough to make natural selection possible). It is not only wild nature that Chambers looks at. He also considers artificial selection: "The starting and maintaining a *breed* of cattle, that is, a variety marked by some desirable peculiarity, are familiar to a large class of persons" (282; his emphasis). Darwin would make a very big deal of this. Chambers also ropes into his argument the monstrosities which occur---of which he and his brother were examples. Both were born with six fingers and toes on every extremity, which, as an author wishing to remain anonymous, he is not foolish enough to report, but he does mention that this oddity can appear "in families which have no record or tradition of such a peculiarity ... and it is then sometimes seen to descend through several generations" (282). A couple with such a feature, according to one writer Chambers cites, "might be the progenitors of a new variety of the race who would thus be marked in all future times" (282-83). His overall point is that varieties or modifications happen everywhere in nature, in the wild and in domestication. What does Chambers conclude from all this?

We are ignorant of the laws of variety-production [Darwin's point as well]; but we see it going on as a principle in nature ['continually operating' in the 5th edition, 300], and it is obviously favourable to the supposition that all the great families of men are ['may have been' in the 5th edition, 300] of one stock. [*Vestiges*, 283]

What Chambers is doing is extrapolating backwards from the fact of varieties in nature to the probable starting-point: It all comes from one common progenitor. Of course, the abundance of varieties does not prove one species can change into another, but Chambers does not mind taking a leap and this one is not far-fetched. In *Explanations* (116-17), he correctly pointed out that the limits of change in species was unknown. He also argued (as Darwin would in *Origin*, Ch. II) that 'species' and 'variety' were arbitrary terminology and should not be confused with reality (*Explanations*, 112-14). He is not as thorough as Darwin. He does not compile an extensive fact base of domesticated varieties. He has seen a couple (cattle, sheep) and that's enough

for him. If it would take ten pieces of evidence to prove a case, Darwin would go after every one. Not Chambers. Give him two or three and he brilliantly intuits the right theory, or at least part of it (the theory of common descent), though he never realized natural selection. He was sharp and a little impulsive, whereas Darwin was more diligent. But no one could accuse Chambers of wild speculation, which is exactly what they did anyway. He was assembling some evidence and drawing sensible conclusions.

Geology and Fossils. Chambers sums it up well in *Explanations*, after reviewing some of the fossils found in the geological record:

... the earth gradually became the theatre of organic being, simple forms appearing first, and more complicated afterwards. *A time when there was no life* is first seen. We then *see life begin, and go on*; but whole ages elapsed before man came to crown the work of nature. This is a wonderful revelation to have come upon the men of our time ... The great fact established by it is, that the organic creation, as we now see it, was not placed upon the earth at once; ---it observed a PROGRESS. [*Explanations*, 31; his emphases]

What he means by 'progress' is not progress towards a goal, but simply movement, a continuing creation. He puts it even more succinctly further on: "... it must be seen that what they call new species are but variations upon the old" (*Explanations*, 158). He knows that he does not have a handle on all the evidence and that he may get some things wrong, but it doesn't matter. "It may be less clear than we could wish; but such light as we have certainly favours the development theory" (63). The most he claimed was "a strong probability for the development theory" (122; also see 169; cf. *Vestiges*, 230, 294, 305, where he also notes that he does not claim to have absolutely proven his case).

It would not matter if half his facts were wrong because 1) the half that are right go a long way towards proving the reasonableness of this theory; 2) if a theory is ultimately correct, it is possible to deduce it from a small number of facts, even though it will take more to prove it; and 3) whatever odd pieces of evidence may prove a difficulty for the theory, it is still right to ask what is the general tendency of most of the evidence and if that general tendency supports the theory, then we have good reason to put forward that theory as the one that is most likely true. Chambers intuitively felt that he was on the right track. He knew the general tendency was on his side. One of the most revealing remarks he made about his development theory was this: "It may prove a true system, though one half of the illustrations presented by its first

explicator should be wrong" (*Explanations*, 182). (I think we can make some allowance for him when he claims to be the first explicator of this. He was not the first anymore than Darwin was the first, but Chambers was out there all alone and took great risks of public ridicule, even though he published anonymously to protect his family.)

In case anyone thinks that Chambers was overstating it by claiming that one could still be right even if half of one's facts were wrong, recall that Darwin believed the same. To repeat this quote from an 1872 letter which I presented a little while back: "I may have erred on many points, and extended the doctrine too far, but I feel a strong conviction that sexual selection will hereafter be admitted to be a powerful agency;" CCD 20.148.) This is another point Chambers and Darwin had in common. Both knew that even many errors could not invalidate a theory that had a lot going for it.

Scientists who raised objections based on this or that piece of evidence annoyed Chambers. He knew that they were not really concerned with legitimately accounting for all the evidence. They were nitpicking because they saw that there was a general pattern favoring development and they knew that they could not erase or explain or wish away this pattern. I think it angered him that they could be either so dense or so malicious about defeating proper scientific investigation of hypotheses. The point that underlies all his factual arguments is this: Even if you find several pieces of evidence that does not fit the theory of development, how does that contravene the general import of most of the evidence?

Embryonic development. One of the most important arguments for all theorists of the development of life from a common source was the peculiar fact that the embryos of so many different animals resemble each other. From there they leapt to a doctrine known as recapitulation. The idea was that the development from the embryo to the full-grown adult recapitulated all the stages in the development of the species. Chambers was excited by the fact that the human embryo in its early stages resembled that of a fish and then a reptile, and moreover had to survive in an embryonic fluid which indicated an origin in an environment of water. Some scientists pointed out the human embryo is not actually a fish or a reptile. Chambers agreed and added, "It is only said that there is a resemblance in general character between the particular embryotic stage of being, and the mature condition and form of the appropriate inferior animal" (*Explanations*, 108). Something significant can be seen in the existence of embryos. It suggested a deep, historical affinity between various animals---a sense of commonality among all life forms that could not just be an independent accident.

It is interesting that so many evolutionists now want to stress accident and randomness and get rid of any idea of progress towards a goal. The truth is that the original evolutionists, including Darwin, were looking for design and the laws that would explain it. Oddly enough the creationists are the ones who really promote the idea of randomness. They want to make everything the result of the completely *arbitrary* will of God. They espouse *pure accident*. Facts like the resemblances among embryos of different adult animals or the similarity of bone structure in various animals do not require an explanation. That's just the way God made things.

Charles Darwin compared the bones in "the hoof, foot, hand, wing, paddle, both in living and extinct animals" (1844, 216) and Chambers compared the bones in the human hand to that in the wings of a bat (*Vestiges*, 196). Chambers, Darwin (both grandfather and grandson), Lamarck and so many others saw design in all these wonderful facts---'wonderful' being a word Darwin uses about thirty times in the 1844 essay, plus a few more for 'marvelous', words which also crop up in *Origin*, though it is not nearly as densely packed with them as the earlier work. Darwin several times notes that the creationist merely "explains" wonderful facts as 'ultimate facts' (e.g., 1844, 182, 193, 216) which are 'incapable of explanation' (216; cf. 1842, 40). But explanation, or frankly, design, is exactly what Darwin and others were seeking.

Darwin's theory of natural selection added a little more weight to the argument from embryos. Adults differ from one another after millions of years because they have been competing with each other and adapting to their changing environments. Embryos, however, are not in a struggle for survival and live in a fairly steady environment. The mothers carrying them may be in combat, but not the embryos. Therefore, one would not expect them to change very much, not even after millions of years. They do point back to a common origin of life. Development theorists like Chambers may not have argued for this with as much precision as later evolutionary scientists would, but they caught the basic idea of commonality revealed in the embryos.

Rudimentary organs and the argument against independent creation. Just as evolutionary ideas went by several names (generation, the development hypothesis, transmutation, regular gradation, etc.), the idea that each species was fixed, unchanging, and created separately by God also went by a number of terms, although there was a little less variation here. In *Origin*, Darwin most often refers to it as independent creation, or separate or special creation. Sometimes he just calls it creation (or, in all these cases, 'the theory of ...'). In his earliest essays, he calls it creationism, but did not continue to use that term

in *Origin*. Chambers sometimes calls it 'special exertion'. Both were vehemently opposed to the claim that special or independent creation explained anything.

The basic argument of Chambers is that the fossil record of some species which have gone extinct and new ones coming into existence at particular points of time supports a theory of gradual creation, not a theory of independent, sudden creations (*Vestiges*, 152-54): "that the organic creation was thus progressive through a long space of time, rests on evidence which nothing can overturn or gainsay" (153). Extinction itself is "a fact calculated very forcibly to arrest attention" (152). That is Chambers to a T: Certain facts arrested his attention, when other scientists were overlooking them. The idea that God would specially intervene for the creation of each species "is too ridiculous to be for a moment entertained" (154). But I want to take a look at a very specific piece of evidence Chambers brings to bear.

He looks at rudimentary or abortive organs (i.e., not fully developed, such as the mammary glands in the males of many animals or the arrested teeth in young whales and rhinoceroses which never protrude from the jaw). They are completely useless. He also notices commonalities such as the bones in a bat's wing being similar to that in a human hand (196). (Darwin also made use of both these kinds of wonderful facts, as noted above.) What does Chambers conclude? "These facts clearly shew how all the various organic forms are bound up in one ... fundamental unity ... one system ... *though it did not all come at one time*" (*Vestiges*, 197; emphasis added). This is a perfect summation of modern evolutionary theory based on facts and it was published fifteen years before *Origin*.

Chambers then continues: "After what we have seen, the idea of a separate exertion for each must appear totally inadmissible. The single fact of abortive or rudimentary organs condemns it; for these, on such a supposition, could be regarded in no other light than as blemishes or blunders ... On the other hand, when the organic creation is admitted to have been effected by a general law, we see nothing in these abortive parts but harmless peculiarities of development ..." (197-98). Darwin constantly argues like this from his initial essays (completed before *Vestiges*) to *Origin*: Independent creation cannot explain these wonderful facts very well, but my theory makes perfect sense of them. In Britain, it was Chambers who was the first to publicly make the theory of common descent his own before it was Darwin's. But Darwin did add some extra oomph to it with natural selection. As natural selection develops organs well fitted for an organism's survival, it is not at all surprising that in some organisms, under certain conditions, an organ might become less useful and fall into disuse ('harmless peculiarity' in Chambers) and remain as

a rudimentary, arrested organ (see 1844 essay, 237; *Origin*, 499). An undeveloped organ is a good sign that all have descended from one common ancestor which also had that organ; it's just another line of development from the one source. The theory of independent creation cannot account for this at all.

One might think that Chambers is taking a big leap when he says that the single fact of abortive or rudimentary organs is enough to condemn independent creation as a bad theory. But he is not far wrong. He means it is an extremely powerful objection to that theory. Darwin argues in a similar vein when, at the very end of Chapter XIII of *Origin*, he alludes to the facts he has discussed in this chapter (morphology, embryology, and rudimentary organs) and says they "seem to me to proclaim so plainly, that [the many organic beings of this world] have all descended, each within its own class or group, from common parents ... that I should without hesitation adopt this view, *even if it were unsupported by other facts or arguments*" (500-01; emphasis added). Chambers had made essentially the same argument fifteen years before. He too immediately followed his discussion of rudimentary organs with embryos and recapitulation (*Vestiges*, 198). He links some things in the same way Darwin would because the development hypothesis explains this variety of facts. He seizes on rudimentary organs all by themselves as dealing a death blow to independent creation. Darwin is considering a few more facts than Chambers, but in principle, he is making the same argument: Even a small amount of *powerful* evidence can overturn a theory and point to another as the better possibility.

Darwin constantly points out in *Origin* that his theory is so much better than the theory of independent creation, but it was Chambers who made the success of this argument possible. It is no small thing that, over a dozen years before *Origin*, Chambers put independent creation on the defensive. To dispute the possibility that the organic world was created according to laws, just as the movement of planets is governed by laws, "would require very powerful evidence ... it would require very decisive counter-evidence to forbid the conclusion that the organic creation originated in law ... no actual evidence has ever yet been offered ... while, on the other hand, geology and physiology exhibit *lively vestiges or traces of that mode [law] having actually been followed*" (*Explanations*, 29; his emphasis). Chambers exaggerates a little when he says "no actual evidence has ... been offered", for after all, there is the general phenomenon of like producing like, and he will exaggerate again when he calls special creation "a *supposition which does not even pretend to have a single scientific fact for its basis*" (181; his emphasis). His influence on Herbert Spencer, who later popularized the term 'evolution', is

clear. In his 1852 essay, "The Development Hypothesis", Spencer argued that the theory of creation is supported by no facts at all (*Essays*, 381). The gradual change of species over millions of years makes more sense (384). He never mentions *Vestiges*, but that book was certainly his source.

In attacking special creation, Chambers and Darwin were not taking aim at religion. Creationism was the confirmed opinion of most scientists at the time. It was a scientific dispute. Both were challenging the majority position in science. But it was more of a problem for Chambers than for Darwin. Darwin would have an easier time because the scientific belief in independent creation was on the wane before 1859 and it was because of Chambers that it was in decline.

What Chambers was doing was challenging his opponents: Prove it to me, prove it, don't just wag your tongues, give me a solid line of evidence. And nobody could. All that independent creation has going for it is "... seeking for miracle instead of cause ... a mere *prejudice* ... which has nothing but priority in its favour [in other words, it's a theory that's been around a long time], in which respect it has no advantage over the notion of the centrality of the earth, or any other of the first impressions of mankind respecting natural phenomena" (*Explanations*, 181-82; his emphasis). After going over what his critic Adam Sedgwick had to say in praise of God and special creation in his *Edinburgh* review of *Vestiges*, Chambers says, "If such be the best view of the opposite theory which a clever scholar and man of science of the present day can give, that theory must certainly be regarded as in a very unpromising condition" (137).

The effort to explain the organic world by special creation Chambers described as "vague and unsteady" (125). One of the most important things he did was to correctly insist that independent creation was a theory, not a fact, and very much an unproven theory. It involved "uncertainty" (126) and "no-reasoning" (128). As noted above, Darwin was arguing along the same line when, in his 1842 essay (40), he pointed out that the creationist does not reason or explain so much as appeal to "ultimate and inexplicable facts" (reiterated in 1844, 182, 193, 216). Few academics today note what a great service Chambers did for science in arguing like this, and in public no less! Darwin was doing it privately in his study. It was because Chambers won this particular fight (that is, he made a deep impression that could not be dismissed and that convinced many people, as evidenced by Spencer's essay), that Darwin could make the next step look so much easier. But it had actually been Chambers who had smoothed the way.

The thing about the theory of special creation, which Chambers was asking his contemporaries to notice, is that it was not really an established theory.

Nothing had been done to prove it. No good evidentiary argument had been made. It was the *assumed* theory, not the established one. I cannot resist offering a comparable example from another field. The betrayal of Jesus by Judas and Jewish leaders as his enemies was never an established theory. It was assumed and not even acknowledged as a theory. What happens to *assumed* theories is that they become facts, but false facts. As Darwin recognized, false theories are relatively easy to disprove, but false facts are notoriously difficult to combat. "False facts are highly injurious to the progress of science, for they often endure long; but false views, if supported by some evidence, do little harm, for every one takes a salutary pleasure in proving their falseness" (*Descent*, 676). He might have added that very few take pleasure in seeing false facts exposed. Instead, the very attempt provokes a lot of hostility. That was what Chambers had to face.

To give you an idea of how brave Chambers was: When Joseph Hooker read Darwin's 1844 essay (in later years he admitted he did not really get what Darwin had accomplished at the time; of course, he was just as wrong about Lamarck and Chambers, but I don't know if he ever admitted that), he advised Darwin to get rid of the attack on independent creation. This attack would be "alarming to one class of readers" and was "uncalled for" (CCD 4.21; March 1847). It seemed to make him nervous that Darwin was doing this. He did not look forward to it being included in Darwin's book. Thankfully, Darwin did not listen and kept this line of reasoning in *Origin*. It is important to demonstrate that a theory is better than the currently accepted one which is often falsely assumed to be a fact. If Hooker was so uncomfortable reading this in a private essay, think how courageous Chambers was to do it in public and to keep it up in edition after edition despite all the venom scientists poured on him. Now there is a freaking hero of science.

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Did Chambers make his case? I think he did and with breathing room. Whether he established it with a slight or moderate preponderance of the evidence may be open to debate, but there is enough of a convincing pattern of evidence in his work to overturn the theory of independent creation which does not explain the same facts nearly as well. The really amazing thing is that I have culled all this from the first edition of *Vestiges* (1844) and the second of *Explanations* (1846). This is before the version of *Vestiges* that Darwin called "the tenth and much improved edition (1853)" in *Origin* (10) in the "Historical Sketch" added in 1861.

It is tempting to see a great distance between Darwin and Chambers. That would be wrong. Darwin was perhaps the better scientist, more diligent, more

painstaking about getting all the evidence right. But it's not a case of great scientist versus paltry amateur. It is rather great versus very good scientist, or maybe better, great versus great. Darwin and Chambers are not as far apart as one might think based on what academia makes them out to be. Darwin could take his leaps too. He did not prove everything. He had to resort to speculation, not as often as Chambers did, but still, it is there. Even some of the errors both made bear some striking resemblances.

Chambers was ridiculed for making a few rather spectacular claims, one of the best-known being: "It is no great boldness to surmise that ... [the right conditions might occur which] would suffice in a goose to give its progeny the body of a rat ..." (*Vestiges*, 219). How they howled at that one (though, as I said previously, it was the things Chambers was very sensible about that really annoyed them). Their howling was a misdirection. They hooted just as much when Darwin suggested that the whale might have developed from a race of aquatic bears in the first edition of *Origin* (217). He was relying on pure imagination. Darwin never made any attempt to compare the physiology or anatomy of bears and whales. He just imagined it. That's what makes his error so comparable to that of Chambers.

Chambers led up to that suggestion about the goose and the rat by remarking "how easy it is to imagine an access of favourable conditions." Darwin wrote that given the right conditions, "I can see no great difficulty in a race of bears being rendered, by natural selection, more and more aquatic in their structure and habits, with larger and larger mouths, till a creature was produced as monstrous as a whale." To his contemporaries, this was just as preposterous as the goose and the rat. He withdrew this from later editions, so intense was the criticism (but he regretted having removed it; see CCD 7.401 n2). That was one major difference between Darwin and Chambers. Darwin wanted very much to get along in the world of professional science. Chambers was the greater idealist. He was outraged when professional scientists turned so hostile to the formation of hypotheses and testing them, and when they used some errors to deny what was good in a work. Their criticisms of him were indeed lousy science and Chambers was not afraid to point this out.

People forget that so many times in *Origin* Darwin used 'we may imagine', 'we can understand', 'I can see no great difficulty', 'we may believe' and the like (e.g., 121, 149, 165, 214, 215, 217, 233, 263, 271, 273, 277, 426). Besides the whale and the bears, he imagines that the early progenitor of the ostrich was like a bustard (165), how bees may have gradually acquired their architectural powers (259-63), how the complex human eye could have developed from simpler light sensitive nerves (219-20). It is not that these things are bad speculation, but that Darwin attempted no evidentiary

argument. Speculation permeates *The Origin of Species*. Even his complete dismissal of cataclysm as an explanation of past changes and his total reliance on gradual development was based more on speculation and assumption than evidence. He made an *a priori* assumption that a species must go out as gradually as it came in because it made his theory perfectly symmetrical. Darwin's position would hinder science for a few generations and kept us ignorant of the role played by catastrophes in the history of the earth. But that is the fault of the scientists who came after Darwin. No one forced them to make Darwin a god.

In all these cases, Darwin is speculating and proving it is *possible*, but that is not an air-tight argument. Does he actually prove that the human eye evolved the way he thinks? No, not really. He makes a good case for the possibility of it, just as Lamarck did. I think that Darwin basically proved the general theory, and maybe even natural selection, with a wide range of evidence but that is not to say that he proved every detail. "It can hardly be supposed that a false theory would explain, in so satisfactory a manner as does the theory of natural selection, the several large classes of fact above specified" (from the conclusion of the sixth edition of *Origin*, 637). He made the same point in many letters and even to the gentleman who criticized him for saying too much 'I believe' and 'I am convinced' (see below). But people like that gentleman made him aware of the possible faults and leaps in his work.

Some of his contemporaries who did not accept natural selection had good objections. They were not idiotic for expressing doubts and raising reasonable suspicions. They had reason to be wary. They could see how often Darwin resorted to imagination to make his argument (e.g., "we may imagine" as he says at 165 and 426 in *Origin*). Imagining demonstrates possibility but it is not complete proof. One writer, the Rev S. Haughton, in frustration complained, "No progress in natural science is possible as long as men will take their rude guesses at truth for facts, and substitute the fancies of their imagination for the sober rules of reasoning" (quoted in Slotten, 199). Darwin was making more than a rude guess, but imagination was employed a little too often. The Rev. Haughton was not out of line.

Alvar Ellegård reminds us that Darwin was frequently criticized for having "replaced observation by imagination" (Ellegård, 189). Some of the expressions used to describe his theory were 'mere conjecture', 'crude theories', 'reckless speculation', 'rash speculation', and 'bold theorizing' (ibid.). "The *English Churchman* in 1870 observed that 'Mr. Darwin ... appears to us as an instance of a philosopher whose imagination has run away with him'" (88). Darwin was not insensitive to such criticisms. He knew he could be too

speculative at times. In a letter to Asa Gray (Nov. 29, 1859), Darwin wrote: "What you hint at is very, very true: that my work will be grievously hypothetical, and large parts by no means worthy of being called induction, my commonest error being probably induction from too few facts."

Darwin recounted to Lyell (Dec. 10, 1859) his meeting with Richard Owen (the gentleman referred to above), British anatomist, and the criticism Owen made of his book. As Darwin reports it, Owen said "in most sneering tone if I must criticise, I shd. say, 'we do not want to know what Darwin believes & is convinced of, but what he can prove.'" Darwin agreed and admitted that he had "probably greatly sinned in this line," adding that he "would endeavor to modify the 'believes' & 'convinceds'. He [Owen] took me up short,---'You will then spoil your book, the **charm of** (!) it is that it is Darwin himself" (CCD 7.422; that is Darwin's exclamation point and the bold indicates double underlining).

Owen also criticized the book for trying to explain everything. That was another point of suspicion for some. They were concerned that natural selection was so flexible that it could explain almost everything. Despite what Darwin said about this theory not accounting for every fact, just a good many, it often seemed like he was trying to make it as comprehensive as the law of gravity, which is not surprising since so many scientists in every field aspired to be the Newton of their domain. George Douglas Campbell, more popularly known as the Duke of Argyll, who I believe had enormous respect for Darwin (he described Darwin's book as 'memorable' and 'delightful') and interviewed him near the end of his life, expressed his misgivings about the amazing flexibility of this theory:

The truth is that the phrase "natural selection," and the group of ideas which hide under it, is so elastic that there is nothing in heaven or on earth that by a little ingenuity may not be brought under its pretended explanation. Darwin in 1859-1860 wondered "how variously" his phrase had been "misunderstood." The explanation is simple: it was because of those vague and loose analogies which are so often captivating. [quoted in Glick, *What about Darwin?*, 51]

A good example of how flexible was Darwin's theory concerns the sterile worker ants (*Origin*, 271-78). These ants are divided into well-defined groups in each of which the members have special structures (such as large jaws or an overdeveloped abdomen or a shield on their head, etc., and even variations in the size of the body within each group) which serve for special functions. The result is a kind of division of labor enabling the work to get done more

efficiently. Normally, Darwin applies natural selection to how individuals are improved in their struggle for survival and then pass on their traits. That explanation won't work here because these ants are sterile and cannot bequeath their improved modifications to any offspring.

Darwin resolves the difficulty by reminding his readers that "selection may be applied to the family, as well as to the individual" (273). He makes a switch here because he needs to do it in order to maintain the resourcefulness of natural selection. "We can see how useful their production may have been to a social community of insects, on the same principle that the division of labour is useful to civilised man" (277). The ants have to be sterile in order to maintain that division of labor. If they were not, they would pass on their characteristics to their descendants and their specialized function would become diffused throughout the community. The division of labor would be lost. It is a very clever explanation. This is probably the kind of thing that caused even his friend Joseph Hooker to comment in the letter I quoted from near the end of §9 of the third chapter (Dec. 20, 1859; CCD 7.437): "You certainly make a hobby of Nat. Selection & probably ride it too hard--that is a necessity of your case ... at first-sight [it] seems overstrained; ie to account for *too much*. I think too that some of your difficulties which you override by Nat Selection may give way before other explanations."

Stephen Gould once remarked, "science is tested evidence, not tall tales" (*Richness*, 149). To his contemporaries, much of what Darwin was relating seemed very much like a tall tale. Darwin does have a good evidentiary case, especially for the theory of common descent (which was essentially the same as Chambers's case), and he has some evidence for natural selection. When he argues that if man can produce different breeds in domesticated animals and plants, we can only imagine what nature might do with almost infinitely more time, he has an excellent point. The explanation for why embryos don't change is also good. But there is a lot of cleverness in *Origin* which does not advance beyond mere ingenuity and is never backed up by solid proof. In the section on sterile worker ants, he uses that technique of arguing "I can see no real difficulty" (273; or "no very great difficulty", 271) and "I believe natural selection ..." (277). He acknowledges his "overweening confidence" in the principle (274).

There is also a certain amount of circularity to Darwin's argument, as Robert Young points out---"he appealed to the very principle which was at issue, the uniformity of nature" (98). Darwin assumes the uniformity of nature to prove the uniformity of nature. In other words, he makes a good evidentiary case that the law of nature he names 'natural selection' is operating through a large amount of facts, and based on the uniformity of nature, it is reasonable

to suppose that the same law is operating in other cases as well (the human eye, how whales came to be, sterile worker ants, etc.).

The real problem for Darwin is that he admits early on, in the very last sentence of the introduction to *Origin*, that "Natural Selection has been the main but not exclusive means of modification." (It is clear from an 1872 letter to Mivart that Darwin was very proud of this sentence and believed it exonerated him of any charge that he had overdone his case for natural selection; CCD 20.19). Therefore, one could ask whether some other law might not explain some of the difficult details, like the human eye or human brain. Chambers is doing the same thing, though he worked with less evidence, to draw his conclusion of the uniformity of nature (from which one could conclude that he is the greater genius, as he saw so far ahead based on so much less---that is, if one had a mind to draw such conclusions, which I don't recommend). Maybe, Chambers argues, I don't have all my ducks in a row, but I have some in a row, and if natural law rules throughout nature, then that means the rest of the ducks somehow must line up, even if I cannot figure it all out yet.

Chambers had not hit on the theory of natural selection, but he did have a definite sense of evolution from a common origin and it was not merely wild speculation. Darwin may have been ahead of him, but, for the time they lived in, Chambers was way out in front of everyone else. So far out in front that he did not feel safe. He scared professional scientists. Their reaction to his book proves he was right to worry about the future prospects of the author of such a book, should he ever be made known. He published anonymously for good reason. In 1848, he was forced to withdraw as a candidate for Lord Provost of Edinburgh because of rumors that he was the author of *Vestiges*. Only a very few close to him knew the secret. A son-in-law once asked him why he was keeping his authorship shrouded in mystery (he never publicly admitted it, not even on his deathbed). He pointed to his house and said, "I have eleven reasons." In that house there lived his eleven children. (See Secord, 371.) Even today, he is disparaged as a mediocre or minor scientist, but it is stunning how much he got right. He did not prove it all, he was not as assiduous as Darwin or Wallace. He called himself "nothing but a general student" (*Explanations*, 104), but damn if he was not on target more often than not.

In fact, putting aside natural selection for the moment, for anyone who has doubts about the theory that all organic life has evolved from a common source, I highly recommend reading *Vestiges* and *Explanations*. What you get in Chambers is the fever of excitement when all this was spanking, brand-new. Evolution is not old news to Chambers. It is an incredibly fresh way of

looking at nature. He is practically trembling with delight at seeing it for the first time. Don't be put off by the fact that his language is archaic at times or that he gets some facts wrong. None of that affects the thrill of hearing someone gasp when he sees truth appear before him like a door to a light-filled room suddenly opened. He is like the man who has just emerged from a long tunnel. "This is a wonderful revelation to have come upon the men of our time ... the organic creation, as we now see it, was not placed upon the earth at once" (*Explanations*, 31). Creation is still going on, it does not stop. It is really no wonder at all that his book continued to inspire people even after *The Origin of Species* was published.

Chambers knew some of his own and his age's deficiencies. He never claimed to have achieved absolute certainty, only greater probability (e.g., *Vestiges* 230, 294, 305), as I said above (which Darwin acknowledged as an accomplishment of Lamarck, but he never paid the same tribute to Chambers). He was also aware that knowledge of nature at that time was constantly changing. After reviewing a number of facts which he believes are favorable to his development hypothesis, he states, "I do not indeed present these ideas as furnishing the true explanation of the progress of organic creation; they are merely thrown out as hints towards the formation of a just hypothesis [to be completed] when some considerable advances shall have been made in the amount and character of our stock of knowledge" (230). He was conscious of living in a time when knowledge was expanding on an almost daily basis (e.g., *Explanations*, 56-57, 78-79, 85, 99). In the last ten years, he says, we have not had stable views on fish fossils that have lasted for a year (56) and "... we might look for new and superseding facts every day" (79). Therefore, any explanation offered now is tentative until all the facts come in. It is a good tentative explanation if it accounts well for what we know so far.

As for the evidence that all human beings are descended from one stock, he admits, "It cannot be considered as conclusive ..." (294). From our point of view, we see Chambers bounce from a solid fact to a bogus fact and back again. He is not nearly as discriminating an investigator as Darwin is. But it didn't matter because he knew he was on to something. To quote again one of the most revealing remarks he made about development theory: "It may prove a true system, though one half of the illustrations presented by its first explicator should be wrong" (*Explanations*, 182). Given all the grief he was given for being so far out in front, his estimation of himself as the first is understandable.

Darwin might have criticized scientists privately in conversation and in letters, but Chambers did it publicly. He was an idealist, as I said, a pure scientist (much more so than Darwin who was always half politician of

science). Chambers wanted to get to the bottom of what was wrong with the profession of science. Darwin was more practical. He wanted to stay on the good side of scientists, if he could, while he tried to win support for his theory one scientist at a time. Chambers's idealism is one reason why he is still so intensely disliked in the world of academia. That and his severe public critique of the way professional science operates. That critique was one of his greatest accomplishments.

Chambers admits that there is "a necessity for the ascertainment of detached facts ... and a danger in premature generalization ..." (*Explanations*, 179), but he also fights for the true meaning of hypothesis formation and against the prejudice of scientists who are so absorbed in minutiae ("the man of science turns to his collection of shells or butterflies, to his electric machine or his retort", 178) that they cannot see the larger questions and frame of the evidence. He was right on the money when he said: "It is to the chilling repression of all saliency in investigation, which characterizes the scientific men of our country and age, that I object, not to a due caution in selecting proper paths in which to venture" (179). He then quotes at length from John Stuart Mill's *System of Logic* to explain that it is legitimate to extrapolate a hypothesis from a few facts (because no one can possibly hold all the facts of nature in one's head at one time) and then we can use that hypothesis to see how well it explains the rest of the facts (179-81). Chambers had firmly put the traditionalists and critics in their place. He had proven that a development hypothesis was worthy of respect and that special creation was another hypothesis, not a fact, that had little or nothing going for it. The latter had never been established in any shape, manner or form that should cause us to bow down and worship it.

His achievement in promoting correct scientific reasoning was one of the things that was completely suppressed by the time Darwin's book rolled along. Darwin became the great scientist and Chambers had to be dismissed as a paltry amateur. It became an ideological truism that Chambers was a deficient scientist, when in fact he was so much the better scientist than any of them. If academia were an honorable institution, the injustice of this would smart.

When Darwin published *Origin*, he received some criticism from certain scientists for faulty reasoning. Henry Fawcett departed from that, writing a favorable review of his book, and later wrote to Darwin: "I was spending an evening last week with my friend Mr. John Stuart Mill and I am sure you will be pleased to hear from such an authority that he considers that your reasoning throughout is in the most exact accordance with the strict principles of Logic. He also says, the Method of investigation you have followed is the

only one proper to such a subject" (July 16, 1861; CCD 9.204). Darwin was much gratified and responded, "You could not possibly have told me anything which would have given me more satisfaction than what you say about Mr. Mill's opinion" (CCD 9. 212). He also proudly wrote to Lyell (*ibid.*) and Gray (9.214) to tell them this good news. In the fifth edition of his book on logic, Mill publicly praised Darwin (CCD 9.205 n3).

Everyone, including Mill, had forgotten that Chambers had been there, done that, a decade and a half earlier. Before anyone else, Chambers saw that the system of logic propounded by Mill would serve evolutionary theory well, and he never got credit for it. *Never*, not even to this day. He was so far out in front of everyone in almost every respect, it is astounding. It is equally astounding, but in a reprehensible way, that the spiritual descendants of his tormentors have continued to denigrate him and keep hidden how much he got right. The drumbeat of mob mentality demands that one opinion of Chambers must be repeated till the end of time.

Chambers was fighting an emotional battle, the hardest kind of battle there is to engage in. Darwin admitted this, in a sense, when he thanked Chambers for "removing prejudice" in the "Historical Sketch" (*Origin*, 11). This emotional battle is not merely a prelude to science or incidental to it. It is science. There is no higher achievement in science than to make the unconscious conscious. That is what Chambers was doing when he argued that human descent from the lower animals is not degrading and when he argued that independent creation was a theory, not a fact, with no good evidence going for it. He got people to face their discomfort with these things as well as facing some of the evidence that supports the development hypothesis. This takes time, almost as much time as evolution takes. Darwin of all people should have appreciated that more than he did.

Ever since Antonio Damasio's *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (1994), we ought to be familiar with the fact that the brain is not composed of compartments walled off from each other. They bleed into each other. That includes the part of the brain for emotions. The emotions are being tapped into when we are engaged in any intellectual activity, even mathematics. There is no such thing as detached, cold objectivity. You cannot think about anything without some emotion being involved. *Assessing evidence for anything engages the emotions. It is not a neutral activity.* Many people have intuitively sensed this. Chambers did. I think Darwin did too. What Darwin could have been more open about is that Chambers was removing prejudices from scientists, not only from the general public. Lyell recognized this when he wrote to Hooker in 1856 that the younger scientists would go for "the indefinite modifiability doctrine" (D &M, *Darwin*, 439),

though he does not give *Vestiges* the credit. Those students in Agassiz's classes were losing their prejudices because of Chambers and no one else.

We have become very good at questioning the foundations of religion. We ask religious people to examine their assumptions and biases, and rightly so. But we hypocritically treat science very differently. We imagine that science and scientists are above all that. We give them a free pass on whatever assumptions, emotions, worldview, or ideology they use in pursuit of their so-called objective search. Chambers did not give them a free pass and I believe it is one reason, perhaps the main one, why scientists still hold him in such low regard, and another reason why Darwin could not fully embrace him. They cannot forgive him for his criticism of the scientific community of his day, nor can they admit that his unveiling of the emotionality in scientists is what made it possible for everyone to consider the evidence in Darwin's work more fairly, which otherwise would have remained in the dark like every other work on development and the mutability of species.

Chambers protested the "absence ... of all liberality ... in my reviewers" (*Explanations*, 171). More than that, he observed that when a new, difficult theory comes along, "... scientific men view it with not less hostility than the common herd" (176). He was right, but that does not make it any less shocking a point. He had already made this point in *Vestiges* (220): "... for so strong is the prepossession for the doctrine of invariable like-production [the immutability of species], that such circumstances [favoring transmutation], on occurring, would be almost sure to be explained away on some other supposition, or, if presented, would be disbelieved and neglected." He saw that even scientists had the capacity to blind themselves to the evidence, when they are too attached to the prevailing view. If that had been his only achievement, it would have made him one of the greatest geniuses who ever lived.

He challenged not science which he loved, as it might ideally be practiced, but the sanctity of the scientific community: "... the ability of this class to give at the present time, a true response upon such a subject [his theory of development], appears extremely challengeable" (*Explanations*, 175). He was right again, and that is what annoyed scientists. He respected their "talents and information" (*ibid.*), but he noted that among scientists, "... while there were laudable industry and zeal, there was also an intellectual timidity ..." (177). Those words must have stung, but how true they were and still are. *It is not only ignorance that can block new discoveries, but knowledge too.* That is such a sharp insight. He gave science an incredible lesson that everyone still ignores. This is how he pointed it out in *Vestiges* (187-88):

A novelty, however true, if there be no received truths with which it can be shewn in harmonious relation, has little chance of a favourable hearing. In fact, as has often been observed, there is a measure of incredulity from our ignorance as well as from our knowledge, and if the most distinguished philosopher three hundred years ago had ventured to develop any striking new fact which only could harmonize with the yet as unknown Copernican solar system, we cannot doubt that it would have been universally scoffed at in the scientific world, such as it then was, or at the best interpreted in a thousand wrong ways in conformity with ideas already familiar.

Chambers is pointing out that it is not only new theories that have difficulty being accepted. Scientists often grow timid in the face of new facts. *Not just theories, but facts too will be rejected, if they contradict accepted systems of thought.* Our presumed knowledge gets in the way. Or as Agnes Arber put it, the prevailing intellectual atmosphere is compulsive to a humiliating degree.

The specializations of scientists blinded them: "Experiments in however narrow a walk, facts of whatever minuteness, make reputations in scientific societies; all beyond is regarded with suspicion and distrust" (*Explanations*, 175-76). Scientists were human beings and they had the faults of human beings. There was nothing holy about them. No one has ever criticized the holiness surrounding scientists as well as Chambers did. They too could come "to venerate the prejudices" at "the sacrifice of even judgment and conscience" (176). In other words, Chambers understood that emotions are always present in any subject (which neurologists like Damasio will now confirm) and that scientists had to be called to account too and not given a free pass. This is great science, and it is for just this reason that the community of scientists has never been able to accept Chambers. He was too great for the times on the subject of science and he still is.

Chambers was doing the same thing here that he did with man as a part of the system of nature. He insisted that man is not above nature but within it and therefore we should learn a lesson of humility from this. So too for science and scientists. Scientists are not outside the world. To think otherwise is hubris. Their examination of the world is just another part of the world. Scientific study cannot be made a thing apart from what it is aiming its measurements at. Any scientific investigation that does not understand this is ultimately a failure. Science cannot exempt itself from the world of investigation. Chambers is much more thorough and consistent than Darwin in his challenge to human, including scientific, arrogance. I admire Darwin

for studying earthworms and for the implications of that with regard to encouraging human beings to keep their ears low to the ground if they want to understand life in its totality, but I admire Chambers even more for trying to expose the workings and arrogance of science in his full frontal attack. You can call it foolhardy because academia will crush such a one as Chambers, but I'm a fool for love and the lost cause.

9

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A WORLDVIEW MAKES

[I]t is worth considering whether or not any fundamental scientific theory can be accurately represented as a pure, positivist discovery, free from the sorts of factors which are clearly involved in the case of natural selection. If we ask this question persistently enough, we may learn something about the nature of science itself, and thereby illuminate the way societies set agendas in their broad culture, including science, as part of the pursuit of social priorities and values.

--- Robert Young (122)

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Chambers's response to his critics was appropriate and measured (Darwin admired his restraint, "the spirit" of his reply, though he continued to unjustly disparage his grasp of the facts; CCD 3.289). The hostility of his critics was entirely out of order. It introduced disorder into a field that was begging for rational analysis. Many scientists considered the mysterious author to be a pure, speculative theorist with no evidence for his claims. They failed to note the several realms of facts that Chambers had assembled nor had they noticed that he had demonstrated that independent creation was even more speculative. Some of them were friends or colleagues of Darwin and at the top of the scientific world. These were not the kind of people that Darwin wanted to antagonize. The same reasons that prompted Chambers to publish anonymously made Darwin bide his time.

Some scientists so disdained *Vestiges* that they could not bring themselves to even mention the book when they criticized its theory (thus, John Herschel and William Whewell). They rendered both the book and the author as invisible as they could make them. Sir David Brewster said the book had "a

fair chance of poisoning the fountains of science, and sapping the foundations of religion" (quoted in Millhauser, 125). It is a rare book that manages to threaten both science and religion. The reasons it was considered a threat to religion are fairly obvious. The author was labeled a materialist, explaining nature by natural facts alone, and materialism was considered the equivalent of or one step away from atheism. It was also a perceived threat for two other reasons: Chambers accepted the discoveries of astronomy about the vastness of the universe and the results of geology about the nature of deep time, thus upsetting beliefs about the smaller space and time scale people believed could be found in the Bible. All of this seemed to expel God from the universe as unnecessary. But, of course, Chambers and those who came after him would argue that they were only discovering the laws by which God created the universe; so too Darwin.

The reasons Chambers was considered a threat to science were, I think, more unconscious than conscious. He had revealed the fact that a cherished theory, independent or special creation, had never been proven at all. Scientists were trumpeting a pet theory with no rational right to do so. He put scientists to shame and that was unforgiveable. No wonder some could wax downright vitriolic when confronted by his work. Adam Sedgwick, an illustrious geologist of the time, wrote a scathing review of *Vestiges*, eighty-five pages long, in the *Edinburgh Review*, July 1845. (The review was anonymous, not unusual for reviews at that time, but everyone knew it was Sedgwick.) In a letter, he was able to vent even more openly. He called the book "base, vulgar in spirit ... false, shallow, worthless." He goes on: "If the book be true, the labours of sober induction are in vain; religion is a lie ... morality is moonshine ... man and woman are only better beasts! When I read some pages of the foul book, it brought Swift's satire to my mind, and filled me with such inexpressible disgust that I threw it down ..." (quoted at greater length in Young, 6).

The book was mocked in the pages of *Punch* in December 1847 as "The Book That Goes A-begging" (Secord, 22-23). It was the book that no one wanted to claim authorship of, though many names had been tossed out as possibilities. "Unhappy foundling! ... taken in by nobody," said *Punch*. It was the ultimate insult: "It does not say much for the book, or else the thing would have been claimed long ago ..." When some attributed the book to Darwin, he said, "I ought to be much flattered & unflattered" (to W.D. Fox, Apr. 24, 1845; CCD 3.181). Sedgwick's tirade could equally well have served against Darwin, had he known what Darwin was writing in his 1842 and 1844 essays. I think Darwin knew that and it made him nervous. With great understatement, Millhauser noted, "Some few could see the theory calmly"

(Millhauser, 135).

At an 1847 meeting of the Geological Section of BAAS in Oxford, Robert Chambers appeared in person to present a paper on marine terraces and land elevation. Geology was the one science he did some original investigation in. At this point, most of these scientists were pretty sure he was the author of *Vestiges*, but a gentlemen's agreement honored anonymity. The assembled let him have it. They fiercely attacked his "audacious theorizing" as one called it (Secord, 434). One observer, Andrew Ramsay, said that Chambers "got roughly handled" and that Lyell told him afterwards "he did so purposely that C[hambers]. might see that reasonings in the style of the author of *Vestiges* would not be tolerated among scientific men" (quoted in D & M, *Darwin*, 348). The only one who had anything good to say about his paper was Darwin "who agreed with most of Chambers's conclusions ..." (Secord, 435). Darwin had something that is unusual in a scholar and almost unheard of in an academic---he had a conscience. He even wrote to Chambers's family after Chambers died to apologize for his previous deprecation of his work (see further on). No one else did that.

Chambers had to have known that many of the scientists at that meeting knew who he was and still he faced them, fully aware of their harsh reaction to *Vestiges* and their likely impending attack at this public event. In church on the Sunday following the meeting, Chambers was also indirectly censured as 'half-learned' in a sermon before the assembled scientists by Samuel Wilberforce, the new Bishop of Oxford, who would later have a famous debate with Huxley about *Origin*. The title of the sermon was "Pride a Hindrance to True Knowledge". He indirectly berated Chambers as a speculative theorist who "grows to deal boldly with nature, instead of reverently following her guidance ... He has a theory to maintain, a solution which must not be disproved" (quoted at greater length in Secord, 436).

"Chambers, fuming in his pew, denounced it as an attempt to stifle progressive opinion," comment Desmond and Moore (*Darwin*, 348; apparently, Ramsay is the source for this also; Ramsay was approving of the sermon; see 708 n22). Secord reports that Chambers responded in an anonymous article in *Chambers's Journal* (the journal established by him and his brother). He said that the sermon seemed aimed "against the spread of knowledge" and that "the impression left on the mind was, upon the whole, of a discouraging nature. Once more the drag" (in Secord, 436). As usual, Chambers was right. On the efforts to suppress evolutionary thinking, Chambers was more perceptive and forceful than anyone of his time, including Darwin. Does brave even begin to describe Chambers on these occasions? When Wilberforce more than a dozen years later assailed *Origin*,

Darwin's friends fairly leapt to his defense; wild horses could not have stopped them. Who befriended Chambers? Not one scientist. It took an outside source to offer some small aid. "[T]he High Church *Guardian* condemned the 'great sparring march' [at the geological meeting] as disgraceful, Chambers being overwhelmed by sheer numbers" (ibid.)

The later Huxley-Wilberforce debate is a famous one in scientific circles and even in popular science histories. Huxley and other scientists who spoke that day, like Darwin's other friend Joseph Hooker, are celebrated for their defense of scientific research against religious dogmatism. But the real origins and nature of this debate have been obscured by scholars. What historians do not like to remember is that it was scientists who made Wilberforce possible. I won't say they created him, but they did create the atmosphere in which a Wilberforce could flourish. On that infamous day in 1847, almost all the assembled scientists enthusiastically supported Wilberforce. They silently cheered him on. They had only themselves to blame when he attacked Darwin just over a dozen years later. These professional scientists had set that attack in motion in 1847. The Huxley-Wilberforce debate is falsely presented as a conflict between religion and science. In reality, it was one more repercussion of an earlier moment when bad science (encouraging Wilberforce) tried to suppress better science (Chambers); except superficially, religion had nothing to do with it. What academic ever tells this side of history?

Such has been the so-called justice of historical scholarship that words like courageous and brave are reserved for Darwin, even to describe him before he went public. Listen to how Janet Browne characterizes Darwin in her biography of him. Keep in mind she is not talking about Darwin in his very public period after *Origin*, though this period may have influenced her choice of words. She is not even writing of the time when he had written his first two essays, but earlier, when he kept his thoughts inside his Notebooks and the bounds of his own head:

Darwin's special achievement lay most of all in holding on in the face of this general consensus [that transformation of species did not occur]. He was not scared off by the lack of evidence or the frightening philosophical issues involved. His independence of mind was clearly crucial here: courage and an air of defiance too. Still, he could see the rocks ahead. [Browne, *Voyaging*, 362]

This is quite a glowing account of Darwin at a time when he had not uttered a peep in public about what he really thought. I will grant that it does take some courage to keep one's mind independent, even if it is only privately, against the prevailing intellectual milieu of the day. But let's not get carried away.

And if Darwin deserves this kind of praise for the courage of his private thoughts, then what do we say about Chambers who maintained his independence of thought in the face of public vilification? He would not back down. Instead he responded by making his own devastating criticisms of the failure of establishment science to think scientifically about this subject.

Curiously, when she gets to Darwin's first public writing after the controversy of *Vestiges* erupted---his 1845 revision of *Journal of Researches* (the second published version of the *Diary*)---Browne describes him as "cautious about laying himself open to the kind of heated responses *Vestiges* generated and in which he partly joined himself; and he made his words sufficiently ambiguous to be read one way or the other" (467). (To be fair, in a continuation of the above blocked quote, she also notes some caution in the Notebooks.) She does not make this sound like a criticism. She almost seems to praise him for being very practical. Darwin is one of those heroes who is blessed if he do and blessed if he don't. It's all good with Darwin.

What bothers me more is that neither she nor any other Darwin biographer uses words like courage, independence, and defiance to characterize Chambers. Browne devotes more space to Chambers (*Voyaging*, 457-70) than most Darwinists would and gives a pretty fair account of his accomplishments (she leaves out a lot, but she also includes some of the important details with which Chambers beat Darwin to the punch, at least publicly). She acknowledges that "he can rightly be credited with pushing evolutionary ideas into the foreground of British life" (463). Yet with Chambers she reins herself in rather than be expansive about his best qualities. She cannot bring herself to spit out the right words, but by any measure, how superbly appropriate words like courage, independence, and defiance would be for Chambers.

Ironically, Darwin, for all that he is often characterized as courageous, was never attacked after the 1859 *Origin* as fiercely as Chambers had been. Darwin's book invited what Secord calls "uncontroversial respectability" (Secord, 511). Secord cites a letter written in March 1860 by Richard Church, taking note that the outcry over *Origin* was far less than that raised by "the once famous *Vestiges*". In an 1870 article, the American philosopher Chauncey Wright (1830-1875) recorded his impression of Darwin's book that "Few scientific theories have met with such a cordial reception by the world of scientific investigators ... In less than a decade the doctrine of Natural Selection had conquered the opposition of the great majority of the students of natural history ..." (in Glick, *What about Darwin?*, 488-89). Natural selection itself did not really conquer that quickly, but evolution as a theory of descent from a common origin did and that was because Chambers had set it up for such success.

Boyd Hilton's opinion is similar to Secord's: "... except in the most biblically literalist circles, *Origin of Species* was absorbed fairly painlessly, in sharp contrast to the anonymous *Vestiges of Creation* in 1844, whose electrical and embryological stabs at a theory of development really *had* provoked 'convulsions of the national mind'" (Hilton's essay in Collini, 180; his emphasis). A striking confirmation of the first part of Hilton's point comes from Joseph Le Conte (1823-1901), an American geologist, who gradually convinced himself of the truth of evolution and describes himself in his autobiography as a pioneer in reconciling evolution and religious belief. He commented, "At first I suffered *some, not much*, obloquy on the part of the extreme orthodox people, but I have lived to see this pass away, and all intelligent clergyman coming to my position" (in Glick, *What about*, 241; emphasis added).

To revisit what I stated earlier about Alvar Ellegård, who has made probably the most thorough review of the reception of Darwin's book in the contemporary periodicals in *Darwin and the General Reader*, his point was that "It has often been asserted that the first reaction to Darwin's theories was uniformly hostile. That is, however, hardly correct. Of the newspapers only the *Daily News* took a decided stand against Darwin ... The other newspaper reviews were fair, and on the whole quite favourable ... the majority of the weekly Reviews were fairly favourable, though cautious and often non-committal" (29). The real hostility did not appear until the quarterly journals took the book on.

Finally (as if a finally is needed here), Stephen Jay Gould concurs: "By 1859, most educated people were prepared to accept evolution as the reason behind similarities and differences among organisms---thus accounting for Darwin's rapid conquest of the intellectual world" (*Bully*, 60). Yet we have been told over and over that Darwin's theory of evolution was a shock to the system that incited the conservatives to vilify evolutionists. That was what Chambers had to face, but not Darwin. It should be noted that while evolution (that is, a theory of common descent) had ceased to be so controversial, Darwin's theory of natural selection as the way evolution happened was not widely accepted. Still, it was not quite the shock it has since been made out to be. Darwin himself helped to foster the myth that he faced overwhelming opposition. His impression was that he faced an "avalanche of Reviews against me [which] has hardly yet ceased" (Oct. 20, 1860; CCD 8.441). Ellegård's research reveals that to be untrue.

As for those who do see that Darwin did not face such terrible opposition, it is a little surprising how much they take it for granted that Darwin had a fairly easy time of it. They never ask how this came to be, when, a half-

century earlier, anyone who even remotely suggested a theory of development was attacked mercilessly. In 2015, Ian Tattersall writes that, after the publication of *Origin of Species*, "it is remarkable how quickly straitlaced Victorian society became used to the idea that the evident unity of life is due to common descent" (Tattersall, 23). It is not all that remarkable. Very few ever think to give Chambers major credit for changing the intellectual climate in favor of evolution. Overestimating what Darwin did and devaluing the work of Chambers is a misdirection. What is it that scholars don't want us to see? What do they want us to forget about Chambers and other proponents of the development hypothesis? It only recently occurred to me what that is. I'll get to it in the last section of this chapter.

As previously noted, one sign of how relatively uncontroversial was Darwin's book is that he could add a second introduction, the "Historical Sketch", to the third edition in 1861, in which he discussed some of his predecessors who held beliefs about species descending from previous species---people like Lamarck, his countryman Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, and others who had been belittled at one time. After fifteen years of controversy over *Vestiges*, it had become safe to talk about these people. If Darwin had dared to say anything positive about Lamarck, say, twenty years earlier, he would have had his head handed to him. He could speak well of Lamarck now in 1861 because the times had changed.

Quickly, here are four other signs that evolution was in the air, despite Darwin's denial of this in his *Autobiography* (101), as I reported earlier. The first is that Wallace came up with the same theory Darwin had. That is because Wallace like others had been thinking about the origin of species for a long time. It did not just strike him out of the blue. Wallace had been deeply impressed by *Vestiges*.

The second is that just after the publication of *Origin*, Darwin had a conversation with Richard Owen, as he reported to Lyell (Dec. 10, 1859; CCD 7.422). Owen was a British anatomist who did much to advance the idea that there was a common pattern of bone structure in diverse animals (see Shubin, 30-32; he also coined the word 'dinosaur'). In that conversation, said Darwin, "He was quite savage & crimson at my having put his name with defenders of immutability." Darwin's book was not out a month yet and here was one British scientist who felt that immutability was the embarrassingly incorrect position to be in; he did not appreciate being associated with it. Owen was not transformed overnight into an evolutionist or even by the joint Wallace-Darwin paper a year earlier. This had been a long time coming.

The third sign of 'evolution in the air' comes from Herbert Spencer. His "The Development Hypothesis" (1852) was completely indebted to *Vestiges*.

That same year he wrote another essay, "A Theory of Population, deduced from the General Law of Animal Fecundity", in which he came very close to formulating a theory of natural selection. Just as with Darwin and Wallace, it was Malthus who pushed him nearly there. At the end of the essay, in §15, he accepts the Malthusian doctrine (whose name is mentioned only once at the beginning of the essay): "... it is unquestionably true, that, if unchecked, the rate of increase of people would exceed the rate of increase of food." In the last paragraph of the same section, he wants to argue that the pressure of population can have the effect of "increasing the ability to maintain life ...". There is some warrant for this in Malthus who would argue at the very end of his essay that the difficulties in life can make us more industrious and that if evil has a purpose, it is "not to create despair but activity" (*Essay*, 217). But Spencer also makes some additional interesting comments in that last paragraph of §15. Families and races who are not stimulated to greater production "are on the high road to extinction; and must ultimately be supplanted by those whom the pressure does so stimulate." Sounds very much like survival of the fittest, an expression he would coin a dozen years later, after *Origin* inspired him to do so. (Darwin too uses "the high-road to extinction" in *1844*, 150.) Spencer also says this:

Nature secures each step in advance by a succession of trials, which are perpetually repeated ... All mankind in turn subject themselves more or less to the discipline described; they either may or may not advance under it; but, in the nature of things, only those who do advance under it eventually survive ... as those prematurely carried off must, in the average of cases, be those in whom the power of self-preservation is the least, it unavoidably follows, that those left behind to continue the race are those in whom the power of self-preservation is the greatest---are the select of their generation.

Notice 'select' and 'self-preservation'. Spencer finally draws a conclusion of "constant progress" to "a more complete life," so he is headed in a different direction than Darwin. But there is no question that there is otherwise so much Darwinian thought and terminology here. Something was in the air. What is 'select' but Darwin's 'favoured' in the sub-title of *Origin* which also contains 'preservation' (*the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*)? What is 'a succession of trials' but a struggle for survival?

Earlier in the essay, Spencer also used 'fitness', 'preserve' and 'preservative', 'race' and 'species', 'variation', and 'adaptation'. While Spencer uses 'competition' once and some variant of 'supplant' a couple of times, he

does not emphasize these concepts as Darwin will. He has a different worldview. This early essay of Spencer's is mild compared to what Darwin would write. If Spencer became a Social Darwinist, it was under pressure from Darwin's work. His worldview drew closer to that of Darwin after he read *Origin*. He never would have gotten there on his own. (In his autobiography, Spencer looked again at these paragraphs in his essay and expressed his surprise that "I should have failed to see that the truth indicated in the above-quoted passages, must hold ... of all animals ... [and] was blind that here was a universally-operative factor in the development of species"; quoted in Young, 49.)

Then there is the case of Patrick Matthew whom Darwin acknowledged in a letter to the *Gardeners' Chronicle* as having "anticipated by many years the explanation which I have offered of the origin of species, under the name of natural selection" (CCD 8.156). Darwin added (quite correctly I think) that he could hardly be blamed for having missed an obscure book such as Matthew's "Naval Timber and Arboriculture". In the "Historical Sketch", Darwin would write, "He clearly saw ... the full force of the principle of natural selection" (*Origin*, 10).

Matthew had written to the *Chronicle* in April 1860 to assert his prior right to this theory, presented in the book he published in 1831. In the letter, he quotes at length from this book (see CCD 8.584-89). His ideas and language are strikingly similar to what Darwin later did. As examples: "a law universal in nature, tending to render every reproductive being the best possibly suited to its condition ..." (584); "those individuals who possess not the requisite strength, swiftness, [etc.] ... fall prematurely without reproducing ... their place being occupied by the more perfect of their own kind, who are pressing on the means of subsistence" (585); "We are therefore led to admit, either of a repeated miraculous creation; or of a power of change ..." (585; note that he was not afraid to take on independent creation); "new diverging ramifications of life" (585); "There is more beauty and unity of design in this continual balancing of life to circumstance ... than in total destruction and new creation" (586); "the progeny of the same parents, under great difference of circumstance, might, in several generations, even become distinct species ..." (586); he also briefly alludes to man breeding varieties (e.g., "almost unlimited diversification" and "careful selection of the largest or most valuable") and "selection by the law of nature" (588). That is a small sampling.

It is significant that Matthew's ideas about natural selection would appear in a book and later in a journal (due to that letter) which were in large part about improving nature for our own uses. Artificial selection is about

improvement and nature sought improvement too. That is how both Matthew and Darwin approached natural selection. Improving the world through artificial selection had been a common theme in colonialism, as previously brought up (Ch. 6, §2). Even a king, George III, aimed to make himself "the paradigm of an 'improver'" (Drayton, 89). In that previous discussion, I also mentioned Walter Blith's *The English Improver Improved* (1652). He made God out to be the first Husbandman or breeder---or improver---and thus connected natural and artificial selection.

The idea of common descent was certainly not revolutionary (for the reason that a number of people had proposed it and it was becoming more and more popular) and, as it turns out, natural selection was not quite as revolutionary as it has been made out to be (though for different reasons than was the case with common descent). If revolution has any meaning, it would mean running contrary to the mainstream or worldview of your culture. Darwin fit his ideas perfectly into his culture's beliefs. He constantly referred to the improvements made by natural selection (as we will see in §4 of this chapter). And improvement in his culture would be linked to the idea that "Nature was best used to yield commodities which might be traded widely, rather than to support local subsistence" (Drayton, 87). Science and politics linked up neatly. In attuning himself to this, Darwin built a contradiction into his idea of natural selection: In theory, it acts locally, but Darwin's eye was out to use it to justify the wide interests of European imperialism. Darwin was following a long cultural tradition in his society.

To be clear about all this: Darwin was doing two different things with artificial selection. One was scientifically legitimate, the other not so much. The legitimate part was that Darwin was using artificial selection to demonstrate that nature was capable of making changes in organisms. His grandfather, Lamarck, Chambers, and Matthew had already been there. But Charles Darwin was more meticulous than all of them in making this point. The less legitimate part of his argument was the way he followed imperialists. The imperialist improvers were very aware of how plastic nature could be and realized they could make this malleability work for Europeans ('plastic' was a word used by Darwin and others from time to time; e.g., *Origin*, 33,52). They claimed they were just imitating nature, replacing nature with themselves as the breeders of animals and plants, improving her works by making nature more fruitful. It was a dishonest claim because in fact they were not just imitating nature. They had switched it around and were reinterpreting nature as imitating the human action of breeding. Darwin did the same when he used artificial selection as the model for natural selection. He exploited the same worldview and dovetailed his theory into the imperialist enterprise.

Patrick Matthew never followed up his own ideas, but that may say more about the state of science at the time than about him. I would guess that Matthew did not receive any positive feedback to his wonderful suggestions about change and species descent in nature. Perhaps (though I don't know this) he received some negative comments. Improving nature might have been acceptable to British sensibilities, but common descent was still facing a hard time in Matthew's day. Species developing into new species remained a stumbling block for most scientists. Without at least some encouraging words, it would have been a lonely and disheartening task to take this any further. Had he attempted it, he surely would have been the recipient of as much, if not more, hostility than the author of *Vestiges* received in the 1840s.

All these examples from Chambers to Wallace to Spencer to Matthew to Henry Hetherington's belief (in 1842) that it is clear there is a power of change in nature (previous chapter, §3) to Owen's indignant reaction to being classified as an immutability proponent demonstrate that, whether Darwin liked it or not, a tendency to accept evolution or transmutation in nature was fairly widespread and gaining ground much before *Origin* was published.

I will go further. I think it is fair to say that evolution (the general idea of common descent) was in the air in the time of Darwin's grandfather. Erasmus Darwin did not get his ideas about gradual development, all organic beings descended from one living filament, life arising from the sea, and more, out of nowhere. As Patricia Fara says, "If [Erasmus] Darwin's had been a lone voice, then he would not have aroused such widespread hostility: there is little point in sustaining prolonged attacks on an insignificant eccentric" (242). I would love to have more thoroughly investigated this, but if I plunged deeply into every nook and cranny of this history, this book would have expanded to three thousand pages at least. I will suggest though that Erasmus Darwin's ideas may have been stimulated by long-held beliefs about nature's chain of being.

The chain of being had two components to it. One is a hierarchy of organisms, which Charles Darwin also rigidly adhered to. The other is the genetic relatedness of all creatures, though it was a long time before this belief came explicitly to the fore. After all, if any two adjacent links so closely resemble each other that they are obviously related, then links which are tens of thousands of links apart must be distantly related. The idea of a chain goes back to the Middle Ages and perhaps earlier. Margaret Hodgen identifies Albertus Magnus (13th century) and Nicholas Cusanus (15th) as two proponents of what she called "the principles of plenitude and continuity" (*Early*, 414). She quotes Cusanus, "all things, however different, are linked together ... such a connection between the higher and the lower [species] that they meet in a common point ... in order that the universe may be one, perfect,

and continuous." Note that Cusanus affirms the linkage, no matter how different two species may appear to be. In order for the universe to be a continuous whole there has to be a continual genetic development. That's the implication of the theory of a chain of being.

I don't know when the term *genetic* came into use, but Robert Chambers used it often enough. It is not there in the first edition of *Vestiges* (1844), but he employed it in the fifth (1846). Here is his usage in the sixth (1847): genetic history (144), genetic system (154), genetic origin (156), genetic line (161; also in *Explanations*, 77), genetic relations (166), and genetic succession (166). On that last page reference, he also mentions "great composite chain" but due to lack of knowledge, "In the present state of this inquiry, it is impossible to give an entire genealogical tree of Being." Chambers here retains a memory of a connection between the chain of being and genetic relationships which, if complete, could give us a genealogical tree (one might say this is a primitive example of what would later become the human genome project).

Charles Darwin too in his way retained a memory of this by occasionally using the language of links, as in "links binding closely together all these forms, now so utterly unlike" (*Descent*, 185), "the intermediate links in the long lines of descent" (*Origin*, 51) and "so closely linked to them by intermediate gradations" (70; intermediate links or linking forms actually appears quite often in *Origin*).

Soame Jenyns, a contemporary of Erasmus Darwin, wrote a brief essay on the chain of being in 1782 (*Disquisitions*, 1-11). He comes so close to saying that the chain means there must be a continuous genetic descent. He tells his readers that God has so arranged creation that all the parts "are so blended together, and shaded off into each other, that no line of difference is anywhere to be seen" (8); "... the links ... are so minute, and so finely wrought, that they are quite imperceptible to our eyes ... invisible to the most inquisitive eye" (2, 7). The problem of some of nature's actions being imperceptible would concern both Malthus and Darwin, as we saw in Chapter 7. This means that continuous descent, or evolution, may be imperceptible, but that does not mean it is not happening. And here is the more complete context for the line about animal life and shellfish which I previously quoted from Jenyns:

... this vegetative power ascending thro' an infinite variety of herbs, flowers, plants, and trees to its greatest perfection in the sensitive plant, joins there the lowest degree of animal life in the shell-fish, which adheres to the rock ... In the same manner this animal life rises from this low beginning in the shell-fish, thro'

innumerable species of insects, fishes, birds, and beasts to the confines of reason, where, in the dog, the monkey, and chimpanzè, it unites so closely with the lowest degree of that quality in man, that they cannot easily be distinguished from each other. [9-10]

Even intelligence exists in such slight degrees of variation with the result that man differs from higher animals in links not "easily distinguished." (Just prior to this passage he also states there is a continuity between inanimate matter and the world of vegetation.) One could say the theory of evolution (common descent) was on the tip of his tongue.

I would not say that the chain of being was the same as the theory of evolving from previous life forms. I don't want to give the impression that its proponents were already there. It would probably be more accurate to say that with the chain of being, certain elements of evolutionary theory were in place. If they did not see more, it was not because they were inferior thinkers or lacked some great intellectual insight. They simply did not know that extinction of species could take place and how old the earth really was. They thought the chain of being was fixed and would not change. They were working with less knowledge. They did not know some links could disappear. Given what they did know, they came as close as one possibly could at that time to the theory of evolution. They deserve enormous credit for that.

Asking anyone prior to the very late 18th century to propose evolution in its purest form is like asking someone to propose the right theory to explain five pieces of evidence, on the condition that we keep two or three of the pieces hidden from view. It can't be done, and if someone comes even close, then they are some kind of far-out genius.

The most important thing that some advocates of the chain of being saw clearly is that all forms of life were genetically related, despite having such different features. They deserve as much credit as those who came after them and who worked with more advanced knowledge. We cannot judge deficiencies in Darwin's work because he did not know about genes and did not have an electron microscope, and we cannot judge previous natural scientists because extinction was not yet an established fact and the immense age of the earth was hidden from them. The chain of being basically established the close relationships among all organic creatures as something to be taken seriously and needing deeper consideration. Evolutionary thinking had been in the air for a very long time and made Erasmus Darwin's theorizing possible.

To the degree that there was some controversy over *The Origin of Species*

on the issue of common descent, it was nothing new but a continuation of the turmoil that had been there for many decades. Ideas of development and descent from lower animals, whether coming from Lamarck or Erasmus Darwin or Chambers or Jenyns or anyone else, had been in the public eye quite some time before Charles Darwin got in on the contest. Darwin threw himself into the existing controversy. He did not start it.

The myth of Darwin as the great hero was invented by those who knew him and a little bit of it was his own contribution. In 1898, Wallace's memory was that *Vestiges* "was met with just the same storm of opposition and indignant abuse which assailed Darwin's book fifteen years later" (*Wonderful Century*, 137). That was hardly true as a statement of what happened to Darwin's work. When Darwin died in 1882, Thomas Huxley eulogized him in part by boasting that he had "found a great truth, trodden underfoot, reviled by bigots, and ridiculed by all the world" (quoted in Sloten, 376). Quite the overstatement. They created this myth about Darwin as the object of special outrage, which everyone knew was false, even as they created it. Huxley also omitted that he had been one of the bigoted revilers and ridiculers when the theory (of general evolution) had been proposed by Chambers.

Origin did not suffer anywhere near the abuse that *Vestiges* did. It is important to remember that Darwin's contemporaries were responsible for this myth of what a lightning rod *Origin* was. This was not done by a later generation from whom the past had slipped away. This was done in a present that had become past just two seconds ago. This was done when these books were still a fresh presence on the scene and everyone was living the moment but changing it even as they still lived it. This was myth-making in the face of the reality that said it wasn't so. Myths aren't always created when the events are in a distant past. They are sometimes created close to the events in question, when everyone could see it happening if they just opened their eyes. The past was changed preemptively before it even had a chance to become past. It is an ideal way to seize control of the past (before it is past!) and make it fit ideological preconceptions.

Some of this could be attributed to Darwin himself. Referring back to that conversation with Owen, Darwin later wrote to him (Dec. 13, 1859; CCD 7.430), "You smiled at me for sticking myself up as a martyr." Darwin added that if he was "sensitive, perhaps ridiculously sensitive," it was because of all "the unmerciful & I think unjust things said of my Book & to me in a letter by an old & very distinguished friend" (that would have been Adam Sedgwick in a letter of Nov. 24, 1859). Sedgwick may have been hard on Darwin, but he had been absolutely vile to Chambers. Very few appreciated the difference. Even Darwin didn't get it.

They knew, or should have known, that it was a myth from the get-go. Part of it may have been wishful thinking. They wanted Darwin and his book to have suffered all that was inflicted on Mr. Vestiges and his creation. They wanted to make Darwin into as big a hero and martyr as they could (though he was handed no loss of reputation or financial setbacks or social ostracism, unlike Chambers who really had to live in fear of these consequences and saved himself only by writing anonymously). If Darwin suffered, it would make him so much more worthy of being worshiped.

I think they were also motivated by some antipathy towards *Vestiges*. The lesser book could not possibly have suffered more than the greater book. Wallace may not fit this mold. He always praised Chambers's accomplishment. But there was a distinct tendency in the intellectual climate to elevate Darwin far above Chambers and give him an aura of martyrdom that really belonged to Chambers. Perhaps they were trying to get people to forget how imperfect science is. Sometimes it is advanced by a book as mixed with flaws and virtues as *Vestiges* was (but a predominance of virtues) rather than by the professional scientists who have quibbling expertise but who fail to see where the overall evidence is pointing. They may have needed to embrace a myth about science as much as about Darwin.

The real truth is that *Vestiges* and *Origin* were a dual accomplishment. Chambers and Darwin together performed a kind of Muhammad Ali rope-a-dope on the opposition, but it was Chambers's book that lay against the ropes and took most of the punishment. It should not be forgotten that Chambers kept putting out edition after edition, ten before Darwin's book stepped into the ring, as well as *Explanations* in response to his critics, especially Sedgwick. He would not go away. They pummeled the anonymous author but could not put him down for the count. Opponents of development were worn out by the unbeatable Mr. Vestiges. The Sedgwick and Wilberforce who later denounced Darwin were not the same Sedgwick and Wilberforce who had reviled *Vestiges* and its author. Chambers had sapped their energy and Darwin reaped the benefit, not to mention the benefit of being read by all the students of science who had become more favorably disposed towards the development hypothesis because of Chambers. It did not take much for Darwin to step out into the middle of the ring and polish off the critics, at least as far as a general theory of evolution was concerned. Had not Chambers come first, on the ropes and taking some severe body blows, Darwin's *Origin* would have had to go a ridiculous number of more rounds before it could even have begun to make headway. It was Chambers who took the pounding. He was the hero we've been misdirected not to see.

The extraordinary thing (to me, at any rate) is that Chambers is still

derided by scholars. He is still out there, alone in that lecture hall in 1847 and in church the following Sunday, abandoned by everyone. Ruse (185) calls Chambers an amateur outsider and Ellegård (11) characterizes his book as amateurish. Bowler (23) says he, or rather his theory of progressive evolution, was simple-minded. Beer (*Darwin's Plots*, 146) takes Chambers to task for being inaccurate. The editors of *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin* seem to concur when they approvingly sum up Darwin's opinion of the arguments in *Vestiges* as "skilful but scientifically unsound reasoning" (CCD 3.xiv). None of them see that Chambers compiled much of the same evidence that Darwin did, even if he was less thorough. He was the first to prove that gradual development was the more probable theory. He not only gave independent creation a run for its money but permanently dethroned it from its preeminent status. None of these scholars even begin to understand how well Chambers understood what holds back progress in science. He unmasked the pretentiousness of scientists. Darwin would have been nowhere without his help.

Ernst Mayr presents a more curious case. Twice he calls Chambers a dilettante (384, 385) and pronounces him "an ignorant layperson" (385) and "much too unimportant a figure to deserve further discussion" (384). But Mayr undermines these judgments by fully admitting that Chambers "displays an amount of common sense in his consideration of the evidence that is sadly lacking in the writings of the contemporary antievolutionists" (383), that he "saw the forest where all the great British scientists of his period (except for the nonpublishing Darwin) only saw the trees" (382), and that "his arguments were remarkably similar to those of Darwin's *Origin*" (384). How all this can be true and still he gets no credit for being a very good scientist is beyond me. It is the need to stay faithful to an ideological position that forces Mayr to devalue Chambers as ignorant and unimportant. The evidence does not support it. The evidence, in fact, contradicts it.

More ironic still than the irony of overcrediting Darwin with courage and ignoring Chambers is that among Chambers's original attackers were Darwin himself, though Darwin was never as vicious as the others, and Darwin's friend Huxley. Darwin was one of those pummeling the author of *Vestiges* as he was backed up against the ropes. Huxley later admitted that his review of the tenth edition of Chambers's book was perhaps too savage (see his piece on Darwin in LL 2.179-204). He said of *Vestiges* that "the book simply irritated me by the prodigious ignorance and thoroughly unscientific habit of mind manifested by the writer. If it had any influence on me at all, it set me against Evolution" (LL 2.187), and then he finally admits there was in his review a "needless savagery" (2.189; following these comments on Chambers, he is

also pretty unkind to and inaccurate about Lamarck). To Lady Eliza Priestley, a daughter of Chambers, he later confessed that "he had attacked it with all the impetuosity of youth" (Priestley, 42). He has some positive words to say about Herbert Spencer without acknowledging that Spencer was positively influenced by the very book Huxley could not stomach. As for Darwin, he was very complimentary to Huxley concerning his attack on *Vestiges* ("*incomparably* the best review I have read on the *Vestiges*"), though he did note that Huxley was "rather hard on the poor author" and that at least the book *Vestiges* "spreads the taste for natural science" (to Huxley, Sept. 2, 1854; CCD 5.213).

(I would have to disagree with Huxley about that "needless savagery." He was dissembling. It was necessary savagery and he knew it. That is what has to be done to uphold the current ideology and suppress a rational approach to a problem. The idea is not just to make the author of *Vestiges* feel ostracized and alone, but to send a message to anyone who might take an interest in what he has to say: This is the kind of treatment you will get if you give this man any support. It is the kind of polished savagery that western civilization had gotten very good at. Huxley only regretted that he let his teeth marks show a little too much.)

In his letters, Darwin was mostly derogatory about Chambers's book, as I have noted. The harshest judgments in his private correspondence were that *Vestiges* and Lamarck had "done the subject harm" (to Hooker, Sept. 10, 1845; CCD 3.253), adding that someone may say the same of him one day, and that *Vestiges* was "a literary curiosity" characterized by "poverty of intellect" (to Lyell, June 16, 1848; CCD 4.152).

His first public comment was in a brief paragraph in the introduction to the original edition of *Origin*. With a hint of condescension, Darwin supposes that the author of *Vestiges* would say that "after a certain unknown number of generations, some bird had given birth to a woodpecker, and some plant to the misseltoe, and that these had been produced perfect as we now see them" (*Origin*, 22). There are moments in the writings of Chambers where you can get that impression, but it is shockingly unfair to suggest that this is all there is to *Vestiges* and *Explanations*. Cherry pick the least reasonable things an author has to say and you can make anyone look bad, even Darwin. Darwin almost immediately regretted his negative comment. "I am now heartily sorry I did so," apologizing to one of his correspondents and explaining that he had not meant "to arrogate to myself the origination of the doctrine that species had not been independently created" (to Baden Powell, Jan. 18, 1860; CCD 8.39). The offending paragraph was removed from later editions of *Origin*.

Chambers (still the anonymous author) was rather hurt by Darwin's brief

comments in that first edition of *Origin*. You can feel it in his response to Darwin in the eleventh edition of *Vestiges* (1860). He was being unjustly written off, even as the world of science profited by the work he had done. It was and still is one of the greatest of scientific injustices. There is more injustice in the history of the world than justice, and precious little of the injustice ever gets corrected or its perpetrators punished.

Chambers channeled his pain into exceptionally sharp insights. Being hurt increased rather than diminished his ability to get to the heart of the issue. He notes that "a change has been going on in the views of scientific men regarding the origin of species. Natural, as opposed to miraculous creation, is now an open question," naming Huxley, Wallace, Hooker, Darwin, and Lyell as coming to the support of the gradual development of species (11th, lxii). He continues:

A revolution coming to a point so nearly the same as the hypothesis of the *Vestiges* could scarcely have been expected a few years ago, when Professor Sedgwick was launching his ill-considered invectives ... The publication by Mr. Darwin ... strongly marks the change which has for some time been silently going on. Its reception equally marks the new temper of the public on this important subject. It is no insignificant fact that the *Edinburgh Review*, which fifteen years ago gave forth the Rev. Mr. Sedgwick's diatribes against creation under natural law [Sedgwick's lengthy vicious attack on *Vestiges*], now proclaims itself as having "no sympathy with the sacerdotal revilers of those who would explain such law" ... [lxii-lxiii]

As usual, Chambers was so right on all counts---and it is eloquently stated. This revolution had indeed been a long time silently coming. It was not sprung on us overnight with one book by Charles Darwin. If it did not come sooner, it was because of the attacks by professional men of science like Adam Sedgwick and even Huxley. That's not all Chambers had to say.

It is to be lamented that this ingenious and most industrious naturalist [Darwin] should have read the present work [*Vestiges*] nearly as much amiss as if, like its declared opponents, he had had an interest in misunderstanding it. [He goes on to point out some specific similarities between the two books] ... It seems to the author [of *Vestiges*] that Mr. Darwin has only been enabled by his infinitely superior knowledge to point out a principle in what may be called practical animal life, which appears capable of

bringing about the modifications ... His book, in no essential respect, contradicts the present [*Vestiges*]: on the contrary, while adding to its explanations of nature, it expresses substantially the same general ideas ... The difference seems to be in words, not in facts or effects. [lxiii-lxiv]

It is true. The two books had more in common than differences. Almost every time Chambers picked up his pen, he was right. That does not sit well with the powers that be. Every word he wrote hit the mark and made them bristle with anger. If Darwin had "an interest in misunderstanding" *Vestiges*, besides the need to curry favor with other scientists who had a low opinion of it, it might have been a desire to be the only cock of the walk in science (see further below).

Darwin's most succinct admission that there was a conglomerate of writers pushing for the idea of common descent was, as noted previously, in a letter to *Athenæum* (May 5, 1863) where he groups the author of *Vestiges*, Wallace, Lamarck, and St. Hilaire together with himself as upholding the view that "species have descended from other species, and have not been created immutable" (LL 3.22). I wish he had done this kind of thing more often. It would have shown that there was a community effort to bring a new idea into being. His fullest discussion of other efforts in this direction was in the "Historical Sketch" added to *Origin* in 1861. He mentions over thirty individuals. Here is where he tries to make it up to Chambers. There is still some criticism but toned down. The tenth edition of *Vestiges* is now "much improved." Darwin does not explain how he had originally managed to be so harsh about *Vestiges* when that tenth edition (1853) had been there for six years before the first edition of *Origin* ever saw the light of day.

Darwin also acknowledged that "it has done excellent service in this country in calling attention to the subject, in removing prejudice, and in thus preparing the ground for the reception of analogous views" (*Origin*, 11). What Darwin was finally seeing was Chambers's role in the rope-a-dope. 'Removing prejudice' is just another way of saying that Chambers had engaged in the difficult task of combating the emotional climate against the development hypothesis. I am not sure that Darwin fully realized the meaning of his remark. Anyone can make a convincing argument of facts and reason when several people are on your side. It is a lot harder when no one is there to be receptive. When people do come round to accepting a new theory, it is not because the evidence convinced them. It is because the consequences of the theory have come to seem less terrible than they once did, less contradictory of the prevailing ideology.

One of Chambers's major accomplishments is that he helped everyone accept that the development hypothesis, if proven true, would not be the end of the world. Belief in God would not shrink or go away, man's place in the universe would not be undone, though his unwarranted pride might. Man's arrogance could be put firmly in its place and society would not collapse. Chambers got everyone emotionally ready to deal with the implications of development or evolution from lower life forms. Near the end of *Explanations*, he pleads that he will be able to truly defend this theory only "when time has abated prejudice" (185). Again, he was so precisely right. It was Darwin who would benefit enormously in that coming time.

The only reason anyone could listen to Darwin's improved evidentiary argument is because investigators like Chambers and those who came before him made the "terrible" implications of being part of nature appear friendlier, embraceable. As I said in the first chapter, the key issue most often is not "What is the truth?", but "Do you want to know the truth?" For the great majority of scientists and the general public when Chambers first published, the answer to the question "Do you want to know the truth about the origin of species?" was simply, No! Never! But Chambers had an impact, so that in Darwin's day, the answer had changed to: Yes, we want to know. More than half the battle had already been won. Chambers gave everyone a hunger to learn the truth about human organic history, "his long descended history" (*Explanations*, 187). He made the theory emotionally acceptable. He compared evolution to the stages of a woman's pregnancy (see §4 of previous chapter), so that people would feel easier with it. I will say it again: For anyone who still has difficulty accepting the general theory of evolution, read Chambers. He can do a world of good.

Darwin still felt bad enough about his former mistreatment of *Vestiges* that in 1871, after Chambers died (never having admitted to being the author of that spectacular book), Darwin sent a note of apology to Annie Dowie, a daughter of Chambers: "I have always felt a most sincere respect for your father ... Several years ago I perceived that I had not done full justice to a scientific work which I believed and still believe he was intimately connected with, and few things have struck me with more admiration than the perfect temper and liberality with which he treated my conduct" (CCD 19.208; this letter first appeared in another daughter's memoir, see Priestley, 41-42; also quoted in Secord, 510, n128).

Much as he tried in his way to make it up to Chambers, Darwin never did the one thing that would have really meant something and would have been the most just thing to do, and that was to speak plainly of the reasoning and facts so close to his own which Chambers employed in his arguments. He

never told his readers the many details, such as commonalities in structure among organisms, occurrences of mutations, the fossil record, embryology, rudimentary organs, the arguments against independent creation, the reliance on Mill's logic, and more, that both books shared. Maybe he never told himself. But it still fascinates me that Darwin could not see or would not admit that they were building the same road with many of the very same stones. It seems that anyone who was very close to his way of thinking made him nervous or blind or both.

You can see Darwin's nervousness and truckling to mainstream science in his September 1857 letter to Asa Gray, when he sent Gray an abstract of his theory. He asked Gray not to mention his theory to anyone because if his ideas became public, then someone "like the Author of the *Vestiges* ... [might] hear of them, he might easily work them in, & then I sh^d have to quote from a work perhaps despised by naturalists & this would greatly injure any chance of my views being received by those alone whose opinion I value" (CCD 6.446). He would never defend Chambers or his own grandfather for what was right in their work and he would never criticize mainstream science for its failure to appreciate them. Making it in the world of professional science was more important to him. It is also exceptionally noteworthy that Darwin intuitively understood that Mr. *Vestiges* would get what Darwin was doing, while most naturalists would not, and yet it was their opinion he valued! He valued the opinion of inferior thinkers because they had the power to make him or break him, and he wanted to be on their good side. So he had to convince himself of the opposite---that it was *Vestiges* which was inferior. But how inferior a work could *Vestiges* have been, if its author was practically the only one who would have understood Darwin? In the final analysis, Darwin had a conflicted conscience about Chambers, which is more than most scientists could claim, but Darwin never let this conflict push him into acknowledging the rich details in Chambers's work.

One such detail which Darwin did not tell his readers about (or remind them of, considering that most of them had probably read some edition of Chambers's book) was the number of times that Chambers spoke of small or gradual changes. I briefly discussed this a while back, but it's worth giving a little more information on this. Because Darwin and everyone else in his time failed to tell the full truth of what Chambers was arguing for, Chambers is still often identified today as someone who believed that "New species ... came into existence not gradually ... but in sudden natural jumps ..." (McCalman, 232). He was much ridiculed in his own time for such beliefs (the most famous one being a goose giving birth to a rat, mentioned earlier). Darwin privately joined in the ridicule. In a letter to Hooker, he recounts some of his

experiments on various vegetables. Of the cress seeds, he says, "the Vestiges would have expected them to turn into tadpoles" (CCD 5.305; cf. 5.343, where Darwin claims that, according to Vestiges, alga can turn into cabbages; Darwin was referring to *Explanations*, 115; but Chambers here may have been referring to both possibilities, leaps and gradual change). Chambers does profess such sudden changes on occasion. But it was never his primary point and criticizing him for it is as unfair as criticizing Darwin for suggesting that whales descended from a race of aquatic bears. What Chambers really emphasized was gradual change (*Vestiges*, 145, 148, 149, 153, 222, 276, 347; also implied at 192-93 and in his idea of creation as gestation, which can only be a gradual process, "over enormous spaces of time," 210). Chambers was as devoted to the notion of immense time as Darwin and that entails slow change.

Yet in "The Historical Sketch" where Darwin supposedly makes it up to Chambers (and about 30 other naturalists), he still promotes "sudden leaps" as the main line of thinking followed by Chambers, thereby misrepresenting his views.

When Chambers spoke of the unity of the system of nature, he was often referring to the gradations underlying the unity (e.g., 333, 347). In *Explanations*, he reasoned that from the study of geology we can see "a constant gradual approach to living types" (95), not sudden changes. Very much like Darwin, he saw that geology would not have preserved "a full exhibition of ... successive stages up to our time" (78); in other words, like Darwin, he realized that the geological record would not preserve all the intermediate forms necessary to fully prove development or evolution. Darwin read these points in Chambers, but chose not to mention them. He never told his readers how many details Chambers got right and every academic since has slavishly followed this omission.

Where Darwin would write of "slight, successive" steps (e.g., *Origin*, 517), Chambers would write, "the stages of advance being in all cases very small---namely, from one species to another; so that the phenomenon has always been of a simple and modest character" (*Vestiges*, 222). Some would call that pure Darwinism, but that is coming from Chambers over a decade before Darwin went public. That is Chambers's central position, not sudden species change. It could be called pure Chambersism. Chambers even speaks of "links of an insensible gradation" (148; not to mention how often he refers to links, 87, 103, 112, 148, 194). We find a similar phrase in Darwin who wrote of "insensibly small steps" (*Origin*, 499; 'scarcely sensible' on 374 and 'graduate insensibly' on 276) and who sometimes used the terms 'gradations' and 'graduated' (e.g., 220, 223, 505, 511). Herbert Spencer also has "we may pass

to the most diverse forms, by insensible gradations" in his 1852 essay "The Development Hypothesis" (*Essays*, 384).

I don't want to make too much of one word, but all of them may have picked it up from Lyell who in 1830 used 'insensible' when he was summing up James Hutton's discovery of deep or immense time: "The imagination was first fatigued and overpowered by endeavoring to conceive the immensity of time required for the annihilation of whole continents by so insensible a process" (*Principles*, 1.63). Lyell of course was not referring to and did not believe in species change, only geological change. It is fascinating that Chambers and Darwin would take that same adjective and apply it to the gradual transmutation of species. There are so many details like this shared by the two evolutionists.

Darwin never told his readers what an effective job Mr. Vestiges did defeating the theory of special creation or his observation of the commonalities shared by many organisms or what he said about variations, the breeding of animals, fossils, geologic time, rudimentary organs, embryonic development, and the proper use of logic. Chambers gave sensible discussions of all these things. As I said before, it was the things Chambers had gotten right that really stuck in the gut of scientists and apparently in Darwin's too. It was the credibility of his case that caused deep concern, not the occasional incredible speculation (for which scientists were grateful or else they would have had no arguments to bring against him). Astoundingly, as previously noted, Darwin could use 'poverty of intellect' to describe *Vestiges* (to Lyell, June 16, 1848; CCD 4.152). This was a self-willed blindness. Darwin well knew that this so-called poor intellect was the only who would get what his own work was about. Mr. Vestiges would have fully appreciated every word in the 1842 and 1844 essays, whereas Darwin's closest scientific friends failed to do so.

Some might object that it is only in hindsight that we can see how clever and accurate Chambers was on so many points and that his contemporary scientists were right to reject his ideas as too speculative. I disagree. He did have a fair amount of evidence and he offered reasonable arguments albeit not absolute proof. Wallace was one of the very few who really got what Chambers had done. He was a better scientist than the mainstream scientists of the time. He was much younger than Darwin, fourteen years younger, when he read *Vestiges*. The twenty-one year old Wallace was excited when *Vestiges* came out in 1844. In a letter of December 28, 1847 to his friend Henry Bates, he wrote "I do not consider it [the theory of progressive development' in *Vestiges*] a hasty generalisation, but rather an ingenious hypothesis strongly supported by some striking facts and analogies, but which remains to be

proved by more facts ... and it thus serves both as an incitement to the collection of facts, and an object to which they can be applied when collected" (ARW 1.91). Wallace, a lower class outsider in a profession of the upper classes, did not have a prejudice against outsiders and could adopt the correct scientific attitude towards new work. Wallace appreciated Chambers far more than Darwin did.

It also has to be said that even at his most ridiculous, Chambers would often have a good point to make. I've already mentioned one of his suggestions that excited widespread outrage and ridicule, which was the idea that under the right conditions, a goose might "give its progeny the body of a rat" (*Vestiges*, 219). Had the critics read *Vestiges* more closely, they would have noticed that the unknown author went on to note that finding examples of "the transition from species to species" was hampered by the way prejudices affect our observation of the evidence---"... for so strong is the prepossession for the doctrine of invariable like-production [the immutability of species], that such circumstances [favoring transmutation], on occurring, would be almost sure to be explained away on some other supposition, or, if presented, would be disbelieved and neglected" (220). It is a brilliant point. He was roping the dopes.

It did not help his case that he followed this wisdom with two more ridiculous examples. One was a supposed case of electricity creating a new animal from inorganic material (a mite, *Acarus crossii*, named after its "creator" Andrew Crosse, which turned out to be the already known *Acarus horridus*) and another being a claim that a crop of oats, after planting, had changed into one of rye. I could see how someone might miss the excellent point that was buried in the midst of these absurdities. Contrast this to Darwin's reaction when he heard rumors of beans growing upside down (described in one of his letters, reproduced in full in Gould, *Hedgehog*, xii). He considered himself a fool for investigating this, but investigate he did, even as he complained about "many wild-goose chases." Chambers could be careless and impulsive.

It is, and was, easy to make fun of and belittle Chambers---that is, if you are a lousy scientist or scholar. A great scientist's task is to separate the wheat from the chaff. That is easily done with Chambers. A great shame few bother to do it. To his credit, Chambers *never once* insists on the dubious evidence as his strong suit. He *never* makes it the heart of the argument. When his back is to the wall, he has the good sense to pull out of his arsenal the things that really pack some punch.

According to Chambers, what establishes "a strong probability for the development theory" as a historical explanation for how life has been created

are two sets of evidence: 1) the geological record that shows "that plants and animals came into existence gradually, in the course of a vast period of time ..." and 2) "the stages through which the embryo of one of the highest [stages of animal life] has to pass before it attains maturity" (*Explanations*, 122). This is his main evidence. Earlier, he called embryotic progress "the grand key to the theory of development" (53). The importance of the development of the embryo is that it showed that life forms could change radically in their development from embryo to adult (according to laws that no one had yet comprehended, and that Darwin also admitted no one understood) and that the similarity of the embryos of so many different adult animals pointed to a deep affinity between these life forms (an argument that Darwin would also make use of).

This gives us not proof positive, but strong probability. As for evidence for the continuation of a law of development---which would also be corroboration, Chambers notes, that this law has been in operation since ancient times---the first major piece of evidence he cites are "the facts which we possess regarding variations of types" (122), and that would include what I said above about Chambers's noting variations not just in nature but also in artificial selection. Again, this too is just like Darwin. Only after this does he also throw in "the production of some of the lower plants and animals by means of independent generation" (122), *though he makes the least of this type of evidence* (even if we had no such examples, he argues that the case of development would depend on the history of organic life and the physiology of embryos, 121-22).

This is good scientific reasoning and in ignoring it, we miss what Chambers accomplished. He writes in *Explanations*, "... some facts of inferior importance may seem to point to an opposite conclusion [opposite to development]; but in the balance of the two sets of evidence, those for a universality of natural law [i.e., development or evolution] downweigh the other [independent creation] beyond calculation" (169). Funny, bizarre bits of evidence (like the *Acarus crossii* and wheat changing into rye) are beside the point. There were large realms of fact that no one could dispute. Chambers had made a case for the greater probability of the mutability of species. And he knew it, critics be damned. Yet everybody since has said, Chambers be damned. If I live to be two hundred, I don't think I will ever see the injustice against Chambers corrected.

~ 2 ~

So how does one explain this? Why is everyone so blind about Chambers? Darwin at least has a personal and understandable excuse: Jealousy that

someone else might upstage and preempt him. That does not explain why everyone else in that time was so down on him, though it might explain why scholars since continue this (they don't want anyone upstaging Darwin). Historians of science are supposed to get it right. Here they have gotten it wrong.

I have to admit I feel a little uncomfortable going on and on about Chambers and his work in *Vestiges* and *Explanations*. Who am I to say that he is memorable and had a profound impact on the course of history, when *all the experts agree* that "he is much too unimportant a figure to deserve further discussion," as Mayr (384) put it? It's no fun being all alone. It actually scares me. So I keep my eyes and ears open, hoping against hope that someone might get it, and I am happy to report that Stephen Gould made some remarks on the importance of being accurate about the history of science and the dangers of creating heroes who block our look into history. These remarks speak to why this is so important. That he made these comments in the course of investigating a different problem does not make them any less applicable to this study of how scholars have made a hero out of Darwin (to which Gould made his own contributions) and a dunce, even a laughingstock, out of Chambers.

In an essay on James Hutton (who, for reasons I have never been able to grasp, Gould thought had been made into too big a hero, at least by geologists, and whom Gould wanted to take down several pegs), Gould wrote, "... in our arrogant approach to history, we choose to flay the past [as we do to Chambers, I would add], all the better to bask in our current wisdom ..." (*Hen's Teeth*, 81). The only modification I would make to this is that I'm not sure that our current wisdom is worth basking in. At the end of the same essay, he says, "If we use the past only to create heroes for present purposes, we will never understand the richness of human thought or the plurality of ways of knowing" (93). Amen, a hundred times. He could also have mentioned a plurality of worldviews. We also might miss that some alleged goat might have grasped some points better than we do, as in Chambers's case with his keen sense of the unconscious forces that prevent progress in science and the need to confront those unconscious emotions. Chambers achieved the greatest thing one can in science: He made the unconscious conscious and, without that, all the evidence in the world will avail you nothing.

In his book, *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle*, where Gould considers Hutton at greater length, he had this to say:

What harm is a bit of heroic folderol about an illusory past [and the idea that Darwin invented and proved evolutionary theory all

by himself is as an illusory bit of history as one can get], especially if it makes us feel good about the progress of science? I would argue that we misrepresent history at our peril as *practicing* scientific researchers ... we enshrine one narrow version of geological process as true *a priori*, and we lose the possibility of weighing reasonable alternatives ... we will never understand how fact and theory interact with social context, and we will never grasp the biases in our own thinking (for we will simply designate our cherished beliefs as true by nature's dictates). [114-15]

These are all perfect reasons for studying Chambers and Lamarck and Rafinesque, etc., in more detail. Gould's last point is particularly important. Historical accuracy is an important tool, maybe a necessary one, in teaching us humility and overturning bias.

I have mentioned a number of scholars who are dismissive of Chambers. One of the best ways to dismiss him is simply not mention him at all. Chambers made a big deal of our descent from fish and even reptiles. He believed that all life came from the sea, as did Erasmus Darwin. In recent years, many evolutionists have returned to this idea of descent from marine life. We have such books as *Once We All Had Gills* (2012) by Rudolf Raff and Neil Shubin's *Your Inner Fish* (2008). Neither author cares to mention Robert Chambers or Erasmus Darwin who were such strong advocates for this. When Disraeli had some fun with the idea that we once were fish in his novel *Tancred* (1847) it was because it had become a popular idea and it was certainly not Charles Darwin he had in mind. As he goes over the history of evolutionary thought, Raff does not include Chambers or Darwin *grand-père* or Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (Raff, 141-57 *passim*). He can even write, "Darwin discovered two of the major themes in evolution, common descent and natural selection" (144). In no court of historical justice (if there were such a thing) would Darwin be given credit for common descent. That should go to E. Darwin, Lamarck, and Chambers, all of whom pushed this idea far ahead before Charles Darwin arrived. Popular science writing still falsely presents one man as the lone hero and champion of evolution.

After discussing Richard Owen's contributions to comparative anatomical research, Shubin writes, "Charles Darwin supplied an elegant explanation for it [the fundamental design in the skeleton of all animals]. The reason the wing of a bat and the arm of a human share a common skeletal pattern is because they shared a common ancestor" (Shubin, 32). He just never tells us that in 1844, Robert Chambers also offered the resemblances between the bones in

the wing of a bat and those in a human hand as evidence for development or evolution, and he even threw in the paddles of a whale (*Vestiges*, 196). If it's an elegant explanation when Darwin did it, it must be just as elegant for Chambers too. No? Yes? Maybe? Please somebody? Yet he never gets credit. Never. If this does not count as rewriting history, I don't know what would.

This kind of thing is so common in popular science writing. Here is another example of the continuation of this myth-making. Michael Pollan writes in *The New Yorker* in December 2013, "Since 'The Origin of Species,' we have understood, at least intellectually, the continuities among life's kingdoms---that we are all cut from the same fabric of nature" (102). That would be a truer sentence if one substituted *Vestiges* or any of Erasmus Darwin's poems or Lamarck's *Philosophie Zoologique* for *The Origin of Species*. Or one could simply say that since the writings of the first evolutionists, the continuity of life has been on the table. Continuity was the whole point of the chain of being. It is not so much that Chambers and the others have been personally erased from history, as their existence is acknowledged from time to time. It is rather that *their accomplishments have been erased*. That is what myth-making about one person always entails. The lies that are promulgated about Darwin are disastrous for our culture because it means lies have to be told about so many others in order to hold up the lies about the great hero.

Darwin seems hesitant about evolution from the sea in his earliest writings. I could be wrong about this, but I detect a slightly sneering tone when Darwin wrote to Hooker (Feb. 10, 1846; CCD 3.289), "I see in the Explanations (the spirit of which, though not the facts, ought to shame Sedgwick) that *Vestiges* considers all land animals & plants to have passed from marine forms; so Chambers is quite in accordance." (He was referring to an article by Chambers in *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*; this was another small piece of evidence that Chambers was the author of *Vestiges*.) A more well-known comment is from Darwin's notes on *Vestiges*: "The idea of a fish passing into a reptile, monstrous. I will not specify any genealogies---much too little known at present" (LL 1.333n). How much more monstrous was that than bears evolving into whales? Darwin had as much evidence for that as Chambers had for his claim. (As previously noted, though Darwin withdrew his suggestion about bears and whales in later editions, it seems he was not happy about having done so; CCD 7.401 n 2.)

In his Notebooks, he was more supportive of the idea of descent from marine life. While he could write, "!, fish never become a man" (B 227), he could also say, "We have not the slightest right to say there never was common progenitor to Mammalia & fish ..." (B 97). Compare that to C 201,

where he says there must be "some source anterior to giving off of these two families" and E 71, "therefore animal life commenced in the Water!" The influence of his grandfather here could not have been negligible. By the time he got to *The Descent of Man*, Charles Darwin is more certain of this evolution: "As the class of fishes is the most lowly organised [of the five vertebrate classes], and appeared before the others, we may conclude that all the members of the vertebrate kingdom are derived from some fish-like animal" (*Descent*, 185).

Chambers was on the same track. Neil Shubin stresses the relationships of all living things because we all have parents. Bones in the middle ears of humans "evolved from bones set in the back of the reptilian jaw" (Shubin, 161). Also, "We can trace bones from gill arches to our ears" (163). Shubin and his colleague Steve Gatesy discovered a fossil they named *Tiktaalik* (meaning 'large freshwater fish' in the Inuktitut language) which is somewhere between a fish and a mammal. "The whole arrangement [head completely free of the shoulder] is shared with amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals, including us" (26). Later on, Shubin explains, "*Tiktaalik* is a wonderful intermediate between fish and their land-living descendants, but the odds of it being our exact ancestor are very remote. It is more like a cousin of our ancestor" (180). Diverse animals are deeply related. "The fish-turtle-polar bear-human grouping, for example, is supported by characteristics from hundreds of genes, and virtually all features of the anatomy, physiology, and cellular biology of these animals" (181; bear in mind that turtles are reptiles). Chambers did not know all this, but the beginnings of this kind of evidence were available in his lifetime. Shubin points out that the German anatomist Karl Reichert in 1837 realized "that parts of the ears of mammals are the same thing as parts of the jaws of reptiles" (160).

If we are not directly related in ancestry, we are at least cousins. "LIFE is everywhere ONE. The inferior animals are only less advanced types of that form of being perfected in ourselves" (*Explanations*, 185). No modern evolutionist would disagree with this, though they might not like 'perfected'. I think Chambers grasped it better than Darwin did. He may have been working from a small amount of evidence and a lot of intuitions, yet his intuitions turn out to have been not only right on the mark but good logical deductions from the little evidence he did have. He had as much of a sense of the tree of life and the connectedness of things as Darwin, if not more so.

Darwin is famous for his tree diagram in Chapter IV of *Origin*. Chambers had a very primitive diagram; it looks like a lopsided tree with one vertical line and a few branching lines on the right side (*Vestiges*, 212). He got it from the physiologist William Carpenter who published books on anatomy (see

Secord, 95, for Carpenter's original drawing). Chambers did not credit him at first, but made up for it in the fifth edition (220). Carpenter also made a number of suggestions to improve *Vestiges*, which were incorporated in the same edition and for which he was paid. Chambers's drawing was not much more primitive than Darwin's first attempts at a crude sketch in his 1837 Notebook B 25-26 and 36. Darwin also used a tree analogy in a September 4, 1857 letter to Asa Gray, which was included in the joint Darwin-Wallace presentation at the 1858 Linnean Society meeting introducing their theory to the world.

The figure of a tree as a metaphor for the history of organic life on this planet comes up quite a lot before *Origin*. Not only do we have Chambers, Darwin, and Carpenter, but it was used by Constantine Rafinesque in the early 19th century and by Alfred Wallace. Rafinesque, who had transplanted himself from Europe, was one of those geniuses who scatter their talents in a hundred directions. Or maybe that is unfair. Perhaps peering into every wonder that grabbed his attention was *exactly* what he wanted. He described himself as "a Botanist, Naturalist, Geologist, Geographer, Historian, Poet, Philosopher, Philologist, Economist, Philanthropist ..." (in Sullivan, 186). John Sullivan simply and beautifully sums him up: "Rafinesque only wanted to look" (205). Bear in mind that *looking* is one of the most horrifying things to all those scientists and scholars who believe ideology overrules evidence.

Rafinesque died in 1840, a few years before *Vestiges* was published. Darwin quotes him in the "Historical Sketch" on varieties gradually becoming species. At the end of Note 48 of *The World*, Rafinesque provides these lines (probably his own, but if they are someone else's, he makes no attribution):

Just like a tree, with many branches; most
Of genera produce the various kinds
Or species; varieties at first, like buds
Unfolding, and becoming species, when
By age, they may acquire the proper forms.

The German scientist Heinrich Bronn produced a tree drawing in 1858 (see Bowler, 55). Erasmus Darwin should not be left out either. Though he did not use the full tree metaphor, he did refer to a branch: "Owing to the imperfection of language the offspring is termed a *new* animal, but is in truth a branch or elongation of the parent" (*Zoonomia* 1.480, his emphasis).

Chambers also used the expression branching lines: "it does not appear that this gradation passes along one line, on which every form of animal life can be, as it were, strung; there may be branching or double lines at some places [or maybe circles and minor circles as he goes on to suggest, which turns out

to have been wrong]" (*Vestiges*, 191). He saw the possibility that "It may have only been when a varied climate arose, that the originally few species branched off into the present extensive variety" (262). In the sixth edition of *Vestiges* (1847) he said, "In the present state of inquiry, it is impossible to give an entire genealogical tree of Being" but concluded in effect that if we only know fragments of it, then "the idea of genetic succession of advancing forms" makes some sense (6th, 166). He was very aware that development implied all life forms are genetically related and this could be captured in a genealogical tree.

Chambers saw the role that the environment could play in creating diversity of life. I mention this because, again, Chambers is often represented as a simple-minded believer in a straight line of evolutionary progression, but his vision was more complicated. The various animal groupings "send off branches; not separate and independent divisions" and in these branches "it is possible to trace the affinities [of organization from marine life to land life]" (*Explanations*, 71). Shubin would like that, I think. As Gertrude Stein might have put it, Chambers was ahead of his time only in that they did not need him (or want him) when he was active. But ahead of his time or not, Chambers was having a deep impact on our perception of nature, as Disraeli's satire indicated.

Chambers got most of his ideas and facts from somewhere else. He never claimed to be a scientist discovering things in the field (except for some work in geology). He was a synthesizer and a rather good one. More than just good, in fact. He knew *what* to synthesize. Where other scientists were being careful, precise, neat, and tidy in the service of trying to create a perfect picture of whatever it is they were studying, Chambers was listening and picking out the startling bits of information (like the resemblance between the bony structures in human hands and bat wings, or perhaps even Karl Reichert's discovery of the similarity of bone structure in human ears and reptilian jaws). He could see a larger pattern where the others saw nothing. And it is possible to see this pattern even if you are making mistakes along the way.

Chambers understood something about science everyone else was missing: You don't have to be perfect. I earlier quoted one of his thoughts that may have shocked some people: "It may prove a true system, though one half of the illustrations presented by its first explicator should be wrong" (*Explanations*, 182). Can that really be true? Can such sloppiness lead to good science? Yes. Darwin would have agreed. As I have noted twice before, he wrote, "I may have erred on many points, and extended the doctrine too far, but I feel a strong conviction that sexual selection will hereafter be admitted

to be a powerful agency" (CCD 20.148). Making some mistakes is compatible with being on the right track.

Chambers was like an artist who attacks the canvas and in her haste and joy and incredible focus to get to the prize which is to capture the essential spirit of what she is after, she spills paint everywhere. She is not trying to be neat and precise. She wants to create life on the canvas. And Chambers made the paint fly. Chambers wanted to find the life that animates and organizes all of nature. So he makes many grabs and some of it will be off base and silly, but he knows there is enough good stuff accumulating that gives us the heart of what is happening. The facts were speaking to him and begging to be included in this grand concert.

That he could spot and pluck that tree-like diagram from someone else's work is an example of how uncanny he could be in the intuition department. Unfortunately, he did not always follow up consistently enough. Rather than stick with a tree and its branches, he also argued for a circular system of organic relationships promoted by W.S. Macleay, and that got him into trouble with the majority of naturalists who did not accept that. That was a messy bit that did not work out. It was too sloppy to suit the taste of the professionals. This was not carefully measured science. Their animosity towards *Vestiges* meant they missed the greater picture that the secretive and upstart author was getting right. Had they approached it with the same positive attitude that Carpenter did, who helped the author improve his work despite the fact that his diagram had been ripped off, then who knows how much more quickly a new science might have emerged.

Scholars employ a double standard with Darwin and Chambers. For Darwin, they have decided to overlook any mistakes he made and pay attention only to what he got right. In the case of Chambers, it is the exact opposite: We shall pay attention to what he got wrong and ignore all he was right about, no matter how considerable it was and no matter how much good evidence he brought to bear.

So what gives? Why is not Chambers at the very least co-credited with having proven the greater probability of the theory of common descent? I suggested some reasons a while back. He was working class, an outsider, critical of professional science, an idealist about pure science (one of his most unforgivable sins), the first to bring down a cherished theory (independent creation), an exposé of unconscious forces which people really hate to face, and more. I don't think it is an accident that the one who came closest to appreciating the accomplishment of *Vestiges* was Alfred Wallace, an outsider and working class just like him.

On being the purer scientist: Chambers cared only about how science

should ideally be practiced and had no hesitancy in rebuking professional scientists when they failed science in the ideal---not just for the purpose of delivering a rebuke, but to remind everyone of what great science is. Darwin cared very much about science and the search for truth, but he cared in equal measure about joining and being loyal to the ranks of professional science.

There might also have been an idea that there can only be one cock of the walk in science. That is a comment Darwin made about Richard Owen in a postscript of a letter to Huxley (Dec. 28, 1859; CCD 7.459). Darwin was concerned that Huxley's review of *Origin* in the Times would make Owen jealous: "for credit given to any other man, I strongly suspect is in his eyes so much credit robbed from him. Science is so narrow a field, it is clear there ought to be only one cock of the walk!" It is hard to tell whether Darwin agreed with this attitude or whether it annoyed him only in so far as it could be used to keep him out. Would he have minded if he was the cock of the walk? To make it even more confusing, the next and last sentence in this postscript is "I could hardly sleep for thinking of the wonderful fact." Again, I am not sure what he is referring to. Certainly nobody wanted Chambers to be cock of the walk. All considerations of an ego battle aside, I think that there is something deeper at play both in Chambers's time and in our own. The more things change, the more they remain the same.

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To really understand why Chambers was and continues to be relegated to the back of the bus, we have to appreciate just what development theory meant before Darwin came along. We can appreciate that best by taking a close look at a distinctly odd moment in *Origin* (which I briefly reviewed in Ch. 5, §5).

There is a remark Darwin makes in *The Origin of Species* which is peculiar only in where it stands in the text. Given everything I have discussed so far, it is not at all surprising that Darwin would say, "throughout nature the forms of life which are now dominant tend to become still more dominant by leaving many modified and dominant descendants." What is odd about it is that it is placed in the last paragraph of Chapter II, the shortest chapter of *Origin*. He has said nothing to prepare the reader for this. The "Struggle for Existence" (Ch. III) and "Natural Selection" (Ch. IV) are yet to come. The remark is dropped in like an ultimatum, a thunderbolt out of the blue, an unconditional truth to be swallowed whole. Why did Darwin feel the need to alert the reader to this supposedly incontrovertible truth so early and without justification?

One could make an argument that Darwin was anticipating conclusions down the line. After all, natural selection is also referred to early in the book three times (68, 70, 75) and the struggle for existence once (77) without

explaining them. Even dominant species are brought up to make the point that the dominant or most flourishing species, "those which range widely over the world" as Darwin clarifies, "oftenest produce well-marked varieties, or, as I consider them, incipient species" (77). He reiterates this in the last paragraph of Chapter II. This fits the general theme of the chapter which is to stress the indefinite line between varieties and species and the way the former can shade off into the latter ('indefinite' appears in the next to last paragraph). He wants to lay the groundwork for his later argument that some varieties gradually become new species. Darwin succinctly summarizes his view in Chapter II:

Hence I look at individual differences, though of small interest to the systematist, as of high importance for us, as being the first step towards such slight varieties as are barely thought worth recording in works on natural history. And I look at varieties which are in any degree more distinct and permanent, as steps leading to more strongly marked and more permanent varieties; and at these latter, as leading to sub-species, and to species ... I attribute the passage of a variety, from a state in which it differs very slightly from its parent to one in which it differs more, to the action of natural selection in accumulating (as will hereafter be more fully explained) differences of structure in certain definite directions. [75-76; those last three words give a hint of Darwin's sense of progress]

Other points that stand out in this chapter: "No one supposes that all the individuals of the same species are cast in the very same mould" (68); "... see what a surprising number of forms have been ranked by one botanist as good species, and by another as mere varieties" (71); "I was much struck how entirely vague and arbitrary is the distinction between species and varieties" (72; and on 76, "I look at the term species, as one arbitrarily given for the sake of convenience ... The term variety ... is also applied arbitrarily, and for mere convenience sake"); "Certainly no clear line of demarcation has as yet been drawn between species and sub-species" (75); "Hence I believe a well-marked variety may be justly called an incipient species" (76); and "... species are only strongly marked and permanent varieties" (79).

All this is well and good for Chapter II. It is all geared to making the reader realize that the malleability of organisms is the norm and not their immutability. This was a natural follow-up to Chapter I which had used artificial selection to make the same point that organisms are not fixed and immutable in their structure. No child is exactly like the parent. *Change* is nature's way. He really does not have to throw in that the dominant become

ever more dominant. It is extraneous to the topic at hand. If anything, it goes against the theme that nature is in constant transformation. Of course, it is always possible that Darwin was merely getting ahead of himself with an idea he was excited about. I would not discount this. No deeper explanation may be necessary. But again, one can ask: Why this and why here at the end of the second chapter? There is an obvious answer.

The theory of common descent (which we now call evolution and which was most commonly known as the development hypothesis in Darwin's time) was not new. In fact, Darwin's first two chapters were not new. Readers had encountered these points before in the extremely popular books by Robert Chambers, *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844) and *Explanations: A Sequel to "Vestiges"* (1846, second edition), the main purpose of this second book being to respond to the criticisms of scientists. Chambers presents only two examples of artificial selection in *Vestiges* (282): a type of sheep with very short legs (useful to owners in that it could not jump over low fences) and the breeding of cattle. He does not delve into this to the extent that Darwin does, but more importantly, he makes this part of the general phenomenon of variations in nature and writes, "nature has a power of producing new varieties, though this is only done rarely" (281). As he puts it in *Explanations* (158), "what they call new species are but variations upon the old." (Darwin at first also thought mutations were rare, though frequent enough to bring about evolution. "Most organic beings in a state of nature vary exceedingly little," 1844, 81; cf. 1842, 4-5. Both Chambers and Darwin were reflecting scientific knowledge of the time. By the time he gets to *Origin*, Darwin believed variations were more frequent. In *Explanations* [152], Chambers also seems to stress how common varieties are in nature.)

Chambers was not the first to see the significance of variations in domesticated animals. Lamarck had made a point of this and so too Erasmus Darwin. (Darwin acknowledged some of this in the "Historical Sketch" which he added to the third and all subsequent editions of *Origin*, but it is impossible to tell from that essay just how detailed was the correspondence between many of Darwin's thoughts and previous work.) Nature could change the structure of its creations. Artificial selection was an example of the malleability of organisms. People who were familiar with development theory were well aware of these points. Other than more details and greater sophistication in the analysis, there was nothing new in the first chapter of Darwin's *Origin*.

The major scientific objection to this at the time was that artificial selection only shows that different varieties within a species can be produced. Most scientists still believed that species were walled off from each other and

that new ones could not be created by breeding or any other method. One species could not give birth to another one, no matter how much time you allowed for this to happen. Darwin's Chapter II is his response to this objection. Chambers had given the same reply a dozen years earlier in *Explanations* (112-14). With a judicious use of quotes from other scientists, Chambers tells his readers that there are no known limits to variation, that using the term 'species' should not deceive us into thinking it is a fact (i.e., an immutable fact), that distinctions between species and between species and varieties are difficult to make, and that scientists often disagree on what is a variety and what a species. For example, Chambers quotes Professor Henslow stating that "There is *no law whatever hitherto established, by which the limits of variation to a given species can be satisfactorily assigned ...*" (112; emphasis in original). He also quotes Bicheno that species is a convenient term, "only *care should be taken that we do not accept the abstract term for the fact*" (113; emphasis in original).

Had Chambers been familiar with Constantine Rafinesque, he probably would have quoted him too. Genus, varieties, species, said Rafinesque, "are but abstract terms of our own; Nature only acknowledges individuals, and vary them constantly; so as to produce new species now and then ..." (*World*, Note 48). Further on in the same note, he says, "*Every species is a variety, and every variety is a species!* The only difference is in their age! and there is no actual limit between them" (his emphasis). Earlier in Note 22, he said something that, if one did not know any better, we'd swear must be a sentence from Darwin: "Every species was once a variety, and every variety is the embryo of a new species." (Darwin quotes a similar sentence from another work by Rafinesque in the "Historical Sketch" which was added to the third edition of *Origin*. Darwin himself describes a variety as "an incipient species"; see *Origin*, 76, 80.) The proofs for this, according to Rafinesque, "are found in the varieties and monstrosities [*sic*], still proceeding under our eyes, or that have for ages past" (Note 22).

Our scientific language, which is often abstract, should not be assumed to correspond to reality. These are all known as Darwinian arguments today, but Chambers was telling the British public these things first and Rafinesque in America was a few years ahead of him. Rarely has someone like Chambers accomplished so much and received so little credit. (I should note in passing how often the phrase 'the origin of species [or, organic beings]', crops up in *Explanations*, 126, 129, 131, 149, 201, and on 138, 'the genesis of animals'. Both Chambers and Darwin were talking about *the process* of originating new species, which Chambers makes very clear with 'genesis'; they were not talking about origin as merely a point in time.)

The reality for Chambers is that organic forms in their minute differences can be seen to almost imperceptibly blend into each other---resulting in incipient species, in other words---and that "the proper discrimination between species and variety, is one of the greatest difficulties which the naturalist has to encounter" (114), a point that Darwin wholeheartedly agrees with. The fact that in 1846 Chambers here quotes a number of scientists means that there was already plenty of doubt on this subject and that "it is, in the first place, not certain that species constantly maintain a fixed character ..." (150). (Rafinesque too pointed out, in Note 2 of his 1836 poem, that it "has long been surmised" that gradual mutations and changes are constantly occurring.) Some scientists (maybe not a lot, but enough) before Chambers and Darwin were already arguing that maybe our language and fixed concepts were deceiving us into thinking there is permanence where there is none. Careful readers of *Origin* saw nothing new in Chapter II. Darwin's presentation is exceptionally well-done, but they had seen it before.

One can legitimately say Darwin does a better job in both chapters. He is more thorough, more precise, more knowledgeable about a wide array of evidence, and because of his knowledge and logical precision, more compelling. But, to his contemporary readers, he is not revolutionary or startling or more right. Chambers got it just as right. He was more of a leaper from a few pieces of evidence. A scientist should gather more evidence and be more careful in his deliberations than Chambers was. But the most important quality for a scientist is to spot a large pattern of evidence and see the significance of it. That Chambers did admirably well, better than any of the professional scientists of his time, except for Darwin. Chambers may have been a leaper, but he leapt to the logically correct conclusion. At any rate, Darwin makes no essential points in Chapters I or II that readers had not previously been introduced to.

And what did this development hypothesis or theory of common descent mean to readers in 1859? It meant exactly what Darwin repeats in these chapters---that nature is malleable, ever in transformation. Darwin references the belief of breeders who "habitually speak of an animal's organisation as something quite plastic ..." (52). Or as he says in Chapter II, "I am convinced that the most experienced naturalist would be surprised at the number of the cases of variability, even in important parts of structure, which he could collect on good authority, as I have collected, during a course of years" (69). This plasticity was a frightening thought to the upper classes who needed reassurance that this new theory was not going to proclaim that human society is also fluid and variable.

I think Darwin unconsciously realized as he got to the end of Chapter II

that he had not yet said anything to distinguish his approach to the development theory. So Darwin suddenly alerts his fellow upper class scientists that this is not your father's or grandfather's development hypothesis. My theory is here to tell you that the dominant (species, races, classes) will increase their dominance; they will not be overthrown. Hence, that bombshell of a remark in the last paragraph of Chapter II: "throughout nature the forms of life which are now dominant tend to become still more dominant by leaving many modified and dominant descendants." One general order of things remains true, one general principle for all forms of life, and that is a division of "groups subordinate to groups," the very last words of Chapter II. It is, as I said, out of place and even opposed to the theme of nature in transition in these first two chapters, but it makes perfect sense as Darwin's attempt to tell his readers that despite everything you have read so far, my theory is headed in a different, steadier direction. Not endless change, but almost permanent, fixed dominance (almost, but not quite).

(I am of course addressing the reading experience of *Origin*. In general, most people knew what was coming. The Darwin-Wallace papers had been jointly presented at a meeting of the Linnean Society in the summer of the year before and published in the Society's journal in August of that year. Scientists had over a year to think about this. But *The Origin of Species*, like any good book, is designed with its own internal structure in mind, without reference to the previous papers.)

For those who were astute enough to pay close attention, they might have noticed that dominance in Darwin's scheme is no guarantee of survival in the long run. It is unlikely the dominant will disappear, but not impossible. Darwin slides it in almost unobtrusively late in the second chapter of *Origin*: "... geology plainly tells us that small genera have in the lapse of time often increased greatly in size; and that large genera have often come to their maxima, declined, and disappeared" (80). He will repeat this when he returns to the idea of the dominant becoming ever more dominant at the end of Chapter IV where it more properly belongs. "Looking to the future, we can predict that the groups of organic beings which are now large and triumphant ... will for a long period continue to increase. But which groups will ultimately prevail, no man can predict; for we well know that many groups, formerly most extensively developed, have now become extinct" (155). In the next sentence, he reaffirms the more normal course of events which is that "we may predict that, owing to the continued and steady increase of the larger groups, a multitude of smaller groups will become utterly extinct, and leave no modified descendants" (155-56).

Throughout *Origin*, Darwin dwells so much on the triumph of the

dominant that it is easy to forget or not notice his caveats about this. If the reader has been caught up in Darwin's main drama of struggle for existence, dominance, the stronger beating the weaker, and extinction of the smaller groups, one can too easily overlook the point that it does not always work out for the dominant.

Rereading these first two chapters of *Origin*, I was reminded of how pleasurable it is to see Darwin carrying out science in top-notch form. His anthropological science falls far short of this. I was also reminded of how cavalier scientists and scholars are when they erase previous scientific accomplishments. As Secord has aptly put it, they made 1859 "the make-believe of a beginning" (514; quoting George Eliot; see the epigraph of previous chapter for the full Secord quote). They made 1859 a starting point instead of an outcome (516). They got history precisely wrong.

~ 4 ~

There is one other important point about Darwin's enthusiastic thumbs-up for the dominant and powerful that requires further discussion. Darwin's view gives the lie to an assertion, or assortment of assertions, that scholars make about Darwin. They claim he did not believe in progress or teleology and that he based his system on randomness. This may be true of their fictional Darwin, but the real Darwin lived in the world of Newton (and aspired to be another Newton) which was built on fixed laws and perfect determinism. There is nothing random about a world where certain groups become dominant and whose foothold in dominance becomes ever more secure. There is nothing unprogressive about a world of favored species and races (which appear up front in the sub-title of *Origin*). Progress belongs to the favored like a divine right. The only way you can make Darwin believe in the random and non-progress is to misquote him or quote him out of context. The dominant becoming ever more dominant is Darwin's version of progress. It is inherent in nature as he conceives it.

To be fair to scholars, there is some good reason to ascribe a denial of progress to the real Darwin. He said so himself. In Chapter IV of the 4th edition of *Origin*, he writes, "natural selection includes no necessary and universal law of advancement or development---it only takes advantage of such variations as arise and are beneficial to each creature under its complex relations of life" (4th, 143). In the 5th edition (145), the first part of that sentence was rewritten as "natural selection, or the survival of the fittest, does not necessarily include progressive development" (the same in 6th, 162). The reason he says this is because he wanted to distinguish himself from all those naturalists who openly, or more honestly, professed a belief in progress. As an

example, he here cites "Lamarck, who believed in an innate and inevitable tendency towards perfection in all organic beings" (4th, 142-43).

But on these very same pages (4th, 142-44), Darwin also uses these expressions to describe what is happening in nature: low forms, highest grade of organisation, unimproved, improved, advanced, more highly developed, and degrees of perfection. Improved and improvement are constants with Darwin from the very first edition of *Origin*. In the original Introduction, he tells us, "Natural Selection almost inevitably causes much Extinction of the *less improved* forms of life" (1st, 23; emphasis added). And in the crucial fourth chapter, he announces that "natural selection is daily and hourly scrutinising ... silently and insensibly working ... at the *improvement* of each organic being in relation to its organic and inorganic conditions of life" (1st, 109; emphasis added). In the next sentence he speaks of "slow changes in progress" which could just mean a neutral, sequential movement in time, but it is his constant use of 'improvement' which is more significant because it serves as a synonym for our usual understanding of progress. On 375, just before he claims that British life forms are higher than those of New Zealand, we get 'this process of improvement' followed shortly by 'this sort of progress.' We should not forget that Darwin concluded *The Origin of Species* with a reference (in the next to last sentence) to "the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals."

This is a constant theme throughout *Origin*. 'Improve' and its derivatives appear 61 times in the first edition of *Origin*; this increases only slightly to 69 by the fifth edition. (I did not count occurrences in the first chapter which is all about domestic or artificial selection. I also eliminated a few references to domestic productions, like sheep, dogs, and cotton, in later chapters.) Most of these are 'improved' (45 in the first edition), followed by 'improvement' (11).

Few writers have troubled themselves to see the significance of this. 'Improvement' is the language of artificial selection. Breeders were seeking to improve their stock. It would also be the language of imperialism. Imperialists were always boasting that they were conquering the world in faraway places in order to improve it (Drayton, 85-128, has a very good chapter on this). Darwin was using the same language to describe the actions of natural selection. This means that all three (artificial selection, imperialism, and natural selection) were entangled in Darwin's conception of the world. Each was capable of being fatefully confused with the other two. Colonialism was in fact much closer to artificial selection than natural selection, but Darwin would obscure that by using the same language of improvement for all three. (It was also the language of his grandfather, as e.g., "... the great globe itself,

and all that it inhabit, appear to be in a perpetual state of mutation and improvement," *Temple*, note on III, 411.) It was a British worldview that influenced the way science was carried out.

If anyone wants to argue that Darwin was ambivalent about progress in *Origin*, it is clear that by the time he gets to *The Descent of Man*, he abandons all caution and trumpets progress as loudly as he can. Here are just some of the relevant quotations from *Descent* (all emphases added):

It is, however, very difficult to form any judgment why one particular tribe and not another has been *successful* and has *risen in the scale of civilisation* ... we are apt to look at progress as normal in human society; but history refutes this ... *Progress seems to depend* on many concurrent favourable conditions, far too complex to be followed out ... it struck me that the possession of some property, a fixed abode, and the union of many families under a chief, were the indispensable requisites for civilisation ... The problem, however, of the *first advance* of savages towards civilisation is at present much too difficult to be solved. [158; whatever the difficulties of the subject, Darwin had no doubt that progress is a real thing]

The western nations of Europe, who now so immeasurably *surpass* their former savage progenitors ... stand at *the summit of civilisation* ... [167; further on here, he mentions that doubting and questioning are essential to progress]

There is apparently much truth in the belief that *the wonderful progress of the United States*, as well as the character of the people, are *the results of natural selection*. [168; artificial selection would have been closer to the truth]

... *progress has been much more general than retrogression* ... man has *risen*, though by slow and interrupted steps, from a lowly condition to *the highest standard* as yet attained by him in knowledge, morals and religion. [172]

... some, at least, of these faculties [intuition, rapid perception, imitation, i.e., the qualities of women] are characteristic of the lower races, and therefore of a *past and lower state of civilisation*. [629]

Man may be excused for feeling some pride at *having risen*, though not through his own exertions, *to the very summit of the organic scale*. [689]

In that last quote, it is rather startling that even though man did not rise through his own efforts---i.e., because the process of natural selection was causing this rise---this supposedly impersonal process still takes man to a *summit*, the very summit of the organic scale. That is what Darwin sees in organic nature---high and low, and a scale with a peak to it.

Make no mistake about it. Darwin links progress or improvement with natural selection. Early in the third chapter, I quoted from an 1881 letter in which Darwin mused on "natural selection having done and doing more for the progress of civilization" and "The more civilized so-called Caucasian races having beaten the Turkish hollow in the struggle for existence" (LL 1.316). That struggle gives Darwin's progress its defining character. I also quoted there his 1860 letter to Lyell in which he exulted, "White man is 'improving off the face of the earth' even races nearly his equals," and approved of Lyell's insight that "man now keeping down any new man which might be developed" (CCD 8.379). Progress serves the European and installs him into a permanent position of power. This is teleology with a vengeance.

What Darwin did not believe is that there is an external or super-intelligence directing natural selection. Survival and Darwin's interpretation of survival take the place of that intelligence. They provide an internal, directional force. But is it really internal? *If* that struggle for survival is based on a very subjective, European outlook, then there is after all a European intelligence which is directing *this* version of evolution. It is the European who is really doing the selecting.

Darwin could have presented natural selection with greater objectivity. Most of the time he chose not to. Strictly speaking, if you are going to describe natural selection as impersonally as possible, there is no struggle for survival---because there is no struggle. Struggle is a very human spin and it is the spin of particular human beings. In a more objective treatment, there are only impersonal forces colliding and none of these forces have cognizance of the others. Each one operates entirely on its own; they are not colluding to produce a result. The struggle for survival is the collision of three forces that are not combining so much as crashing into each other: There is 1) all organisms' need for sustenance and 2) their rate of reproduction occurring in 3) the world of nature's production of food. When there are too many mouths to feed (due to the fact that #2 is greater than #3, creating a limited food

supply), something's gotta give. Darwin never described natural selection so sharply as in his first essay when he called it "selection by death" (1842, 10). But death is not really a selecting agent. There is no agent. Death is what happens to some organisms which are at the mercy of these forces. When those three forces run into each other, some organisms get smashed up a bit. Organic creatures are like objects bobbing in the waves and being knocked about by the currents. They *appear* to struggle from a human vantage point, but it is not really struggling, it is merely the waves and currents tossing each one about.

This is all pure Malthus and Darwin acknowledged where he got it from all through his writings---from his Notebooks (D134-135, E3) to his first two essays (1842, 7-8; 1844, 88, 90) to *Origin* (88) to his *Autobiography* (98-99). Malthus was writing about the pressure that human population growth put on obtaining enough food for all, but as I discussed in Chapter 7, he explained in the very first pages of the sixth edition of his *Essay* that the application of this principle in the natural world was even more intense. Darwin (just like Wallace who later on was also inspired by Malthus to come up with the same theory) picked up on this and realized that Malthus was right. The struggle, or collision of forces, is intensified in wild nature because there is no way for nature to ratchet up the food supply and animals will not engage in sexual restraint.

Malthus and Darwin were not the first to observe the importance of the struggle for survival. Others, including Darwin's mentor Charles Lyell, had written about it, but as Darwin said in the abstract of this theory which he sent to his friend Asa Gray, American botanist, on September 5, 1857, these others "have written strongly on the struggle for life; but even they have not written strongly enough" (CCD 6.448). What Darwin got from Malthus was a realization of the intensity of the struggle. "It is the doctrine of Malthus applied in most cases with ten-fold force" (1844, 88). In *Origin*, we have "It is the doctrine of Malthus applied with manifold force to the whole animal and vegetable kingdoms" (88).

The other three forces Darwin added to the mix were heredity, mutations (or variations), and an environment in flux. Mix it all up, let the environment go on gradually changing, and new species will gradually evolve out of the old ones, as mutations pile up in the organisms that last longer because they are better adapted to get food and to avoid becoming food in the new conditions and therefore they get to reproduce more. Accumulating variations, or the accumulating power and action of natural selection, is what he called it several times in the abstract sent to Gray (CCD 6.447-49).

Darwin certainly knew that natural selection could be explained as the

result of a convergence of thoughtless and directionless forces, but he rarely talked about it that way. His penchant was always for personifying the process. It seems that Gray was the first person to point out to him that he conceived of natural selection as an *agent*, that is, as some sort of active being or power. Gray's response to the abstract has been lost, but Darwin wrote back to him on November 29, 1857, "I had not thought of your objection of my using the term 'natural Selection' as an agent" (CCD 6.492). He explains that he only means by it "the result of several combined actions [i.e., forces]." He then offers the following expanded formula: "the tendency to the preservation (owing to the severe struggle for life to which all organic beings at some time or generation are exposed) of any the slightest variation in any part, which is of the slightest use or favourable to the life of the individual which has thus varied; together with the tendency to its inheritance."

This is very close to the way I described it above. He has mentioned variations (mutations) and inheritance as two of the fundamental forces. But he is still using 'struggle for life' as a summary of the first three forces. In the early pages of *Origin's* Chapter III, "Struggle for Existence", when he brings Malthus into it, he does break down the struggle into sexual reproduction and production of food ("more individuals are produced than can possibly survive," 88) and "the geometrical tendency [of population] to increase" (90), but his more general approach was to use the struggle for survival or existence as a power in itself. Previously, I pointed out how often he used words like competition, dominant, and beat in *Origin*. These words do not appear so much in the first two essays. I did find a couple of uses of 'beating out' (1842, 37; 1844, 184, 186). Instead, in the early essays, we get 'struggle' over and over again, often as a synonym for 'competition' (e.g., 1844, 90, three times, and four more times on the next two pages), and he continued to use it in *Origin*.

In one or two places in his published writings, Darwin comes close to describing natural selection in a way that is as devoid of agency as it is in his explanation to Gray. In the same place in later editions of *Origin* (109 in 6th) where he said "it is difficult to avoid personifying the word Nature," he explains, "I mean by Nature, only the aggregate action and product of many natural laws, and by laws the sequence of events as ascertained by us." (He said the same thing a little earlier in *Variation*, 17.) He could easily have taken the opportunity here to advance a more objective statement of natural selection as the result of tendencies in nature. Instead, in the paragraphs that follow in *Origin*, he goes right back to his personifications: "natural selection can do nothing [without increased variability]", "As man can produce ... so could natural selection", "... natural selection to fill up by improving some of

the varying inhabitants", "She can act on every internal organ" and more (110-11 in 6th).

We quickly lose any sense of impersonal forces and are immersed again in a world of a powerful agent out to get things done. He has gone well beyond using natural selection to sum up an aggregate of events, when he could have just stuck to the events and said: variations occur, some are inherited, some are beneficial to survival, there are many individuals being born, not enough food, some die, while others live. Darwin goes beyond the basic description necessary to convey what natural selection is or is supposed to be. He envisions a nature which makes Europe's aggression towards other peoples appear very natural and acceptable. "It has truly been said that all nature is at war; the strongest ultimately prevail, the weakest fail; and we well know that myriads of forms have disappeared from the face of the earth" (*Variation*, 16; cf. *Origin*, the last words of Ch. VII, "... let the strongest live and the weakest die"). He could not end *Origin* without reminding us in the next to last sentence that the beautiful diversity of life on earth results "from the war of nature, from famine and death" which produces "the most exalted object ... the higher animals." This embodies a definite notion of progress.

How many times has the last sentence of *Origin*, "There is grandeur in this view of life ... endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved," been quoted? A million? (Note: The last sentences were already written for the 1842 and 1844 essays.) And how many times has the previous sentence with its "war of nature" and "exalted ... higher animals" been quoted? Hardly ever. (Note: In 1844, "war of nature" was omitted, but in 1842, he had included "the concealed war of nature.") When scholars make such a big deal of the last sentence about grandeur, it is a misdirection. The purpose is to make us forget what came immediately before. Charles Darwin has probably been selectively quoted and sometimes misquoted with a view to making him fit an ideological framework more than any other writer. It seems not to be in anyone's interest to remind everyone that Darwin's vision of evolution was all about progress and dominance resulting from lethal conflict.

This is not merely a war of subjugation. This is a war of genocide. He writes as if he were preparing everyone for this finality. For Darwin, the stakes are: Become successful or go extinct. Genocide was not an issue for Malthus. He was writing about the fluctuations of population, increasing and decreasing among humans, but not to zero. Famine, war, and disease (the positive checks, as he called them, to population growth) and the rational impulse to limit family size (a preventive check) kept the numbers down, but *Malthus never thought about the extreme case of total destruction. Darwin did.* Darwin immediately thought about applying this to the severe struggle in

nature ending in complete extermination. In his second Notebook entry (E 3), made around October 2, 1838, just after he discovered Malthus, he quotes him on how "the causes of population & depopulation have been probably as constant as any of the laws of nature with which we are acquainted" (from Malthus, *Essay*, 6th edition, 1.529) and adds, "I would apply it not only to population & depopulation, but extermination & production of new forms." *Darwin would apply it to extermination which Malthus never did.*

In Darwin's view, there are only three possibilities for any species, variety, or race: Either it is successful and dominant, or it is extinct, or it is on the way to extinction. There are no other slots. It is all or nothing or getting closer to nothing. Survival of the fittest conveys that too. You're the fittest or you're gone. If that sounds ruthless, that's because it is. That ruthlessness is embedded in the circularity of survival of the fittest. Evolutionists who buy Darwin's scheme have no other way to measure fitness than by survival. If something survives, it is declared fit, and if it does not survive, then it is automatically not fit. The survival of those that survive---that is really all that survival of the fittest says. It is not a reasoned conclusion from other facts of nature. It *imposes* a point of view rather than draw a conclusion from anything. It might as well be called the perfect rigidity of the survival of the fittest. The unfit must lose and the losers must be unfit. Fitness can belong only to the winners.

No one ever proposes a standard for fitness independent of survival because of the fear of what theoretically could happen if survival and fitness were properly separated. It might turn out that *sometimes* the unfit survive and the most fit perish. No one wants to see that *possibility* realized. If western civilization has triumphed because it is less fit, that would be a disaster for our self-consciousness. That cannot be allowed to happen, so the mere possibility that unfitness could in some way lead to survival must be forever banned. The circular reasoning of survival of the fittest is what we are left with. It is a self-serving concept for those in power, it does nothing for our understanding of nature.

It was up to the humanitarians to break the circularity of survival of the fittest by pointing out that it might be the moral unfitness or a defect in the character of Europeans that enabled them to exterminate indigenous peoples. In his lifetime, Wallace was on both sides of this issue. In the question and comment period following his 1864 paper "The Origin of Human Races" (S093), a Mr. Carter Blake objected to the assumption of the inferiority of certain peoples. For example, "we know absolutely nothing about the history of the Basques, and we are not entitled to affirm that they were in any way inferior to the early savage Teutonic or Celtic nations that immediately

extirpated them" (clxxv). Wallace responded, "Now it appears to me that the mere fact of one race supplanting another proves their superiority ... [We may not know all the causes] But still there is the plain fact that two races came into contact, and that one drives out the other. This is a proof that the one race is better fitted to live upon the world than the other" (clxxxiii). It does not get any more circular than that. It is a wonder that Wallace could not see it. Much later in life, in his autobiography, he realized that the charge of unfit was too easily made by the master against the slave and by western civilized nations against indigenous peoples. In matters of justice, "the question of good or bad, fit or not fit for self-government, is not to the point" (*My Life*, 2.121), but I will get back to this in the last chapter.

In the first two essays, Darwin sometimes used the word 'rigid' to describe what natural selection was doing: "rigidly destroyed" (1842, 9), "such selection far more rigid and scrutinising" (ibid.), "rigidly destroyed" (1844, 92), "the selection is rigid and unfailing" (1844, 95), "rigid, steady, natural means of selection" (ibid.). In his very first Notebook entries (D134-135) after reading Malthus, which he dated September 28 (1838), he speaks of "the warring of the species as inference from Malthus" (D134) and concludes, "One may say there is a force like a hundred thousand wedges trying force every kind of adapted structure into the gaps in the œconomy of Nature, or rather forming gaps by *thrusting out weaker ones*" (D135; emphasis added). Darwin may have thought to himself that he was just inferring from Malthus, but the fact is that Malthus did not think about a war unto extinction. He was going way beyond Malthus. (There is one place in Malthus, 6th, 1.95, where he does mention many savage tribes being exterminated in the struggle for existence, but this is an exception, not the rule, in Malthus's thinking.)

This problem of using the term natural selection as an active, almost conscious, agent in this exterminating process would continue to perplex those struggling with the theory.

To sum up the last two sections of this chapter: The first two chapters of *The Origin of Species* repeated what Chambers and other investigators had said. The varieties that we get out of species in artificial selection demonstrate that species are not fixed and immutable (Ch. I of *Origin*) and the distinctions between varieties and species are rather arbitrary (Ch. II). Nature is more mutable than traditional naturalists have led us to believe. Every one of the early evolutionary thinkers had made these points. Then in the last paragraph of Chapter II, Darwin slams us with: "... throughout nature the forms of life which are now dominant tend to become still more dominant by leaving many modified and dominant descendants." There is a limit, he was saying, to how much change nature gives us. It is not a topsy-turvy world. The dominant

(species, races, classes) will remain so and become even more dominant. By making this proclamation so early in the book, Darwin was unconsciously acknowledging three things: 1) everything in the book up to that point was a repetition of the insights of others; 2) something about constant change in nature was part of the worldview of his predecessors; and 3) he was offering a different worldview based on dominance and lethal competition. Thus, Darwin built a notion of progress into evolution, but one that would not overturn the current power structure.

~ 5 ~

As I have said before, Erasmus Darwin, Lamarck and Chambers did not fail to see natural selection because they were less intelligent or less ingenious than Charles Darwin. They simply were not looking for domination and control in nature. Their spirit was in search of something else. They were not even all that interested in finding a causal mechanism of mutability (except perhaps for Lamarck). They were enthralled by change as a principle in itself, by a continuing creation, by the wholeness of nature, and by the spiritual or moral implications of these ideas. In a sense, you get what you are looking for. Darwin got what he wanted and those scientists who quickly accepted his theory of natural selection also wanted this sense of domination.

If you can wed science---and I mean the insights you get out of it---to colonialism and conquest, why can you not wed science to peace and harmony with the whole system of which you are but one part? Why wouldn't the insights obtained thereby be just as valid in their own right? In the beginning, there was a single life form, a parent, and that parent had a child who was a little different, and with that slight difference, the whole system of nature was off and crawling (at an incredibly slow pace; it would take millions of years before appreciable differences accumulated). But Darwin did something different with this idea than other evolutionists did.

When I previously presented a point for point comparison between the work of Darwin and Chambers, it was not to take note of someone who anticipated Darwin but rather 1) to show the reverse, which is that Darwin was being pushed forward by the insights of others (Darwin's two unpublished essays were completed before *Vestiges*, but then again Chambers was making points which others before him had made, and these others impacted Darwin as well; Darwin's essays came out of the same environment of thought that Chambers had learned from), and 2) to emphasize that indeed they were all thinking about the same sort of evolutionary development---that is, the transmutation of species, creating and tracing a genealogical record back to a common ancestor for us all. This idea of evolution which they all

immersed themselves in was given to Charles Darwin. Yet out of this one simple idea of the mutability of species, Darwin and others found quite different ways to be inspired.

And then there was Constantine Rafinesque. I won't say Rafinesque ties everything up in a neat little package, but he and Emma Martin (see §6 below) are more revealing of what this new view of nature, as Chambers called it, meant to a lot of people.

Although my interest here is in Rafinesque's evolutionary ideas, it has to be said that this was not his main significance to his contemporaries and near contemporaries. Evolution gets a couple of pages in Richard Call's 1895 biography and scattered references in T.J. Fitzpatrick's 1911 book. What they truly loved about Rafinesque (for those that did love him) was his passion for nature and for being the first to describe so many species of plants and animals. Of his *Ichthyologia Ohiensis* (1820), a catalogue of the fish species of the Ohio River and its tributaries, Richard Call in his preface to an 1899 reprint of the book, said, "It is a book redolent of the sweetness of Nature, rather than of the dust of libraries" (36).

This was said by an admirer, and quite properly so, one who wished to correct the circumstance that "Rafinesque had not been treated always fairly by his contemporaries" (Call, *Life*, v). His detractors played up his mistakes, his occasionally making things up, and his passion for identifying new, previously undiscovered species, some of which turned out to be not so new after all. He was derided probably more often than he was praised. 'Eccentric' is the word that comes up most often in descriptions of his person and his work. One writer pointed out that his name rhymes with grotesque and picturesque, "and both these adjectives fit him closely as the unique character of American botanical history" (quoted in Fitzpatrick, 53). 'Grotesque' is going way overboard. I would rather say he was picturesque and picturesque, spun in either a likable way or less likable for those who were not fond of his eccentricities.

Asa Gray, later one of Darwin's chief American supporters, in an 1841 essay was particularly scornful of him (see Fitzpatrick, 47-48, for lengthy excerpts from this essay). Gray pointed out that his "passion for establishing new genera and species, appears to have become a complete monomania" (47). He found it extraordinary that Rafinesque would claim new species derive from existing forms (54). Darwin called him a "Poor Naturalist" in an 1860 letter to Hooker (CCD 8.541), even as he was preparing to quote Rafinesque favorably in his "Historical Sketch" on his view of "varieties ... gradually becoming species." How poor could his observations have been if he was capable of seeing something most naturalists had missed? Richard Call

deplored "the tendency to ignore all of his work because some of it was peculiarly bad" and hoped this "shall give way to a more generous treatment" (*Life*, ix).

Call notes that his energy was "widely scattered" ("Sketch", 22). There is no way I can do justice to the man. For a good, recent review of his life, see John Sullivan's colorful essay. Rafinesque does not have a lot to say about the process of evolution, which he never gives a name to, unless it is perpetual mutability or the law of change. He never uses 'generation' or 'development'. As with almost every other early evolutionist, the words 'evolve' or 'evolution' do pop up once or twice. For example, he gives us, "... living swarms/ Of active moving bodies, gradually/ Evolving from each other, thro' the love/ Of reproduction and of changes ..." (*World*, 1284-87). But evolving never becomes a fixed term. (Just as Spencer used 'the theory of evolution' once in an 1852 essay, not to be picked up again until after Darwin's book.)

Rafinesque did not produce one masterful opus on his view of nature. His ideas are delivered in many smaller works. But if he did produce one work close to a masterpiece, it would be his epic poem, *The World, or, Instability*. It may not be great poetry, but if you put that out of your mind and read it as an essay, which is essentially what it is, it is quite extraordinary.

Whenever Rafinesque offers his essential evolutionary belief, he always says the same thing: Varieties become species and every species was once a variety. That's what he said in the quote offered by Darwin. It is what he says in Notes 22 and 48 of *The World*, which I quoted in §3 of this chapter. Thus: "Every species was once a variety, and every variety is the embryo of a new species" (Note 22). In another book, he includes an extract from a letter he wrote in 1832 to Dr. John Torrey (who would later be one of the executors of his will) in which he says:

There is a tendency to deviations and mutations through plants and animals by gradual steps at remote irregular periods. This is part of the great universal law of PERPETUAL MUTABILITY in every thing. Thus it is needless to dispute and differ about new G. [Genera] Sp.[Species] and varieties. Every variety is a deviation which becomes a Sp. as soon as it is permanent by reproduction. [*Herbarium*, 11; his emphases]

In a narrow sense, that is pretty much the extent of Rafinesque's contribution to evolution. He never shows any interest in Lamarck's suggestion that changes in external circumstances, the environment, somehow precipitate changes in organisms as they adapt to the new environment.

Change was the general theme for all these development theorists. Nothing

is standing still, everything in nature is on the move---*la marche de la nature*, as Lamarck had said. All is in transition. Rafinesque's "perpetual mutability" is a strong reminder of Erasmus Darwin's "all animals undergo perpetual transformations" (*Zoonomia*, 1.502). David Hume was prior to both of them, telling his readers in Part VIII of *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* that the world was in "perpetual agitation", there is a "perpetual restlessness to matter", and "Every individual is perpetually changing ..." Chambers gave us: "Species of sea mollusks, of reptiles, and of mammifers, have been changed again and again ..." (*Vestiges*, 120). Erasmus Darwin constantly referred to a never-ending process of mutation: "change eternal" (*Temple*, II, 47), "the perpetual mutability of the forms of matter" (note on II, 43), and the globe in "a perpetual state of mutation" (note on III, 411).

The lesson to be learned from naturalists like Rafinesque. Erasmus Darwin, and Lamarck is that the best observers of nature would inevitably come to a conclusion that animals and plants change as they descend from parent types, and thus we get new species gradually forming. Evolution was an almost logical deduction. Almost. Not every careful observer would come to that conclusion. But for all the ones I have cited here, they were excited by the thought that creation did not just happen once a long time ago. Creation is a process that never ends; it still goes on today.

Because he was following in the footsteps of these naturalists, Darwin will occasionally give a prominent place to the mere fact of change in his Notebooks: "the principle of incessant change in her [nature's] offspring" (C 53); "Every individual fœtus would reproduce its kind was it not for the necessity of some change" (D178); he calls it "a monstrous conclusion, that every organ is become fixed. & cannot vary.---which all facts show to be absurd" (E 151). But he was also capable of emphasizing the importance of stability in these Notebooks. In C 53, nature "has invented all kinds of plan to insure stability." Incessant change, as opposed to stability, is a principle which comes to the fore only sometimes. In the Torn Apart Notebook 41, he denies there is an innate power of change and he denies it again in the sixth edition of *Origin* (137). He is clearly out to distinguish his own ideas from the central belief of the preceding evolutionists. Stability, especially of the dominant species, became even more important to the mature Darwin. That is why the idea of continuing creation makes only a rare appearance in Darwin's early work, as at C 204 where he says that anyone who says "creation is at end" is "bold. I will venture to say unphilosophical" (and bear in mind that the last term means unscientific).

Rafinesque takes the opposite of Darwin's mature approach and puts his belief in the title of his poem, *The World, or, Instability*, just as Darwin put

his beliefs in the full title of his book. As already noted, Rafinesque's poem should be read as an essay, bold in its own right. The editor in the preface says, "The great aim of this poem is to prove that *Instability* is as much a law of nature, as attraction or gravitation; that it rules both the physical and moral worlds, is equally wise and beneficent ..." (5). Rafinesque might just as well have said creativity is a law of nature. *The unstable nature of the world is a sign that creation is still taking place in our time. Creationists believed creation happened only once. The new naturalists believed creation is a force so strong and so intrinsic to nature that it does not stop.* Creation happens slowly over a long period of time, not all at once by a fiat that exhausts itself in one shot. The energy of creation has staying power. The world is still being transformed because everything in it is unstable or mutable. It was precisely *that* which frightened professional scientists of the time. If human cultures were an outgrowth of nature, then it meant that culture and social classes were not fixed and final either.

For Rafinesque, God "Ever gives new forms" (*World*, 1963); "... the power divine inactive/ Can never be, creation still proceeds" (2245-46). That's a good way to put it. Divine power or nature's power, whichever way you choose to look at it, never becomes inactive. Why would it? Why would God or nature burst forth once in a fit of creative energy and then shut down? It makes no sense as a premise from which to study and understand the world. No wonder Chambers insisted that this new view did more justice to God's divinity and sublimity. It's also an amazing, brilliant idea. But, of course, there are different ways one can go with this premise. You can seek to understand nature with an intention to control and manipulate it or you can choose to appreciate your humble place in the whole and maintain its harmony.

Rafinesque may have been more explicit about "creation still proceeds," but it's there in all the other early advocates of the transmutation of species. Erasmus Darwin sees "a perpetual state of mutation and improvement" (*Temple*, note on III, 411) and "the production of new organization" (Additional Note for I, 227). 'Improvement' and 'new' simply mean that the creation of new kinds of organisms goes on. "With finer links the vital chain extends/ And the long line of Being never ends" (II, 19-20). He is talking about the variety of life on this planet, produced by reproduction. What reproduction gives us is "Each new Descendant with superior powers" (II, 33). We are getting new creatures all the time. Chambers tell us that we "*see life begin, and go on ... The great fact ... is, that the organic creation ... was not placed upon the earth at once;---it observed a PROGRESS*" (*Explanations*, 31; his emphases). And it's not over yet. Even with respect to

human beings, our race is probably only "the initial ... type." It is not improbable "there [are] yet to be species superior to us in organization" (*Vestiges*, 276; I have only changed his question, which he answers in the affirmative, into a statement). Humanity is still a work in progress. We haven't yet seen the end of God creating man. Creation is not a one-off event.

The idea of perpetual creation was beginning to take hold with more than just these proponents of developing species. Where Rafinesque proposed that divine power can never be inactive, another writer, quoted by Chambers, called it "unremitting energy." In a long section added to the 1853 tenth edition of *Vestiges*, offering various authorities in support of his views, Chambers quotes a naturalist named Doddridge who refers to "a perpetual divine agency" and proposes that "... an unremitting energy ... greatly exalts our idea of God, instead of depressing it; and, therefore, by the way, is so much the more likely to be true" (quoting from 11th edition, ii). That is exactly what Chambers thought. A continually creating God is more sublime, not less, and more realistic.

For all of them, continuing creation is connected to their sense of holism. They see all of nature as a whole organized being in constant motion. This is Erasmus Darwin's "webs with webs unite" (*Temple*, I, 244), "Life's subtle woof in Nature's loom is wove" (I, 252), "Rings join to rings" (I, 255), "the living web expands" (I, 259), and "connect the whirling world!" (I, 20). As Chambers had it, "LIFE is everywhere ONE" (*Explanations*, 185). One life force and one set of organic laws running through everything. Also, do not forget Chambers's image of nature as a pregnant woman going through stages (*Vestiges*, 223; though he may have only meant to apply this to each species, it clearly can mean more, as he says that "the whole plan of being is as symmetrical as the plan of a house," 232; a view of the whole is never far from Chambers's mind). In the above expression of God giving new forms, as used by Rafinesque (*World*, 1963), the more complete quote is: "Ever gives new forms,/ To beautify the whole by pleasing change." He once called the earth an "organized animal rolling in space" (in Sullivan, 188). Sullivan does not give a reference, but Rafinesque says pretty much the same thing in a passage that begins "Has not the earth her limbs and organs like/ The smaller bodies living there?" (*World*, 1325-26). Thus, the earth "moves and lives' thus has a soul" (1333).

Lamarck too saw nature as "that immense assemblage of various existences and bodies ... [and] should be regarded as a whole made up of parts, with a purpose that is known to its Author alone, but at any rate not for the sole benefit of any single part" (Lamarck, 180). This assemblage was in constant motion, "an eternal cycle of movements and changes controlled by

laws" (ibid.). The constant change was a sign that the individual parts were not that important: "Since each part must necessarily change and cease to exist to make way for the formation of another, each part has an interest which is contrary to that of the whole, and if it reasons, it finds that the whole is badly made" (ibid.). The gradual gradations between species and genera means that we have great "difficulty in determining what should be regarded as a species, and ... finding the boundaries ..." and consequently, that "everything is more or less merged into everything else" (37). This is much like Erasmus Darwin's webs unite, living web, and whirling world. This was holistic evolution. One life force, one set of organic laws.

Again, because Charles Darwin was following these transmutationists, a holistic sense of nature can be found in his Notebooks. He is perhaps at his most holistic when he writes, "There is one living spirit ... which assumes a multitude of forms ... There is one thinking sensible principle ... which is modified into endless forms ... We see thus Unity ... & the community of mind" (C 210-11). A little further on, "... there is nothing more elementary than that complex nature itself with which our speculations must end as well as begin" (C 218; it is not clear if he is quoting someone else here, but even if he is, he finds it interesting). We must reason from and to the whole. That is pure holism.

When Darwin refers to a "system of great harmony" (D 74), the editors think he is being ironic and putting down a creationist idea (Note 74-1). Was he being ironic when he said "... generation connected with whole system, as if there was, a superabundance of life, like tendency to budding, which wishes to throw itself off" (D 176) or when he has "sometimes speculated" about the "absolute quantity of vitality in the World" (E 85) or about "All parts of one great system" (Mac 56; all caps in original)? I don't think any of this was intended ironically. He was at one time fascinated by things like budding, a special kind of reproduction, in which the whole seems to be implicit in a little speck, or a crab producing a new claw (D 130), or skin growing over a wound (D 131, 167), or a tiny embryo producing a Newton as if the whole of Newton were already present in the embryo (D 131), or seeds adapted for long transportation as if they knew there is a "whole world" out there (D 74). This last implies, as he says, "system of great harmony." He may be restating someone else when he says "each particle of animal must have structure of whole comprehended in itself" (D 130) but he seems to be at least in partial agreement with it as it is supported by this assortment of a wonderful class of facts (D 131). At D 166, he connects "knowledge of the part" with "what is good for the whole" and finds there is "sympathy" in parts for each other, and then adds "*sympathy* in human frame" (D 167; his emphasis).

In summary, "we may be all netted together" (B 232). He was tentative about it. Darwin did not maintain an interest in this. A bit of it survives in the last sentence of *Origin*, maybe, which is the most often quoted part of that book (and it was already there in the 1842 and 1844 essays), but this is not what animates *Origin*. The driving motor of *The Origin of Species* is the system of groups subordinated to groups, a ranking and hierarchy of life, not a sympathetic wholeness---a ranking based on competitive skill at survival ("competitive highness" as he calls it in a letter to Hooker; CCD 7.229; see my discussion in Ch.6, §2). Subordinate, sub-groups, groups under groups, etc. are mentioned about 28 times in *Origin*. Natural selection explains "the more dominant groups beat[ing] the less dominant" (*Origin*, 516) and also "... natural selection, which results from the struggle for existence ... explains that great and universal feature in the affinities of all organic beings, namely, their subordination in group under group" (477; cf. 83, 454).

Hierarchy is a world where individual rank is more important than being part of the whole. A hierarchy is not a world where "everything is more or less merged into everything else," as Lamarck put it. There are grades in which individuals and groups are maintained as distinct, separate, and apart from each other---not merged, but disconnected. The earliest evolutionists remained truer to the evolutionary idea that organic beings are separated from each other by insensibly small steps and blend into each other, so that their deep connections remain intact. Darwin believed this only in the abstract. He was more attracted to the traditional and conservative idea that there are distinct rankings from lower to higher---everything is subordinated, not connected in a kind of equality (differences being insensibly small from creature to creature). Hierarchy gives us disconnections, which is fundamental to racism, whereas holism gives us connections ("everything more or less merged"), which is fundamental to anti-racism. Hierarchy and holism could not be further apart.

As we've seen before, Rafinesque was not fond of competition. It generated too much greed and injustice. He probably accepted a certain amount of hierarchy in life, but he would have objected to it as a worldview to apply to the fundamentals of nature. Rafinesque, like Chambers, was not all that interested in the physical cause of transmutation. He was more absorbed in the consequences and implications of the process. What conclusions could we draw about life, what natural system of religion would it give us? Constant change or instability, a creative process that never ends, organized within a larger system---this all implied tolerance and love as the overriding principles of life as far as he was concerned. Rafinesque hated cruelty and intolerance. "Yet never dream to make all men the same/ In anything. It is beyond the

bounds/ Of possibility ..." (*World*, 3789-91). If the whole is putting its parts through a continual process of change, then the least that this demands of us is to tolerate change and love the variety, the constantly changing variety, that nature gives us.

This is evident throughout *The World, or Instability*, but it is more explicit in some places than others:

'Twas wise and kind for him [God] to give us change
In mind and matter, creeds, opinions, rites;
As a sweet law to modify, improve,
Adorn and beautify the whole of life.
From this good law, let men at last receive
The hint of toleration. ample full
Equal to liberty, in ev'ry case.
[2253-59]

There it is, all put together in a few lines. The whole is overlooking this system of diversity and respect for each part. A couple of lines after this, he says, "Diversity controls the whole in pleasure,/ Dispelling gloomy uniformity." Diversity, instability, change, were the great virtues of nature for Rafinesque. The idea that everything stays the same was gloomy. You can almost hear him say, as the earth spins and evolves, It's all good. For Chambers too: A nature which does not change through time would be an "endless monotony" (*Vestiges*, 385.)

Some of my favorite lines from Rafinesque are not his own but they do represent his thinking. They come from the school of Pythagoras and appeared in the one and only issue of his magazine *Western Minerva* (1821). Some of his fellow citizens of Lexington, Kentucky objected to his characterization of them as ignorant and uncouth and had the magazine suppressed. In the 1949 republication, E.D. Merrill called it an example of early Americana. It is quite a hodge-podge on a range of subjects in the arts and sciences. The first entry is a collection of one hundred pieces of political wisdom from "Pythagoras and his Disciples," translated by Benjamin Franklin. The first three are these:

1. This world is but an atom, a small rolling ball. Let the plurality of worlds teach us humility.
2. The most powerful nation is but an ant hill, a bee hive. There is room for many on earth.
3. It is madness to dispute and fight for a few acres of ground, or for an unjust superiority. Let justice prevail.

"There is room for many on earth." It perfectly captures much of what Rafinesque's poem *The World* and holistic thinking are about. The above lines read like an anti-colonialist tract. You can see why they appealed to him. If all you knew of evolution was Charles Darwin's exposition of it, you would never guess that evolution and anti-colonialism could be intertwined like this.

No. 39 in these bits of Pythagorean wisdom is "Where there is inequality of wealth, it is almost useless to speak of equality of rights." No. 61: "Tell to conquerors how many worlds there are to conquer." No. 69: "Beware of conquests, they are social robberies." And here is some real dynamite in No. 78, "All nations are equal, the earth on which they live is round, in order to prevent any pretext of precedence" (I think Tavis Smiley would particularly love that one) and in No. 98, "Do not despise other nations, else you will be despised by them. They are your equals. Avoid national jealousies, they lead to war." No. 100 ain't bad either: "Nations! do you want to know your friends? they are those who tell you the truth in spite of national pride and prejudices."

I have been selective in these quotations and I should point out that Rafinesque nowhere expressly agrees with any of this, but it is clear that most of these thoughts fit with his sense of evolution. The Pythagorean "room for many on earth" is so close to Rafinesque's sensibility. It is the opposite of Darwin's vision of the "dominant tend to become still more dominant." Rafinesque included Pythagoras for a reason in *Western Minerva* and that reason would have a lot to do with his feeling for the meaning of evolution. He was not the only evolutionist who connected the spirit of Pythagoras to the spirit of an ever evolving nature. Erasmus Darwin did it too.

Grandfather Darwin identified Pythagoras's doctrine as "the perpetual transmigration of matter from one body to another" and drew the conclusion that "all creatures thus became related to each other" (*Temple*, note on IV, 417). In verse form, it came out this way (IV, 425-28):

... the moral plan,
That man should ever be the friend of man;
Should eye with tenderness all the living forms,
His brother-emmetts, and his sister-worms.

(Emmet was an older word for ant.) Yes, something happened before Charles Darwin. They were striving to create a world (all things netted) where science and justice were united. They didn't get there (there was too much opposition), but they kept trying.

The original proponents of generation or development not only argued that species are mutable, but contended that they are *perpetually* mutable. Change cannot be stopped. It is *natural*. It is just what nature would lead us to expect. It might even be *a priori*, meaning it is a logical, eternal truth that has long been hidden from us by the powers of conservative academia and was only waiting to be revealed. Revolution did not frighten the champions of the development hypothesis. They welcomed it. The French revolution would inspire Erasmus Darwin to publish *Zoonomia*. Development theory appealed to all kinds of radicals---freethinkers, socialists, atheists, feminists. Atheist newspapers promoted an interest in the theory. (James Secord is very good on all this; especially see his Chapters 9 and 10.) If everything is in constant transformation, then kings, priests, and other authorities do not permanently rule over us. They can be overthrown. Nature would want us to do that because stability is unnatural, instability is natural. Rafinesque would not quite agree. He hated the idea of violent overthrow. For him, the ideal way to achieve justice is when the rulers self-correct their injustices. But the basic lesson of evolutionary theory before it came to be given this name was that uniformity is dreary and change is beautiful, as Rafinesque might have put it. No wonder conservatives (and most scientists were deeply conservative) hated the theory.

Emma Martin was a British feminist who embraced the development hypothesis. She started out as an ardent Christian, handing out Bibles and religious tracts in the street, challenging atheists and socialists to debates. Soon she would reverse that and challenge religious representatives. A lecture by one prominent socialist of the day, Alexander Campbell, in 1839 and her own independent studies turned her mind around. She took up the cause of socialism and the rights of women. She said her change did not come overnight but was due to "the result of calm investigation." (For more on all this and her own development, see Taylor, 131-35.) She was a passionate speaker, attracting huge crowds, physically attacked on several occasions and at other times chased by crowds. She died in 1851, just shy of forty. In the last years of her life, one of her favorite lecture topics was teaching women to learn about their own bodies and take control of their lives away from male doctors (see Taylor, 155).

She became a more ardent atheist than most socialists were and lost some support from them. She pushed things to the limit, especially her belief in education and reason. In 1844, she published a tract, *First Conversation on the Being of a God*, in which she argued for development theory. Four thousand copies were distributed in the streets before *Vestiges* appeared. It is in the form of a dialogue between a Theist and a Querist. In one section

(incorrectly labeled Theist, when it should be Querist), she explains:

But suppose, we discover that the progression of development in general is matched by the progression in the development of individual being; for instance, every human being has passed through a variety of stages, each more advanced and complex than [*sic*] the previous one ... We know this is the case with the individual, may it not have been the case with the species also.
[*First*, 5]

The embryo, she also says here, starts out as an animalcule, then resembles a "fish, and eventually becomes man." The main purpose of this pamphlet is to argue for materialism---the material world has a certain vitality in it which suffices to explain all of creation "without the intervention of an intelligent designer" (3). She goes on to argue that indeed man has developed from "the meanest insect" (6). We don't see new creations happening, "but they may nevertheless take place" (*ibid.*). After *Vestiges* and *Explanations* gained public attention, she gave a series of lectures on them in 1846. An editorial in one newspaper suggested that her followers resembled escaped inmates from the monkey ward at the Zoological Gardens (Secord, 318-19).

This was the kind of thing that the protectors of science were afraid of. Novices, in their view, were using science to achieve radical social change. Why not, if all is in transformation? In another of her pamphlets, *God's Gifts and Man's Duties* (1843), Martin wrote, "I do not think that it can be *truly* said that there are *defects* in any department of nature ... [these defects] are not aberrations [*sic*] from the laws of nature, but *portions* of it," and hence, she argues it is not really a defect, if it is part of the constitution of a thing (*God's Gifts*, 9). She seems to be aiming for the same spirit of toleration that was Rafinesque's concern. "Go into the wide fields of nature, and by the process of an inductive philosophy, collect data which will teach you how to banish crime and poverty, and cause you no longer to be the victims of kings and priests" (*God's Gifts*, 16). This was not what scientists wanted to hear. For Martin, all science had a social usefulness. Her main interest in development theory was that it was in accord with her atheism. It demonstrated that you did not need God to explain life on earth. But the development hypothesis was also part of her larger interest in education and science which she believed could be very useful to the downtrodden. Development theory meant liberation, both from religion and the backward politics of secularists.

Why was development theory so appealing to the working class? It meant everybody could develop and become something new. If the life of the individual recapitulated the history of species, as most development theorists

believed, then the development of advanced forms of life in species gave hope that the individual could follow that path of advancement. Nothing was fixed and final. With the fixity of species giving way to ideas of transmutation, individuals could transform themselves as well.

If nothing is fixed, then life is a lottery and nature might favor those who took a chance. Chambers saw a certain amount of randomness in nature, just as some later evolutionists would emphasize, but, unlike Darwin and others, he saw it as a true randomness, that is, one that did not favor the rich, the powerful, the dominant and the strong. All had an equal chance in this new view that Chambers propounded. "The system has the fairness of a lottery, in which every one has the like chance of drawing the prize" (*Vestiges*, 377). Even if life handed you a disadvantage (or, a defect, as Emma Martin might have said), it might make up for it in another way, he continued. *This was not survival of the fittest, but survival of the doggedly industrious, regardless of fitness or unfitness or defects, the survival of the never-quitters, the ones who roll with the punches, the ones who gamble that life might hand them a blessing one day.* Life is full of surprises, like a fish evolving into a human being. Who would have thunk it?

There is a hopefulness to the view of life expressed by Chambers, Rafinesque, and Martin, that did not sit well with the powerful who thought their job was to keep people down. This message of optimism was not founded on a dream, but on gaining solid knowledge of how nature works. With thoughtfully acquired information, you could accomplish almost anything. When Martin said, "I would rather give my daughters a set of physiological and obstetric books for their perusal than allow them to read the Levitical Law ..." (in Taylor, 155), she was not thumbing her nose at the Bible or religion so much as at those who controlled knowledge. Development theory represented liberation from all this crap (for want to a better word). No wonder the powers of the day did not like it.

In the last pages of *Explanations*, Chambers stressed the liberating effects of this new view of nature. He tries to take some kind of logical path from development to solving social problems, but mainly, it is simply the force of good knowledge which will lead us to a better world. (I will explain both below.) Like the equally working class Wallace who followed him, social betterment meant a lot to Chambers. In Wallace's case, in a letter to *Nature* (Jan. 13, 1870), he wrote "though I love nature much I love justice more," as he argued that science should not receive government funded support because he believed that science was mainly run for the benefit of the upper classes and he did not think the government had a right to help one class over another. (Bear in mind that government funding would potentially have been

immensely helpful to Wallace who always had to struggle to make a living.) Every scientific problem and solution had social implications. Studying the atmosphere was not an abstract problem to Wallace. It had relevance in working class neighborhoods where children suffered the effects of air pollution. He concluded Chapter XIII of *Man's Place in the Universe* (1903), "For very shame do not let us say 'We *cannot* arrange matters so that our people may all breathe unpolluted, unpoisoned air!'" (his emphasis). Also, recall his argument that women should be given economic independence and control of whom to choose for a marriage partner (see previously, Ch. 7, §5). In a sense, Wallace carried on the legacy of Chambers and all the early developmentalists.

The logic that Chambers tries to follow in the final pages of *Explanations* goes something like this (some of which I previously reported): The new view of nature "extends the principle of humanity to the meaner creatures also ... [and this is so because we are various parts of] LIFE [which] is everywhere ONE ... We are bound to respect the rights of animals as of our human associates ... even their feelings ... *The rule of force and of cruelty has hitherto prevailed* in this department of the world's economy as between man and man; but the day of true knowledge will bring a better rule here also ..." (185; emphasis added). True knowledge will set us free from force and cruelty. (This is very much like Refined, and Martin too for that matter.) Humanity has a humble place in the whole system (186).

Moreover, as creatures, we all face extinction: "It may be ... that there is not only a term of life to the individual, but to the species" and humans too may become extinct (187). "The unit of each individuality, great or humble in social regard [the wealthy have no special rules of their own; development theory is a great equalizer], takes a fixed place in that march of life which rose unreckoned ages ago, and now goes to a 'weird,' [Scottish for fate or destiny] which no wizard has pretended to know" (187). All of time, past and future, becomes "one intense Present" (188). This is a thorough-going holism. No wizard could possibly know what it all means, so let each man and woman play their part with humility and kindness, and trust that it adds up to something benevolent.

Whatever you make of that logic, Chambers's basic faith, like Emma Martin's, is that knowledge pursued with honest conviction can bring us "Daily health and comfort" (183) and might alleviate such ills as the death of children who die from "ignorance of the rules of health" (183). We need better knowledge of "the pestilences ravaging the haunts of poverty ... the neglect by the rich of the haplessness of their penury and disease-stricken neighbours ... the canker of discontent and crime, which eats into the vitals of a nation in

consequence of an unlimited indulgence of acquisitiveness ... [and] degradation and misery which follow wars entered upon in the wantonness of pride, greed, and vanity" (184). All this is from *Explanations* but it's in the same spirit as *Vestiges*. There is, he is arguing, a law of life which dictates that from evil, evil comes. Sow bad seeds and you will get bad crops. What else should we expect?

The law of development teaches us that "every act, thought, and emotion of [men] helps to determine their own future ..." (184). Screw others and it will come back to haunt you---which is precisely his argument against slavery, war, and one class in society taking advantage of other classes in *Vestiges* (382-83) where he says, "an individual, a party, a people, can no more act unjustly with safety, than I could with safety place my leg in the track of a coming train ..." (383). Unlike Darwin, *Chambers does not treat slavery as an isolated evil but classifies it together with other human evils---like war and a social class acting to "grasp at some advantages injurious to the other sections of the people ..."* (382).

You could call this the philosophy of what-goes-round-comes-round. This is the fruit of holistic thinking. One part cannot do bad without other parts suffering. It is exactly what Granville Sharp believed. You don't have to believe in evolution to adopt this way of thinking. For most people, evolution and payback for your misdeeds have nothing to do with each other. But for Chambers and Rafinesque and probably for most of these early evolutionists, there is a connection. His belief in what-goes-round-comes-round is founded on his development hypothesis. As I've already said, Chambers believed in the connectedness of all things more than Darwin did. Life is one and he meant it quite literally. All creatures are soul mates and genetic mates (he probably would have said DNA mates had he known about DNA), even if they don't know it---which is why if one mistreats any other one, the first one is going to feel it sooner or later. (He uses 'genetic history' in *Vestiges*, 5th, 236, and 'genetic lines' in *Explanations*, 77.) A shock wave set off by any organism will affect all the others, including reverberating back to bite the first one in the ass, if it was a bad deed. Justice and evolution go hand in hand---for Chambers, that is. One cannot say that Darwin saw it the same way. Natural selection drove him in a very different direction, or it may be that Darwin was doing the driving and he took natural selection in another direction, rather than it taking him.

If these are the kinds of things the original notion of development or evolution inspired in people, conservative scientists wanted no part of it. When Robert Chambers wrote, "LIFE is everywhere ONE. The inferior animals are only less advanced types of that form of being perfected in

ourselves" (*Explanations*, 185), this was not what scientists of the time wanted to hear anymore than they wanted to hear what Emma Martin had to offer. When he continued, "We are bound to respect the rights of animals as of our human associates. We are bound to respect their feelings" (*ibid.*), this would not have been to the liking of most scientists. Chambers may have believed in progression, but man's higher state only gave us a designated place in the order of nature. More than Darwin, he believed man's place was "humble beyond all statement of a degree" (186). Individuals have a finite life span, so too any species, and even the current species of man will be "transferred to the list of extinct forms" (187). He does not mean the inferior races will become extinct, though he probably believed they too would disappear. He especially means civilized Europeans will one day see their day in the sun at an end. It might seem odd, but it fills him with hope.

All the great things about human life, he mused, "the thrill of the lover, the mother's smile on cherub infancy, the brightness of loving firesides, the aspirations of generous poets and philosophers ... the tear of penitence, the meekness of the suffering humble, the ardour of the strong in good causes ... that *all these* should be thus resolved; fleeting away whole 'equinoxes' into the past ... gone, lost, hushed in the stillness of a mightier death than has hitherto been thought of ... making of all the far-extending Past but one intense Present, glorious and everlasting!" (188; his emphasis). His hope is that there is a wholeness to the experience of life on this planet that achieves a kind of eternity (in God's eye?).

When Chambers asked in the first edition of *Vestiges* (262), with his emphasis, "*What place or status is assigned to man in the new natural system?*", he was asking a question that scientists did not want anyone to ask. When he answered, "... we do not differ more from the simiadae [monkeys] than the bats do from the lemurs" (266), he was giving an answer scientists could not bear to hear. When he removed theology from consideration--- "Man, then, considered zoologically, and without regard to the distinct character assigned to him by theology, simply takes his place as the type of all types of the animal kingdom ..." (272)---he was stepping on the toes of all the authorities then in existence. And when he concludes, "The probability may now be assumed that the human race sprung from one stock ..." (305; cf. 278, 283, 294), that was just too much. Recall that Ernst Mayr believed Lamarck was more courageous in tackling head on the question of man's development from the apes than Darwin was in *Origin*. What would be so wrong with aiming similarly appreciative words towards Chambers? He was just as brave as Lamarck.

More than Darwin, Chambers preached our oneness and connectedness

with the rest of the world. We are all bound so much in one net that if we fully realized this, we would have to respect the feelings and rights of other creatures. That was further than Darwin would go, who believed that the benefit of animals to mankind was the chief consideration. Chambers was opening up not only new possibilities for an understanding of the past, but new possibilities for the future. If development is a law of nature, then it is still going on and we can expect to see something better than the current human species evolve. "The present [human] race, rude and impulsive as it is, is perhaps the best adapted to the present state of things in the world; but the external world goes through slow and gradual changes, which may leave it in time a much serener field of experience. There may then be occasion for a nobler type of humanity ..." (*Vestiges*, 276). That new type might be a "species superior to us in organization, purer in feeling, more powerful in device and act, and *who shall take a rule over us!*" (ibid.; emphasis added). Possibilities in the past and in the future---that was the major theme for Chambers. Possibilities meant that we could envisage something potentially better than what exists now and which will rule over us one day. This was not what any scientist wanted to hear. Radicals like Emma Martin might want to hear it, but not conservative scientists.

What they wanted to hear was that all was in order as it is and would remain so. That was what Darwin gave them. Fear not theories of development or evolution because it is on our side ('our' being that of the upper classes). Not only did Darwin prematurely state at the end of Chapter II of *Origin* that the dominant will remain dominant and become more so, but he introduced another premature thought in the last sentence: "And thus, the forms of life throughout the universe become divided into groups subordinate to groups." That is exactly what the upper strata of a class society like Britain wanted to hear. Not only here on our planet but throughout the universe. If that is not enough audacity for you, Darwin extends it throughout all time in the first sentence of Chapter XIII. Somehow he knows that 'groups subordinate to groups' has been the rule since "the first dawn of life." (In general, Darwin was averse to theorizing about the origins of life, but he makes a grand exception for this point.) It is as if Europe were out to colonize the whole universe and all of time.

Darwin put a stop to the liberal direction of development theory, or tried to. He saw the mutability of species just as much as Chambers, Lamarck, and his own grandfather did, but he delivered it in a way that made it safe for the upper classes, the rulers of society. The dominant will remain dominant. The class or group structure will not be disturbed. Evolution gives us change but very, very gradually, and even most of that change is to entrench the dominant

and make them more dominant still. Some people would interpret Darwin's theory of evolution to promote liberal causes, but that was a holdover from the way development theory had been used before Darwin. Darwin was not in favor of it. He was writing in the context of a time when other ways of interpreting evolution were being advanced and were frightening many people of his society. He speaks to that context. And that context included an intense dislike of any change of the ruling order. Darwin shared that feeling.

In the sixth edition of *Origin*, Darwin tries to shut down an emphasis on change for the sake of change by putting distance between his theory and those who would insist on the value of time and change. Recall Erasmus Darwin's "Nature rises on the wings of Time" (*Temple*, II, 36). Here is Charles Darwin: "The mere lapse of time by itself does nothing, either for or against natural selection. I state this because it has been erroneously asserted that the element of time has been assumed by me to play an all-important part in modifying species, as if all the forms of life were necessarily undergoing change through some innate law" (6th, 137). (In the Torn Apart Notebook 41, he also stated "no *innate* power of change.") But perpetual mutability or change was practically an innate law for his grandfather, for Rafinesque and David Hume, for Lamarck, Chambers, and Emma Martin as well. They celebrated the fact (a fact for them) that nothing is static in nature, that all is in transition, that the new is constantly being born as the old passes away. Darwin did not. It was unwelcome in his neighborhood.

At the beginning of his evolutionary thinking, Darwin was reluctant to give in to this idea of a plenitude of change. He originally underestimated the frequency of mutations (see *1844*, 59, text and n1). He would change his mind about how often mutations occurred by the time he got to *Origin*, but he still held back from making his a theory of constant transformation. One could say he was more interested in controlled change, even directed change, in favor of the already dominant, whereas previous evolutionists were more topsy-turvyists. Someone like Chambers could see in the development hypothesis the fairness of a true lottery in which all had a chance, not just the strong and dominant.

Darwin preferred stability in nature and in society (no lottery, no randomness, nothing that had the potential to upset stability). Darwin's thoughts about this would be more effective---they would come to reign supreme as the *only* interpretation of the mutability of species---if we could be made to forget the other interpretations that came before in evolutionary theory. History is in part the study of other possibilities (so Gould and many others have said). Possibilities were not what the upper class wanted. In James Secord's beautiful way of putting it, *The Origin of Species* became a make-

believe beginning. "Reference to the *Origin* erased the troubled past out of which this new order emerged, so that debate about the meaning of science could begin with a clean slate in 1859. It was, as George Eliot wrote in another context, 'the make-believe of a beginning'" (Secord, 514; the Eliot reference is to the epigraph of Chapter 1 of *Daniel Deronda*). That is exactly right. Secord notes that *Darwin did not so much create a crisis as resolve one*. Also exactly right. With this make-believe beginning, we forgot that theorizing about evolution could have taken another direction.

They needed a manufactured beginning because *the real beginning had been too threatening and dangerous*. From Erasmus Darwin to Lamarck and culminating in the hidden Robert Chambers, from whatever point you traced the actual beginning, the first thoughts on this had emphasized change, knowledge (always a threat to the powers that be), liberation from arbitrary tradition and control, freedom from fiat (special creation), an embrace of development according to rules one might grasp (they knew they didn't understand it all yet), and above all, *possibilities* of new things to come, meaning creation was not a done deal but an on-going process. Even the working class might become part of the creative march of life. There was so much to fear in all this. When Darwin proved you could have evolution and yet reimpose conventional order, the rulers of society breathed an immense sigh of relief. Creation is over and we're at the top.

How much Darwin contributed to this myth that his version was the real beginning of evolutionary theory is open to debate. The previously quoted letters to Baden Powell make clear that he was uncomfortable having his predecessors erased and tried to make up for it somewhat in the "Historical Sketch". But in the end, all he really acknowledged was that the general theory or idea of common descent had a long history. He continued to give the impression that the details proving the theory commenced with his work, that no one else had cleverly put much of this evidence together, and that only the implications he chose to draw from the mutability of species were valid. With a make-believe beginning, we could forget that once upon a time, there was another sensibility about evolution which saw the world of mutable life forms very differently and drew different conclusions.

Darwin's overall message was clear: If you are a small species (few in number), a weak species, an underdeveloped species, or a species with a toehold in a special environment, time is not on your side. There is no lottery for you. Time is on the side of us, the dominant and powerful and wide-ranging. Nothing can stop us, least of all evolution or nature which is all about us to begin with. He may have been right. I don't know. I really am an agnostic about these things, and I certainly do not want to challenge the

powerful, nor would I be foolish enough to stand in the way of nature. I am just saying that I do not believe it was an accident that Darwin reasoned like this and also happened to be a member of a conquering culture. Would someone from the underclass or a small, losing species have interpreted nature differently? Perhaps. We will never know if things turn out as Darwin predicted. Maybe my analyses should be erased even as they squeak their way to some kind of existence in the world.

There is surviving and there is surviving, isn't there? Darwin usually seems to have had in mind the overpowering survivors who wipe out other contenders (whether they were contending or not; Darwin's idea of survival is just indiscriminate destruction of any Others that might even remotely be considered competition). This is the preeminent kind of survival for Darwin. Call them the champions. Then there are the barely surviving, but surviving just the same, sneaky perhaps, maybe not even deserving to live, but slipping in under the radar of the powerful, and just managing to squeak by. They are always ready to flee. They enter and exit fleeing. What they do best is retreat. They have no home. Their home is wherever they hide their head for the moment, and if they are good at hiding, they survive and get to live another day. (Okay, yes, I'm talking about myself and a lot of others, but that is as legitimate as Darwin constantly celebrating his class triumphant.)

One of the lessons of evolution for Darwin seems to have been this: If you are a small species, you must learn to behave, you must learn to fit into your niche. Everything in its place. Sub-groups under groups. And if you're not in your place, you will be sent far, far away, and never come back. Your place will be extinction, extermination, the final resting place. The final forgetting place. That was a message the over-confident rulers could live with.

This was, I think, one of Darwin's major mistakes. The truth is that you can talk of extinction with confidence only in the past. Fossils give us a record of what was and is no longer. But you cannot apply extinction to the future. No one knows what the future holds. Darwin was much more correct when he wrote, "Natural selection acts only tentatively" (*Descent*, 167). Unfortunately, Darwin put more effort into making predictions about who would go extinct.

I don't want to glorify Chambers and make him out to seem a hundred times more humanitarian and progressive than Darwin. He had his faults and blind spots. I am just outlining some of the reasons why conservatives were so horrified by the theory of development in general and his expression of it in particular. They smelled social revolution in it. But Chambers was not perfect and certainly not a saint. If Darwin was unfair in many ways to Chambers, Chambers was just as unfair to Lamarck. He said Lamarck's "hypothesis of organic progress ... deservedly incurred much ridicule, although it contained a

glimmer of the truth" (*Vestiges*, 230). He too misinterpreted Lamarck as suggesting that animals could will changes in their structure which idea "we can only place ... with pity among the follies of the wise" (231). Chambers never acknowledged his debt to him and characterized his ideas in a very unjust manner. Why did he do it? Probably for the same reason that Darwin did it to him. He did not want to offend the scientific establishment and hoped to curry favor with them by deprecating someone who was considered an enemy.

One lesson to be taken away from this is that it is very hard to resist the repressive atmosphere in science. That atmosphere holds sway because too many people cave into it, and this is especially true of scientists who are trying to establish themselves. For all his independence, even Chambers at first tried to suck up to professional scientists and win a favorable opinion from them by putting down Lamarck. Did it help? Did it work? No. When he pointed out their failure to live up to ideal science, did that work? No. Sometimes you are doomed no matter what you do. For Darwin, it all worked out. He was to the manor born and because he was cautious in promoting his theory (which he could afford to do since Chambers had taken all the heat), his fellow scientists mostly rewarded him by considering and debating his theory in a way they had never done for Chambers, though both had offered more or less the same evidence for common descent (as far as the good evidence goes). Perhaps it was as Darwin said, there can only be one cock of the walk in science, and God forbid it should have been Chambers.

Another major fault in Chambers is that he made the same assumption that Darwin and almost everyone else made of the superiority of the Caucasian race (*Vestiges*, 306-10). "The Negro exhibits permanently the imperfect brain, projecting lower jaw, and slender bent limbs, of a Caucasian child ..." (307) and so too the other races which are in the stage of the arrested development of infants. "In the Caucasian or Indo-European family alone has the primitive organization been improved upon ... [all the other races] comprehending perhaps five-sixths of mankind, are degenerate" (309). The Caucasian race is the highest type (307). There is also an endorsement of imperialism as the Caucasians "fill up the waste places ... [and] supersede the imperfect nations already existing" (310; cf. 367).

But, like Wallace, Chambers was not stuck there. He was also capable of saying things that would upset a racist. He believed that facts showed "the possibility of a natural transition by generation from the black to the white complexion, and from the white to the black" (279). More significantly, the external conditions in which people lived greatly determined their appearance so that "elegant and commodious dwellings, cleanly habits, comfortable

clothing ... co-operate with food in increasing the elegance of a race of human beings" (281). If they are forced to live miserably, they will assume a degraded appearance. Skin color and other physical characteristics "are of a more superficial and accidental nature" (278; Darwin agreed with this).

In later editions of *Vestiges*, Chambers took this further and changed his mind about the presumed inferiority of savages. "The state of our knowledge of uncivilized nations makes us liable to error on this subject [how capable savages are of advancing towards civilization]" (11th, 243). He observes that all native races should not be classed into one group. He again emphasizes that the conditions of life make a great difference and that even European civilized people will revert to barbarism under the right conditions (245). He approvingly quotes a long passage from Charles Lyell in which, among other things, Lyell states that contact with white Europeans may have caused some tribes to regress and that these tribes would otherwise have attained a more refined civilization (11th, 244n; from Lyell, *Travels*, 2.39). Darwin read Lyell too, but only Chambers took these words to heart. Given the bad influence of white people, Lyell concludes, "what caution ought we not to observe when speculating on the inherent capacities of any other great member of the human family." Chambers concurs with the entire passage. That would not sit well with any die-hard racist.

One could say that Chambers is not a consistent racist, or equally, that he is not a consistent anti-racist. But the most important thing about him is that *he is not creating a system in which racism plays an integral role*. What racism we do find in him comes as a surprise. *Vestiges* is otherwise so large-spirited and so good-willed a book that we don't expect this harshness. In Darwin's case, it feels very much like he is building racism into the system. *Origin* prepares us for the imperialism and extermination we will encounter in *The Descent of Man*. In Chambers, it seems like an accident. It does not fit into his general optimism and benevolence for all creatures of God. You get the feeling he could easily remove it and end up being more consistent, if you pointed out to him the facts of native life and the justice of letting them live their own lives. As we just saw, Lyell's comments caused Chambers to reconsider his attitude towards other races.

Maybe because he did not know the causal mechanism of evolution, Chambers was free to be more hopeful, generous, buoyant than Darwin. The prejudices of racism and imperialism may momentarily affect his writing as they did with most European intellectuals, but they are not intrinsic to what he is doing. They are a temporary aberration. For the first evolutionists who did not know anything about natural selection, development was a wonderful thing. We are *all* part of this system of nature of evolving into higher and

better life forms. They saw direction in nature, which Darwin said he did not although that is debatable. (Upholding the dominant is a direction, however you try to spin it and slice it and dice it to make it seem random. It's random but it just so happens to work out mostly for the benefit of the dominant species?) A directed evolution told these early theorists that we may pass away, but we are playing our role in the grand scheme of development. Chambers does not single out the inferior races for the punishment of extinction. What fascinates him is that extinction will come for European Caucasians and that's great because who wouldn't love to be succeeded by something nobler than us. Just contemplating that future perfection is a joy. Extinction is not sad for Chambers. It's wonderful because LIFE is wonderful as it goes on evolving---and that we in our time (in 1844) could have been granted this magnificent insight is joy compounded.

I do not exaggerate the sense of wonder and joy in Chambers's writings. He was thrilled to be learning new things all the time. Studying the history of the earth was rapture to him. "*A time when there was no life* is first seen. We then *see life begin, and go on*; but whole ages elapsed before man came to crown the work of nature. *This is a wonderful revelation to have come upon the men of our time* [my emphasis; the previous emphases are his], and one which the philosophers of the days of Newton could never have expected to be vouchsafed ... [Organic life was not created all at once.]---it observed a PROGRESS" (*Explanations*, 31). Notice in particular *what he is calling a wonderful revelation: Man was not created at the beginning, he is a late arrival* ("whole ages elapsed before man"). And while Chambers may call man the crown of creation, he is very clear throughout his writings that it would be very strange to regard man as the purpose of creation, since creation went on for so long without him. The purpose is the whole, not any one part. Or to put it another way, even if man could be said to be the purpose of creation, it is of great significance that man is not an immediate outcome of the creative process of life but a very late product. Much happened before man's appearance that had nothing to do with his existence.

But to return to the problem of racism: So while there is the usual European racism in Chambers's writing, he does not make it into a deep or central component of his system of thought. It flies out of his mouth and it is gone. He is not creating a systemic racism. He is not trying to justify European superiority. He is more interested in our inferiorities and failures and how they might be overcome one day by a superior knowledge and a superior race. *A creature that has come so late in the day in the march of life has no right to the presumption that he is the end of the creative process, and no right to be judgmental about other races.* Some people see this thought in

Darwin, but Chambers is far more clear and emphatic about it. The march of life never ends and does not stop with one human species. Chambers sees the manifold faults in our civilization and looks forward to a better society. Thus, he will not accept war as an inevitable part of nature, as Darwin might. Not for him the philosophy of so many European intellectuals that war is a natural event as society struggles to survive and advance. War is an evil, not a benefit.

In short, Chambers was not writing for the age of rampant capitalism and imperialism in which he lived. Darwin was. Therein lies all the difference between them. In Chambers's work, there is another dream of what nature might be and what direction human life might take. From the point of view of personal success and how you are received by academia in the future, it is always a mistake to buck the trend as Chambers did. On the other hand, it might be the reason why *Vestiges* continued to be popular after *Origin* appeared. Some people longed for something other than the death and unmitigated power which western culture was supplying in abundance. Darwin was more in tune with the predominant spirit of the age. And whether we have been the better or worse for it is a subject that is still waiting to be debated.

10

EUPHEMISMS BE DAMNED

It ain't hard to laugh at somebody else's troubles,
it don't make you lose any sleep at night.
Just as long as fate is out there
bustin' somebody else's bubbles,
you know that everything is gonna be alright.

---Steve Goodman

~ 1 ~

I ended Chapter 5 by saying that in making western man the classifier of all things human, Darwin and his fellow investigators failed as scientists. I will begin here by saying that they did not all fail. Georg Gerland did not. He saw how self-serving western assessments of indigenous people could be. I will get to him later in this chapter. As for Alfred Wallace, he moved ahead in life and began to have doubts about the superiority of western civilization and acquired a higher opinion of savages. He wasn't perfect. He started out where Darwin and everyone else did, and, to some extent, he would keep jumping back and forth in the decades to come between more humanitarian ideas and harsher views, but he was always leaning towards the former.

In his 1864 paper, "The Origin of Human Races and the Antiquity of Man Deduced From the Theory of 'Natural Selection'" (S093), where he defended Darwin's theory to the hilt (it was his own theory as well, but he always generously referred to it as Mr. Darwin's theory), he too took the extinction of savages for granted. "It is the same great law of '*the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*,' [quoting the sub-title of Darwin's *Origin*] which leads to the inevitable extinction of all those low and mentally undeveloped populations with which Europeans come in contact" (clxiv-clxv). (This quote, as previously noted, is also a good example of what Darwin's sub-title meant to his contemporaries; it's clear that Wallace took him to mean favored groups, not individuals as Dawkins claims.)

Wallace continues: The superior qualities of Europeans enable them to

conquer savages in the struggle for existence "just as the weeds of Europe overrun North America and Australia, extinguishing native productions by the inherent vigour of their organisation, and by their greater capacity for existence and multiplication" (clxv). In his copy of Wallace's paper, Darwin underlined 'weeds' and wrote 'rat' in the margin (I owe this to Lindqvist, "Exterminate", 132-33), staying true to this in *Descent* (222) seven years later when he noted that New Zealanders (i.e., Maoris) compared their fate to that of their native rat. (Darwin might have got this from any number of sources; e.g., Bonwick, *Last*, 380, reports it; also, a letter in the *London Times* in December 1863 mentions this saying of the Maoris; see Heartfield, 144.) In the fascinating question and answer session that immediately followed Wallace's talk, no one objected to these remarks about the impending doom of savages. It would take humanitarians like Herman Merivale who were further removed from this realm of science to object to this demoralization of the human condition.

Wallace's remarks in that paper about the extinction of savages are often quoted by scholars as an illustration of 19th century thinking, but they usually fail to point out that Wallace was representing Darwin and standing up for his point of view at that meeting. He overstated the case just as Darwin often did. Darwin always insisted that Anglo-Saxons would eventually wipe out all the inferior races. But for Wallace, this did not become a trap. He could see exceptions. In *Malay Archipelago* (2.282), he regards the Polynesians and the Papuans as doomed to an "early extinction," but "the more numerous Malay race seems well adapted to survive as the cultivator of the soil, even when his country and government have passed into the hands of Europeans." He spent time in these regions living with natives and did not impose European ideas of superiority as often as Darwin and others did, but he was still capable of sometimes doing it and comparing savages unfavorably with the conquering culture of western civilization. Weeds or rats, it was an ugly and unhealthy way of looking at Aborigines.

What kind of science is this that compares human beings to weeds and to rats? What were they thinking? I mean these as serious questions. In part, the answer is that they weren't thinking. They were carrying on past European attitudes (remember, this isn't just about Darwin and Wallace) which could not decide what to make of savages and where to place them with respect to European humanity. (Or what to make of Jews. Jews would be described as already dead, already exterminated, walking corpses, they just didn't know they were dead yet. See Susan Shapiro's essay "The Uncanny Jew".) They certainly weren't thinking afresh and examining the evidence with fresh eyes. Wallace would in fits and starts gradually change whereas Darwin did not.

Darwin's anthropology never altered as Stephen Jay Gould would point out in the last essay in *The Mismeasure of Man* (416): "I don't think that Darwin ever substantially revised his anthropological views. His basic attitude remained: 'they' are inferior but redeemable." (Given how deep Darwin believed were the intellectual and moral differences between Europeans and many savage tribes, that 'redeemable' is questionable.)

In that long passage which I previously quoted from Margaret Hodgen (in Ch. 5, §5) where she talks about the difficulty of escaping from the categories of past scholarship, she quoted Agnes Arber who noted that we are affected by the general intellectual atmosphere in its approach to problems and their solutions and that this atmosphere "is compulsive to a humiliating degree ..." (quoted in Hodgen, *Early Anthropology*, 480). Yes, humiliating is the right word for it.

Note also a not unimportant point: Wallace's use of a euphemism in that above quote where he used Darwin's sub-title. He used an expression many European intellectuals were fond of: Europeans had *come in contact* with native populations around the world. From the point of view of the natives, it was more like *invading, dispossessing and annihilating*. Darwin uses the same euphemism in a quotation I provided earlier from *Descent* (212; this is from the section "On the Extinction of the Races of Man" in Chapter 7): "When civilised nations come into contact with barbarians the struggle is short ..." Some of the causes of the victory of the civilized, as Darwin goes on to say, are "plain and simple, others complex and obscure." Might not euphemisms have something to do with any obscurity? Somehow, the plain and simple fact of invasion and destruction escaped him.

He also obscured the truth a few pages later in the same section of *Descent*. He says that in the cases he has been discussing, "aborigines ... have been subjected to new conditions as the result of the immigration of civilised men" (221). In some contexts, 'immigration' might be an appropriate word, but not in this case. Civilized people were not merely immigrants to these other parts of the world. They were invaders. They pushed the native people aside to appropriate their land and, if they had to, they used violence to do it. They were intruders, but Darwin had already told himself in Notebook E 65 that "man is not an *intruder*." In our world, if a terrorist comes here to wreak havoc, we don't call him an immigrant, and we will set up a department of Homeland Security to deal with the intruders. Native people who resisted white invasion formed their own versions of Homeland Security, but we have rewritten their history to disguise that. Darwin did it by calling it immigration when the intruders invaded.

In the very next sentence, Darwin refers to a savage tribe attacking another

tribe as "the inroad of a conquering tribe" (this phrase is repeated on the next page which is the end of this section on the extinction of races). So if a savage tribe does it, it is conquering, but when civilized people do the same thing, it is immigrating. Darwin could not have come up with more of a double standard if he tried. The result of this spin doctoring, as Darwin presents it, is that there is no moral responsibility for the problems of native "sterility and ill-health" which follow from innocent European immigration. There is nothing like a good euphemism to disguise reality and set up your own ideology. The same problems of sterility and ill-health, Darwin says here, would result if another savage tribe made inroads (221). These health problems lead to "decreasing numbers [which] will sooner or later lead to extinction; the end, in most cases, being promptly determined by the inroads of conquering tribes" (222). But savage tribes had been attacking each other for centuries and severe ill health and extinction were not the results. Only the friendly immigration of Europeans had achieved this.

Darwin also ignored the fact that savages often resolved their disputes by diplomatic negotiations, not by war; he was incapable of ascribing that much intelligence to them. That point aside, it is obvious that Darwin was doing everything he could to minimize European responsibility for what was happening to indigenous peoples. They were not conquering, they were immigrating, and whatever bad results followed from that, it was destined to happen anyway, when other savage tribes invaded. Europe, as Darwin saw it, had done nothing unique here, and yet even when looked at that way, Darwin could still not bring himself to call it invasion and conquering. He covered it up with 'immigration'.

As for that other euphemism, 'come in contact', used by both Wallace and Darwin, it must be noted that the difference between these two discoverers of natural selection is that Wallace was not trapped by this way of speaking, while Darwin was. Despite the euphemism, Wallace could see and acknowledge the unjust destruction that was inflicted on Aborigines and Darwin could not. At least, that is, Wallace could grow into this kind of thinking, though in his younger days, he was much closer to Darwin. In a curious piece, "Comments on the Effect of Contact Between the Higher and Lower Races of Man" (S087), which is actually a summary (about a page and a half) by an unknown third party of Wallace's comments on two papers presented by others in 1864, the term 'contact' is used four times (excluding the title) and 'presence' and 'appearance' (of the white man) once each. The summary even refers to white men as 'immigrants' just as Darwin would do. 'Invasion' and 'conquering' are studiously avoided. If all this is an accurate summary of Wallace's words, it does not speak well of him at that time.

Most interesting is that T. Bendyshe, a presenter of one of the papers, argued that "there was no natural law operating to cause extinction of races except when the land was taken away. The possession of the land was the essential point; nobody imagined that the mere presence of the white man effects extinction." From the summary, it seems that Wallace did not get it. If accurate, the summary represents his response as "Of course the white man takes the land; it is simply a question of whether the native can himself cultivate the soil. If he cannot, he must evidently decrease ..." How much Wallace had changed when in 1898 he wrote of how "the lust of conquest" has featured in the struggle of European powers to divide up Africa, producing "much bloodshed, owing to the objection of the natives to the seizure of their lands and their cattle; great demoralization both of black and white; and the condemnation of the conquered tribes to a modified form of slavery" (*Wonderful Century*, 372).

I am going to anticipate a conclusion. The west has always had a subjective approach to science. We tend to honor any science as great if it helps us to achieve and maintain power or if it provides material benefits to ourselves. We honor Darwin for that reason. We disparage any science that undermines power---which, I think, is the reason scientists like Wallace (as he grew), Chambers, and Gerland (and Napier and Bannister, though they were not scientists) have never received their due. Wallace and the others were capable of questioning and entertaining doubts about where science was headed.

One year after "The Origin of Human Races", Wallace could write that many white men were the true savages. This was in a piece entitled "How to Civilize Savages" (S113orig), first published on June 17, 1865 (six years after *Origin* and just as many before *Descent*). After noting that "the practices of European settlers are too often so diametrically opposed to the precepts of Christianity, and so deficient in humanity, justice, and charity", he went on to comment, "The white men in our Colonies are too frequently the true savages, and require to be taught and Christianized quite as much as the natives" (near end of 673). He goes on to recount some of the horrible things Europeans have done to natives, the "lawlessness and inhumanity ... in all our colonies", and, by way of summary, remarks that "recent events in Japan and in New Zealand show a determination to pursue our own ends, with very little regard for the rights, or desire for the improvement, of the natives" (672). In *Malay Archipelago* (1.257), he wrote of the effect of British colonization on the natives, "Our system has always failed. We demoralize and we extirpate, but we never really civilize." Or as a writer, Mr. F. Boyle, quoted by Bonwick put it, "Search history, and in the north and south, east and west, the story is ever

the same,---we come, we civilize, and we corrupt, or exterminate" (*Last*, 344).

(Given that Wallace comes to the conclusion that many white people are the true savages, you could wonder exactly who he had in mind when he referred to savages in the title of his essay. It would have been a clever ruse on his part if he had meant white people, but I cannot prove that. Delicious irony to ponder, though. It was Daniel Newsome's letter to editor [see Bibliography] which inspired this thought.)

Darwin could be this bold in his younger days. I gave several examples in Chapter 2 of his referring to some particular Europeans as savages in his *Beagle Diary*. But he suppressed this in his published works. As an opponent of legal slavery, he was admirable. But on the extermination of native peoples, there is no sense of moral outrage in his official work. He wrote with equanimity, recounting the facts of bad health leading to extermination, without emotion and, worse yet, as we have seen, justified it as a natural outcome of evolution. It ain't hard to be composed about somebody else's troubles.

~ 2 ~

Darwin had a tendency to be defensive about what was going on in the colonies. As Gould reminds us in that last essay in *Mismeasure*, Darwin's first published essay was "A Letter, containing Remarks on the Moral State of Tahiti, New Zealand, & c." (1836), co-authored with Robert FitzRoy, captain of the *Beagle*, as they journeyed around the world. According to Gould (414), the two authors were responding to Otto von Kotzebue who had argued that Christian missionaries had caused more harm than good. Darwin and FitzRoy maintained to the contrary that the Tahitians were generally morally inferior and needed improvement by Christian missionaries. Desmond and Moore mention another writer of the time, Augustus Earle, a man Darwin had met, who disparaged Christian missionaries (*Sacred Cause*, 99-102). I discussed Kotzebue and Earle in the second chapter. Wallace himself was doubtful of Christian missionizing in "How To Civilize Savages", which came about thirty years after Darwin's and FitzRoy's essay.

But there is something peculiar in approaching the FitzRoy-Darwin article in the way that Gould, and Desmond and Moore do. FitzRoy and Darwin were not really responding to criticism of the harm inflicted by Christian imperialism on natives. The most significant lines are the first ones and the interesting thing about them is the ambiguous way they read for us today:

A very short stay at the Cape of Good Hope is sufficient to convince even a passing stranger, that a strong feeling against the

Missionaries in South Africa is there very prevalent. From what cause a feeling so much to be lamented has arisen, is probably well-known to residents at the Cape. We can only notice the fact; and feel sorrow ... we were wholly unprepared for such notions as those so predominant in Cape Town.

Are they talking about complaints against missionaries by the indigenous people or by other white Europeans? They don't say. The first time I read it, I assumed they were referring to the grievances of the native population. It only occurs to me now that it is ambiguous. In fact, they only have in mind the objections of the white residents (their use of the word 'residents' should have tipped me off). They also were being rather disingenuous in giving the impression that they had no idea what the trouble could be as their article goes on to detail some of these criticisms. (Most of the article is selections from the journals of the two men, the majority being from Darwin's.)

What is so striking now is the great probability that neither Darwin nor FitzRoy saw any ambiguity in their opening lines. To them, it must have been obvious from the first that they were considering only the complaints of other European colonizers. Any grievances of the natives were the furthest thing from their mind. There is one very slight exception to this. Darwin states that one of the impressions he got from Kotzebue was that "the Tahitians had become a gloomy race, and lived in fear of the missionaries" (228). He immediately adds, "Of the latter feeling I saw no trace. As to discontent, it would be difficult to pick out of an European crowd so many happy, merry faces." We have heard about the happy natives from many sources. Darwin writes off the possibility that the natives might be unhappy about being colonized and Christianized; he has paid only the barest attention to what the natives might be feeling. The rest of their article is about the discontent of European settlers with the missionaries.

Not only were Darwin and FitzRoy not responding to native complaints, such complaints did not exist for them, they formed no part of their consciousness. How could they? So many happy, smiling faces. (It should not go unmentioned that FitzRoy would become governor of New Zealand, 1843-45, and did a good job, as I pointed out in Chapter 3, §8, of listening to and acting on at least some native complaints, enough so to garner the enmity of white settlers; see Ward, 65-66, 70. FitzRoy was not as insensitive to native needs as this early article would suggest.)

The discontent that Darwin is very aware of is that of European settlers, many of whom were English convicts and whose morality Darwin had no high opinion of. He considers these settlers very ungrateful because one of the

chief effects of missionary work has been to make these wild countries safer for Europeans ("Letter", 235). Darwin's most passionate outcry is that if any sailor is ever shipwrecked, he will hope that he is cast away in a land where the work of missionaries has taken hold (228). Near the end of the article, Darwin mentions as one complaint that the Christian missionaries have obtained all the best land because they got there first (237-38). His response to that is in effect: So what? "Ought they to have taken the worst?" (238).

The highest praise Darwin and FitzRoy can heap on natives is that they have European or English manners, including playing cricket (234)! They are delighted on seeing English homes and gardens in such faraway places (233). All this is understandable and not necessarily mean-spirited. They were homesick. It's not wrong to love what you are most familiar with. But as understandable, naïve, and charming as this is, *it makes for lousy anthropology*. If someone wants to write a poem or drama about anglicizing the native population, with its touching ups and downs and full of patronizing sentiments, that's one thing. We can debate how harmful or helpful that might be. But when scientists have an inclination to think like this, they have deeply compromised their science of humanity.

Darwin has a well-deserved reputation for being an excellent naturalist, an astute observer of flora and fauna. But, with a few exceptions, that is not much in evidence when he turns his attention to non-European peoples. One exception is when he talks about the ability of natives to mimic, including their ability to listen closely to the sounds of a foreign language they have no knowledge of (*Voyage*, 174). He admires this to no end, but interestingly, he does not speculate on what else this might entail, for example, a talent for music. The wider context for his thought may help to explain why Darwin felt free to admire this talent. He did not have a high opinion of the power of imitation. He considered it, along with intuition and rapid perception, natural to women and savages but not indicative of a high intelligence (*Descent*, 629). As for any ability at music, I previously noted how much he detested the savage variety (see *Descent*, 116, 636).

For the most part, rather than carefully observe and report the ways of savages, Darwin relies too much on hearsay and he participates in, if only by silently condoning, the destruction of native cultures. If you throw your weight into the program for Christianizing and civilizing savages, you can no longer be deemed an objective anthropologist.

What is missing from this first published essay is any mention of what might be the best work that some missionaries ever did, and that is their defense of native cultures and their barbed criticism of the lethal nature of colonialism. Darwin's and FitzRoy's failure to mention some of the good work

missionaries did on behalf of the natives is another indication that the natives' experience of imperialism was not on their minds.

In *Dark Vanishings*, Patrick Brantlinger discusses quite a few of these missionary efforts, including the Reverend John Philip (77-80) and the Reverend Lancelot Threlkeld (130-35), and many more who were not missionaries. (On Threlkeld, also see Reynolds, *Whispering*, 60-69.) In *Researches in South Africa* (1828), Philip used language like "enslave or exterminate" and "seized or extirpated" (see Brantlinger, *Dark*, 78, 79) to describe what was being done to the original inhabitants of South Africa. Even if the natives were not complaining (which is highly unlikely), people like Philip were. But you would never know it from FitzRoy and Darwin. As Brantlinger points out, Philip recognized that "slavery itself exterminates" (79). That is something you will not find in Darwin's writings.

Brantlinger also reports the observations of other explorers who noted the high degree of intelligence and morality in savages. For example, "in his 1807 *Account of New Zealand*, John Savage expressed surprise that the natives, reputed to be cannibals, displayed 'no symptom of savage ferocity' and were 'of a very superior order, both in ... personal appearance and intellectual endowments'" (155). I referred to Savage's remarks in Chapter 2.

FitzRoy and Darwin certainly thought some natives were intelligent enough to be educated in European manners and learn civilized ways, but they were also sure that the savages lived a debased life which very much needed European improvement. (So too Wallace; e.g., *Malay*, 1.253-57.) Darwin and many others believed savages routinely mistreated their wives (e.g., "treats his wives like slaves," *Descent*, 689). It was an oft-repeated claim about Tasmanians (see Boyce, "Fantasy", 65-66). Part of what they observed in the violence of natives was a response to European encroachments and their being forced to adjust to a life under constant pressure. Scientists like Darwin never considered what savage life may have been before invasion by Europe and assumed it was more or less the same as what they saw in their time.

Oxford Professor Herman Merivale, whom I introduced in Chapter 6 (§5), understood that natives under colonization were not the same as they were in their original state before the European invasion. In Lecture XVIII of a series delivered from 1839 to 1841, he pointed out: "We hand over to the care of the missionary and the magistrate, not the savage with his natural tendencies and capacities, and his ancestral habits, but a degraded, craving, timid, and artful creature, familiarized with the powers and the vices of the whites, rendered abject or sullen by ill-treatment, and with all his remaining faculties engrossed by the increasing difficulty of obtaining subsistence in his contracted hunting grounds" (2.152). The indigenous natives were being dispossessed and the

increased pressure to survive in a smaller and smaller realm was changing their usual habits. These were not the original savages, but savages as changed by western civilization.

I don't know if Merivale was conscious of this, but a similar argument had long been made in the fight against slavery. In 1773, Benjamin Rush in his remarks on slavery explained, "But we are to distinguish between an African in his own country, and an African in a state of slavery in America ... All the vices which are charged upon the Negroes in the southern colonies [of America] and the West-Indies, such as Idleness, Treachery, Theft, and the like, are the genuine offspring of slavery, and serve as an argument to prove that they were not intended for it" (quoted in Boulukos, 107; see Rush, 2; I have quoted a slightly longer portion than Boulukos does). In Boulukos's analysis, Rush argued that false, racial differences were being used to justify legal discrimination and "to shield ... [the] iniquity" of slavery's apologists. A year later, John Wesley in his pamphlet accused slaveholders of "keep[ing] them [slaves] stupid and wicked" and then "us[ing] that as an excuse 'for using them worse than brute beasts'" (Boulukos,111).

How rational is it to degrade a people and then claim that degradation is inherent in this people? That question was answered by Saxe Bannister in 1822: "It is a cruel sophism, after debasing a people by bad governing and by hard treatment, to argue from their degradation that they are essentially not fit to share the benefits of civil institutions" (*Remarks*, 3). If scientists like Charles Darwin did not consider this, it is not because there weren't contemporaries posing this dilemma. It is because Darwin lived in an academic society that had erected walls so that such questions about the original state of savages would not get through, even though a few people did raise them from time to time. We should not forget that one of the greatest accomplishments of western civilization is its ability to engage in self-criticism, but we should also not forget that this is often practiced by an ignored and despised minority.

Charles Lyell made a similar observation about the dangers of leaping to wrong conclusions about savages in 1845 in *Travels in North America*. Some natives "when brought into contact with Europeans, relapse and retrograde ... The negro, for example ... may even have become more barbarous when brought within the influence of the white man, and yet may possess within his bosom the germ of a civilisation as active and refined as that of the golden age of Tezcuco" (2.39). Chambers favorably quoted this long section from Lyell in *Vestiges* (11th, 244n). Also, as noted at the end of Chapter 9 (§6), Lyell concluded from this that we ought to exercise caution "when speculating on the inherent capacities of any other great member of the human family." It is

telling that Chambers would pay attention to this point in Lyell and Darwin would not.

Bannister not so remarkably reached the same conclusion: "It seems in the highest degree unreasonable to consider the essential inferiority of any portion of the human race proved, so long as the conduct of those who approach it is of a kind calculated to debase the most intellectual" (*Humane* [1830], 5-6). How I wish Darwin had listened to that or to Lyell's point, which Chambers picked up on. The possibility of anti-racist thinking---by prominent personages, no less! not by outsiders---kept rearing its head in the 19th century. The powers of mainstream science and academia refused to hear it. And Darwin would never seriously consider it. The anti-racists were reminding everyone of the damage that racist and imperialist thinking was doing to our view of the world and other cultures. Darwin paid no attention.

Merivale and Lyell could see these things in the 1840s and Saxe Bannister even earlier in 1822 and 1830. In the 21st century we still need reminding. James Boyce provides an effective rebuttal to this assumption that Aboriginal life was the same before and after invasion by Europeans:

Only someone who is totally blind to the impact of changing power relations, of declining choices, of the profound impact of cultural disintegration and recurring violence and abuse, let alone the simple imperatives of survival, could cite the unfolding tragedy at Bruny Island [one of the residences of exiled Tasmanians] in this period as evidence for the sexual mores and domestic relations of pre-invasion Aboriginal society. [Boyce, "Fantasy", 66]

The perceived bloodthirsty violence of Aborigines was also a mistake according to other observers. It was due more to provocation by Europeans. In the opinion of Lancelot Threlkeld (mentioned above), a missionary in New South Wales from the late 1820s to the early 1840s, "a War of extirpation" had long been carried out against the Australian Aborigines; their violence was a response to what was being done to them (Brantlinger, *Dark*, 131). Bannister made the same point about American Indians and noted their complaints, as reported by a Moravian who lived among them, about "the hard returns they have ever received for their utmost unbounded kindness" (*Remarks*, 6).

Many humanitarians of the time pointed out that the natives did not provoke hostilities. They had very often been friendly on first meeting Europeans. Much like Lewis Carroll's "A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,/ Along the briny beach." If that pleasant exchange was transformed, it was

because they were reacting to the aggression practiced against their people and culture. Even some officials recognized this. You can see it in the correspondence between the colonial government in Van Diemen's Land and other officials which I will get to in the next chapter. Here is a preliminary example in a letter dated May 4, 1832, from British officer W.J. Darling to the Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land: "If Sir, these people appear to us to be savage and bloodthirsty, it can easily be accounted for, *without attributing to them any of these qualities*. The sealers, stockkeepers and other persons of that description have robbed them of their wives and daughters and otherwise illtreated them" (P, W, 992; emphasis added). In a letter to the Colonial Secretary, Darling complained of the unfairness of applying the epithet "*bloodthirsty* and *ferocious* Savages" (his emphases) to the natives because it did not take into consideration the provocation they have been subjected to (ibid., 998). Savagery was not their original character or nature. It was a major scientific failure on the part of Darwin and other anthropologists not to see this. Darwin saw what he wanted to see and did not see what he did not want to see.

In the next section, I will look at Darwin's awareness of the atrocities of colonialism, his acceptance of this situation, and several people besides Wallace and the ones I have just briefly reviewed who took a strong stand against it and questioned the value of any European activity in the colonies. There were many who were both anti-slavery and anti-extirpation of natives. Darwin was only the former. For that reason, I would not place Darwin among the highest voices of his time, as Gopnik (157) does. Look again at the quote from *Descent* (143-44) in the last set of blocked quotations I presented in Chapter 5 where he defies those who "have recently taken a high view of their [savages'] moral nature", and tell me why Darwin should be counted among the highest voices of his time. Complaining about those who presented savages in a good light should not earn one high marks. He was a good man, but he did not think carefully enough about non-European cultures. He assumed way too much and was too inaccurate about the life of "primitive" cultures.

Racism does not always have to wear an ugly face that is working hard to scare you to death. It does not have to escalate into overt violence or adopt a Nazi snarl to be racism. Brutality and viciousness, vitriol, name-calling, and hateful imagery can be part of racism, but this is not the only kind. Racism can be cool, laid back, ultra-sophisticated, polished, spoken in a quiet, almost clinical voice. This kind of racism is self-assured, calm, taking its views for granted and inspiring others to do the dirty work. The greatest accomplishment of racism is that it gets even decent people, like Darwin, to

see the world through a racist lens, without anyone realizing what's up and what the repercussions might be.

Darwin almost beat it. Perhaps his best achievement goes unnoticed by his idolizers because they refuse to see his great fault. Despite his prejudices against savages, barbarians, or natives, Darwin was able to reason his way to the conclusion that we are all related, all sprung from a common source. For myself, I'd have to say that this is a magnificent insight (which was not his alone), given the prejudices he started with. He deserves to be praised for that achievement. Too bad more people don't see it. They can't because they cannot bring themselves to admit that he had those prejudices to be overcome. Unfortunately, these prejudices did produce at least one fundamental error in his evolutionary thinking.

~ 3 ~

I have quoted several of Darwin's comments about the extinction of savages. There is no need to repeat them. He made his position very clear that he regarded this as a natural, not a cultural, process which was inevitable. I do not see how anyone could miss these comments. I have not yet quoted from the very first paragraphs of Chapter 1 of *The Descent of Man* where Darwin presents the questions that will concern him in the rest of the book. Here are the last two questions in the second paragraph: "... whether man tends to increase at so rapid a rate, as to lead to occasional severe struggles for existence ... Do the races or species of men, whichever term may be applied, encroach on and replace one another, so that some finally become extinct? We shall see that all these questions, as indeed is obvious in respect to most of them, must be answered in the affirmative ..." (22).

There is Darwin telling us in the very first pages of the first chapter what is on his mind and what his answers will be, yet his idolizers refuse to listen. Implicit in this is that he is treating the extinction of native peoples as a natural, not a cultural, phenomenon. He is putting the stamp of scientific objectivity on the extermination of human races, something he refused to do with slavery. New Testament scholars and Darwin admirers have one strong characteristic in common: Just as New Testament scholars made the Gospels irrelevant to the study of the Gospels, so too have some Darwinists made Darwin irrelevant to the study of Darwin. "The less we see, the more we know" is their shared motto. As I said earlier, they write about an ideal Darwin they invented, not the one who really lived and thought and wrote.

But let's say an admirer of Darwin missed the scattered comments on elimination of human races and the opening pages of Chapter 1 of *Descent* as well. Let's say that. Still, how could one miss his *extended* discussion of

extinction in a long section in the middle of Chapter 7, a section entitled "On the Extinction of the Races of Man" (211-22)? Even if writers like Gopnik and Gould missed the odd comment here and there, how could anyone miss these dozen pages where Darwin presents a sustained discussion of the inevitability of savage extinction and its causes? It is one of the most fascinating things that Darwin ever wrote. Recall that this is where Darwin used the euphemisms 'come into contact' (212) and 'the immigration of civilised men' (221). We will also encounter some other euphemisms.

This section is a long dispassionate, rather cold recitation of declining population figures for savages, which Darwin and others believed would lead inevitably to extinction. They were wrong in their predictions for most of these people. The Aborigines of Australia, the Maoris of New Zealand, American Indians, many African tribes, and more did not disappear, but the important thing is that Darwin believed they would come to this end. He also considers the causes of this extinction, which I will get to. Throughout this section and the entire book, he expresses not a dollop of sympathy for their fate. This man, who believed that enslaving a people was wrong, was perfectly fine with their extermination. Recall that he once severely criticized his friend and mentor Charles Lyell for writing so placidly about the break-up of slave families---quoted in the first chapter (§4) of this book and to repeat it here: "How could you relate so placidly that atrocious sentiment about separating children from their parents; & in the next page, speak of being distressed at the Whites not having prospered; I assure you the contrast made me exclaim out" (CCD 3.242)---yet he did likewise when writing about the extermination of native peoples. How does one begin to fathom that?

Here is a representative selection from what Darwin has to say about the Tasmanians (who may or may not have become extinct in 1874):

When Tasmania was first colonised [in 1803] the natives were roughly estimated by some at 7000 and by others at 20,000. [The current estimate is 5,000 to 7,000.] Their number was soon greatly reduced, chiefly by fighting with the English and with each other. After the famous hunt by all the colonists, when the remaining natives delivered themselves up to the government, they consisted only of 120 individuals, who were in 1832 transported to Flinders Island ... [which] seems healthy, and the natives were well treated. Nevertheless, they suffered greatly in health ... In 1835 only one hundred were left. As they continued rapidly to decrease ... they were removed in 1847 to Oyster Cove ... But the change of site did no good. Disease and death still

pursued them, and in 1864 one man (who died in 1869), and three elderly women alone survived. The infertility of the women is even a more remarkable fact than the liability of all to ill-health and death. [213]

I have quoted from this at length to give a sense of how dispassionate Darwin is in recounting this. He writes as if the disease, infertility, and death that pursued the Tasmanians were somehow objective facts that hovered in the air, unattached to any injustices on the part of British human beings. His very brief mention of 'fighting with the English' is the *only* time he brings this up and he seems to regard it on the same level as intertribal fighting. In the rest of this section in Chapter 7, he harps on changed conditions of life (another euphemism) producing infertility in savage women---this seems to fascinate him more than anything else. Even that reference to fighting with the English is phrased in a passive point of view from his perspective. Note well that he did not say 'chiefly by the English making war on the natives and decimating them.' The way Darwin puts it---natives have been "fighting with the English"---allows one to think that if only the Tasmanians had been more peaceful or passive, they could have avoided all this destruction. That is not the way others of Darwin's time saw it. Many of them are quoted in James Bonwick's 1870 *The Last of the Tasmanians*---a book Darwin read (how attentively is another question) as he refers to it in notes 37 and 39 on pages 213-14 in *Descent* and offers some quotes from it in the text on 214.

G.W. Rusden's three volume *History of Australia* was published the year after Darwin died, but Rusden still counts as a contemporary whose moral and scientific approach is very different from Darwin's. He rails against the inhumanity practiced towards Aborigines and the failure to properly report all that had happened: "A supporter of the existing atrocities admitted that it would be fatal to the usefulness of the force if reports were exacted" (Rusden, 3.248-49). "The air of Queensland so reeks with atrocities committed and condoned that the few who plead for justice and mercy deserve the more praise" (3.249). Almost a half century earlier, Bannister pointed out that "... every species of neglect and persecution is heaped on the men who, if listened to, could have prevented such doings [atrocities, dispossession, and other notorious acts against the natives]" (*Colonization*, 259).

Rusden was able to determine that for one year, a good portion of £20,000 "was expended on the ammunition with which the blacks were shot, and on the wants of those who shot them ... [while] £100 were allotted for fees for defending aborigines and Polynesians" (3.249). Rusden was critical of the statistics kept by the Registrar-General, Henry Jordan, who "finds no place for

the aborigines in his account of the population. In his table of 'causes of death in Queensland' in 1878, 'arranged in the order of degree of fatality,' *Mr. Jordan omitted the rifle*" (ibid.; emphasis added). The Registrar also recorded how much had been expended "in importing immigrants. The sums spent in destroying those whom the colonists found upon the land are not mentioned" (3.250). Rusden's scholarship was good science. He was demanding *a full account*.

I should point out that Darwin did a slightly better job in his *Beagle Diary* where he made some comments that were retained in the public editions. He was in Tasmania the first week in February 1836. He refers to the removal of the Aborigines to an island where they are "kept (in reality as prisoners)" as "this cruel step" (*Diary*, 408; changed to "most cruel" in the published editions; e.g., see *Narrative*, 533; *Voyage*, 385), though he adds that it was unavoidable. He acknowledges in the *Diary* that "without doubt the misconduct of the Whites first led to the Necessity." This was strengthened a bit in *Narrative* to read "this train of evil and its consequences, originated in the infamous conduct of some of our countrymen" and remained that way for the subsequent editions. All this is carefully expunged from his account in *Descent*. But even in the published journal, which acknowledges the evil committed, Darwin can still write that after the Tasmanians were removed to a smaller island, "... Van Diemen's Land [Tasmania] enjoys the great advantage of being free from a native population" (which is not in the original *Diary*, but is in all the published editions; *Narrative*, 533; *Journal*, 447; and *Voyage*, 385). Only an imperialist European could write this.

Darwin knows what is happening. These people are disappearing from the earth and he believes it will happen to many more native tribes, as probably most European intellectuals believed. Their language, their customs, their history, their laughter, their tears, their babies' squeals of delight---all gone forever, never to be born and live again. They can never be brought back. And Darwin feels nothing? Because if he did, it sure is not expressed in *Descent*. At least not openly, not consciously. In several places in *Origin*, Chapter X (351, 353, 382), he said it very clearly: "When a species has once disappeared from the face of the earth, we have reason to believe that the same identical form never reappears" (351). The extinct do not come back. He is never that brutally honest in *Descent*. I think there are indications that he was unconsciously troubled by it, to be discussed shortly. On the surface though, he is as placid about the extermination of natives as he accused Lyell of being about the breakup of slave families.

We should be very clear that this is not about imposing later standards on Darwin. There was in his time a great debate about the elimination of native

peoples and what was the moral responsibility of Britain in this. Henry Reynolds quotes from a letter which a young man, Henry Mort, in Queensland wrote to his mother and sister on January 28, 1844:

John and David McConnell argued that it is morally right for a Christian Nation to extirpate savages from their native soil in order that it may be peopled with a more intelligent and civilized race of human beings, etc etc. F. McConnell and myself were of the opposite opinion and argued that a nation had no moral right to take forcible possession of any place. What is your opinion on the subject? Don't you think it a most heinous act of any Nation however powerful, however civilized and however christianized that Nation may be---to take possession of a country peopled by weak and barbarous tribes? [Reynolds, *Whispering*, 13-14]

One of the major goals of the Aborigines' Protection Society, founded in 1836, was to prevent extermination from happening. Many examples of contemporary outrage can be found in Reynolds's *This Whispering in Our Hearts*. In another pertinent example, in an 1824 letter to the *Sydney Gazette*, a writer signing as *Amicitia* agonized, as summarized and excerpted by Reynolds, "The extinction of human life was an act 'so transcendently awful in its consequences' that it could only be justified by extreme necessity. Unless that could be established, the massacre of Aborigines would be 'foul and unpardonable murder'" (6). There is nothing placid about that. Recall that John Lort Stokes (Darwin's cabin mate for a time) in 1846 called it a national crime.

In a speech delivered in June 1833 at a colony in Australia, R.M. Lyon exclaimed, "An exterminating war over a continent as large as Europe, and abounding with tribes unknown and innumerable! The very thought is appalling ..." (in Reynolds, 80). A little further on, he called a war of extermination "the madness of a policy so uncalled for, so demoniacal" (81). There were many others who shared these feelings of horror. It is the kind of thing one would have hoped that Darwin would have written, but he did not. Instead, he adopted Lyell's placid approach.

The official position of the British government was categorical: Extermination is inhumane and unjust. In a letter of November 5, 1830, Secretary George Murray of the Colonial Office in London tells Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) that although the settlers may look forward to the impending extinction of the Aboriginal race, this result is "one very difficult to be reconciled with feelings of humanity, or even with principles of justice and sound policy; and the adoption of any line

of conduct, having for its avowed or for its secret object *the extinction of the native race, could not fail to leave an indelible stain upon the character of the British government*" (Bischoff, 233; emphasis added). This passage is given a prominent place in the 1837 *Report of the House Select Committee on Aborigines (Report, 14)*.

Murray's declaration was reiterated by a subsequent Secretary, Lord Goderich, who sent a Despatch to a British officer on January 31, 1832, stating in pertinent part, "There can be no more sacred duty than that of using every possible method to rescue the natives of those extensive islands [Van Diemen's Land, New Zealand, New South Wales] from the further evils which impend over them, and to deliver our own country from the disgrace and crime of having either occasioned or tolerated such enormities." These enormities would have included, as referenced earlier in the letter, "a rapid decline of population, preceded by every variety of suffering" and "the work of depopulation" which caused Goderich to say "I cannot contemplate the too probable results without the deepest anxiety." This too is in the 1837 *Report of the Select Committee* (17). This language of indelible, stain, and disgrace is very old humanitarian language, as demonstrated by Granville Sharp in his 1769 anti-slavery pamphlet: "the tyrannical constitution of the British colonies (to the indelible disgrace of the British name) reduces the freedom of any poor man to so low a value ..." (*Representation*; 48).

As for Goderich's suggestion of "using every possible method to rescue the natives," I have to take the opportunity to anticipate my later observation that "every possible method" apparently did not include giving natives equality under the law. Nor am I making a judgment in hindsight of an important failure. Charles Napier in 1835 had stressed that had he been given the governorship of South Australia, he would have fought for their legal equality, for "laws, that shall give the same protection to the savage as to myself, and those who go with me ... we must not then have a *monopoly of justice*" (Napier, 96, his emphasis; cf. 103). Saxe Bannister made the point in testimony submitted to the House Select Committee in 1837. He recommended that "perfect equality of rights should be declared by law and enforced in the courts for the natives" (*Report, "Minutes", 19, #6*; also in his book *Colonization*, 279). One aspect of legal equality would have been to allow natives to give testimony in court. Without that, they could never expect justice in the courts.

George Robinson had expressed the opinion, as summed up by James Bonwick, that "the legal disqualification to give evidence ... accelerated the destruction of Blacks by the Whites" (Bonwick, *Last*, 328; Bonwick does not give his source, but Robinson mentions this in an 1843 report to Governor

Gipps of New South Wales; see Smandych, 257). It was an important issue that concerned many people. James Backhouse brings it up a number of times in his letters in the late 1830s, as for example in a March 1838 letter to Thomas Buxton, chairman of the House Select Committee, in which he observes "a complete barrier is placed against their availing themselves of this protection [seeking justice in the courts], by the refusal of their evidence" (*Extracts*, Fifth Part, 55). In the same letter, he points out that lack of court justice means that the natives have to resort to retaliation. This, I believe, was Robinson's point. Without legal justice, natives are forced to resort to retaliation which leads to the whites responding with massacres or exterminating punishment. In another letter, Backhouse notes that without being able to give testimony in court, "they are to a great extent virtually placed out of the protection of British law" (53; Jan. 19, 1837). Bannister gave one example of a colonist in South Africa who had murdered a Caffre in front of 15 witnesses, all of them natives, and since their evidence could not be taken, the case was dismissed (*Humane* [1830], 36). As long as such legal inequities existed, it was quite insincere to speak of "using every possible method to rescue the natives," as Lord Goderich did.

Secretary Murray's "indelible stain" letter is found in the Appendix to James Bischoff's 1832 *Sketch of the History of Van Diemen's Land*, which collects some of the correspondence that passed between the colonial and home governments. Darwin read this Appendix and states that he found it most interesting to read (*Narrative*, 533). These letters and the Report of the local Aborigines Committee, also included in Bischoff's Appendix (and in the last chapter of Napier's book), detail some of the horrific abuses that occurred, such as indiscriminate murders of natives and the abduction of women and children, and acknowledge that white people were the original aggressors. But the details do not seem to have penetrated Darwin's conscience in the way that abuse of slaves did.

Even earlier than Murray's comment, in 1813, Thomas Davey, the second governor of Van Diemen's Land, wrote of the cruelties inflicted on the natives by settlers, "That he could not have believed that British subjects would have *so ignominiously stained the honour* of their country and themselves, as to have acted in the manner they did toward the Aborigines" (Bonwick, *Last*, 59; emphasis added). Darwin read this too, though much later in 1870 when Bonwick's book was published.

Saxe Bannister, in the same testimony noted above, quoted from a 1789 report from the American Secretary of War, General Knox, conveying his sentiment that if they did not make the Indians' rights to their land the basis of justice, then "the blood and injustice which would stain the character of the

nation would be beyond all pecuniary calculation" (*Report*, "Minutes", 7). Langfield Ward in 1874 also took note. After recounting the terrible slaughter of the Pequods by the Puritans in the early days of the American colonies and referring in general to the British failure to protect natives from injustices, Ward worried that "our credit as a nation, and our reputation for justice" were at stake (Ward, 17). He brought up such sins as "the deliberate trampling upon all human rights, and the tyrannical conduct to the weak ... and territorial aggrandisement" as examples of what "bring misery upon the natives and dishonour upon ourselves" (102). Like Bannister, he dismissed money-making as a concern. This was about ensuring the "happiness of the natives ... confided to our care" (*ibid.*; there is some paternalism in this, but it doesn't affect his main insight about justice and moral duty [e.g., 15]). In Note A at the end of his book, Ward gives some examples from the colonies "to show how unlikely a native is to obtain redress from a functionary or a jury interested on the side of the colonists."

The idea of a stain on the nation and its character was getting around on both sides of the Atlantic. It was at the root of the Select Committee's investigation. In his testimony before the Committee (#4367), the Rev. J. Beecham found himself grateful that some "religiously-disposed" individuals in their treatment of Aborigines in the colonies "have to some extent redeemed our national character" (Coates, 91). It was generally acknowledged that there was a stain. The open question was whether and how it could be redeemed.

Indelible stains and honor were the language of humanitarians and it was not confined to cases of approaching genocide. Any gross injustice had the potential to stain. In 1830, Bannister, writing about the Caffres in South Africa, said that if we seize their land without attempting compensation, "an indelible disgrace will be stamped on us" and further down on the same page, "a regard to the national character should urge us to do justice to the rightful joint-claimants of this little spot" (*Humane* [1830], 81). For the humanitarians, the honor of Britain was at stake in the colonies. For Darwin, it was only legal slavery that produced a stain.

Darwin read the correspondence in Bischoff sometime between 1832 and 1839 when his journal contribution to the three volume *Narrative* was published. In 1833, he used language about slavery similar to Murray's about extermination of Aborigines. Darwin wrote from the *Beagle* to a friend, "I trust they [the Whigs] will soon attack *that monstrous stain on our boasted liberty, Colonial Slavery*" (June 2, 1833; CCD 1.320; emphasis added). Darwin did not necessarily get this language from Secretary Murray. But if Darwin was impressed that exterminating a people or dispossessing them was

as stain-making and dishonorable as slavery, he never let on. He never sees or acknowledges the parallel between these injustices. Be it noted that some of these comments on staining British honor or character as a result of how Aborigines were treated came not only from outsider humanitarians, who were probably the source of this way of talking, but from British officials. It seems that Darwin resisted whatever effect this may have tended to have on him.

The closest Darwin ever comes, as far as I am aware, to sensing that there might be something dishonorable in the way the British or Europeans have behaved, is in his remark to Charles Lyell, which I quoted in the second chapter: "I am content that man will probably advance & care not much whether we are looked at as mere savages in a remotely distant future" (May 4, 1860; CCD 8.189). He is aware that one day Europeans may be viewed as having acted like savages. This implies that there is dishonor in this. This may be the closest he came and yet it is not all that close. It is very general and not specific enough for us to be able to tell what exactly Darwin was referring to. And even if we could know that he was thinking of something like the barbaric behavior of Europeans towards indigenous people, what we have is a contrast to Murray's and Davey's point. Where those officials saw dreadful actions as leaving a stain on the British character, Darwin is totally indifferent to the (future!) accusation that we have behaved like savages. He sees no terrible stain at all, rather he seems to be denying that this will leave any deep stain; it will leave only a vague accusation that might be made by a later generation.

The bulk of Darwin's comments throughout his career on the dispossession and extermination of savages do not contain any statements or even hints that he saw any stain on Britain's honor or character. In his *Diary*, he noted without objection that the colonists in Argentina considered the war against savages a just war, that this extermination will bring benefits to colonizers, and in the published version, that a native-free land was a great advantage, and in his comments in *Descent*, that the extermination of natives was inevitable, not to mention comments in various letters repeating the same and the one in which he states that after this extermination is complete, humanity will have risen higher. The melancholy remarks, probably made for public consumption, are only slight exceptions to this general trend and they do not remotely suggest there was anything dishonorable in this. Given all the language that humanitarians were using to describe the havoc Europeans were causing for native peoples, it is interesting that Darwin would only use 'melancholy', and only in his younger days, and never 'stain' or 'honor' or 'character'. The agonizing of the House Select Committee and many

humanitarians finds absolutely no parallel in Darwin's writings.

Those last words of Secretary Murray about an indelible stain were in a sense prophetic. It did leave a mark, largely because very little was actually done to fulfill the noble sentiment expressed there and prevent the expected catastrophe. It could be questioned how sincere any of these officials were. Bannister certainly questioned it in South Africa, criticizing the government for allowing continual encroachment onto native lands: "the unceasing professions of the Government in favor of the tribes, often to be called insincere, must always labour under the imputation of weakness" (*Humane* [1830], 44). In another book, he called its professions of sympathy "barren regret": "statesmen have either looked on listlessly at the miseries caused by a scramble for these lands and possessions; or they have satisfied themselves with the expression of barren regret that the progress of civilized society should seem *ordained* to be the inevitable destruction of the savage" (*Colonization*, 12; his emphasis). Everywhere you look in this history, you can see plenty of examples of inspiration for Lewis Carroll's "The Walrus and the Carpenter"; barren regret is another possible inspiration for the image of weeping behind a handkerchief.

Other examples of insincerity can be given. They well knew that the behavior of convicts transported to the colonies was a main source of the wanton violence towards natives---"I have no doubt they [the natives] were continually ill-used by the dissolute and abandoned convicts ..." says Arthur in a November 20, 1830 letter to Murray (Bischoff, 245)---and yet Arthur would request additional transports of convicts (at least 2,000!) for the protection of the white settlers (202) and Murray agrees to do so if at all possible (234). Does that count as a policy having as "its secret object the extinction of the native race," as Murray expressed it? More than forty percent of all convicts transported to Australia went to Van Diemen's Land (which is why it acquired the reputation of being a penal colony and why its name was later changed to Tasmania to escape that reputation).

Or how about constantly expanded white settlement? Or taking land without compensation or inadequately providing for the welfare of the original inhabitants? Do these count as policies having extinction as their 'secret object'? Because the result of these policies was obvious to many people. Recall that Malthus could write in the 1826 edition of his *Essay* that driving the natives into a corner would cause them to starve and that this was unthinkable. In a May 4, 1832 letter to the Colonial Secretary, W.J. Darling writes, "It will always be important to have as few Convicts as possible on the Establishment [for Aborigines] ... and if possible, married, that is, if their Wives also bear good characters, otherwise they would do more harm than

good" (Plomley, 994). Or Saxe Bannister making an even stronger suggestion in one of his papers read into evidence before the Select Committee:

Transportation of convicts to be stopped immediately ... All experience proves that the evils of convict transportation exceed the amount of its advantages to any class of people. But the evils it inflicts upon the native families and tribes are incomparably greater than any others, and utterly uncompensated by any advantages to such natives. [*Report, "Minutes", 20, #10*]

The consequences of convict transportation were well-known. In 1874, Langfield Ward was still complaining that "the system [of convict transportation] can on no grounds be defended" and that "the plan for colonizing by convicts is injurious to natives in all cases" (Ward, 14, 15).

Was the failure to stop it an example of a policy with a secret object? I would guess that Darling's and Bannister's advice fell on deaf ears, but I honestly don't know. And how can any of this be reconciled with natural selection (a grand euphemism when applied to human beings dominating other human beings)? There is nothing like this in nature where one species sends its least fit members to the territory of another species, helping to bring about their extinction. Langfield Ward called it "the introduction of the dregs of a population" (14).

Darwin is famous for his compassion among his worshipers. The example that is most often given is from *Origin* where he describes how a certain type of wasp paralyzes, but does not kill its prey, so that the wasp's offspring can have live prey to eat, though the compassion only comes out in a letter to Asa Gray (both Dawkins, *Greatest Show*, 370, 395, 400, and Gopnik, 186, bring up the wasp). I discussed this in Chapter 1 along with my favorite example of Darwin's compassion. Darwin would condemn anyone who performed vivisection on a dog to a lifetime of almost hell, unless he had excellent reason for doing so: "... every one has heard of the dog suffering under vivisection, who licked the hand of the operator; this man, unless the operation was fully justified by an increase of our knowledge, or unless he had a heart of stone, must have felt remorse to the last hour of his life" (*Descent*, 90).

Gopnik says that the one word that could best sum up Darwin's character is *sensitive* (Gopnik, 67). In some cases, yes. But I don't see how that word could in any way apply to what Darwin wrote about savages in *Descent*. Sensitivity is not in evidence at all. Some racists could fool themselves into thinking that savages are not human and have no feelings. Darwin was not that sort. He knew better. At least he knew it in the abstract. When he is bent

on proving his thesis of descent from a common progenitor (e.g., *Descent*, 208), he is quite capable of emphasizing the commonalities between all races that will bring him to his desired conclusion: "This is shewn by the pleasure which they all take in dancing, rude music, acting, painting, tattooing, and otherwise decorating themselves; in their mutual comprehension of gesture-language, by the same expression in their features, and by the same inarticulate cries, when excited by the same emotions" (208). He might have specifically mentioned laughing, crying, and feeling pain, instead of just alluding to them generally.

Remarkably, none of this causes Darwin to feel any kinship with savages. The commonalities are indeed an abstraction necessary to prove a thesis but produce no compassion. The enormity of extermination and the particular pain of these peoples seem to entirely escape Darwin. Perhaps not entirely. In Chapter 2, I discussed the two melancholy remarks in *The Voyage of the Beagle*. "It was melancholy at New Zealand to hear the fine energetic natives saying, that they knew the land was doomed to pass from their children" (375). And, "It is melancholy to trace how the Indians have given way before the Spanish invaders" (86). It would be nice to believe that Darwin had some sympathy for the natives of the various countries he visited. Following this last melancholy remark, he describes with considerable admiration how an Indian and his son escaped their captors: "What a fine picture one can form in one's mind, the naked, bronze-like figure of the old man with his little boy, riding like a Mazeppa on the white horse, thus leaving far behind him the host of his pursuers!" (87).

But as I pointed out in the second chapter, these melancholy comments had become a common form of discourse among Europeans and Americans. For a few writers, expressions of melancholy were probably genuine. But in the case of Darwin and many other writers, it is impossible to tell how sincere they were or whether they just wanted to fit in with the public conversation. Their melancholy was not specific enough (what was melancholy? the injustices committed against the natives? or merely the ultimate fate of the natives?) and one can ask how much genuine compassion was intended when you go on doing the very thing you are lamenting, like the Walrus weeping as he consumes the oysters. And Darwin does seem to condone the continuation of consuming all the natives when he writes (in the same volume that contains the melancholy remarks!) that it is quite advantageous when a territory becomes native free (*Narrative*, 533; *Voyage*, 385).

Sympathy for natives, while it might occasionally appear in his Journal or Diary or other personal writings, never makes it to the forefront of his scientific thinking. You get the feeling that Darwin is using science to benefit

Europe and maybe particularly the upper classes, but he will not turn this science to benefit the dispossessed native. To benefit some slaves, yes, but not these indigenous peoples on the verge of disappearing for all time.

Darwin certainly had plenty of opportunity to introduce more compassion and thoughtfulness into his work, but that's not what he does. In that twelve page section on extinction in Chapter 7 of *Descent*, he reports on several observers (some of them taken from Bonwick's book *Last*) who were astute enough to take note of the very thing that likely was causing the melancholy Darwin commented on in his published journal. According to Darwin in *Descent*, these writers noted: "changed habits of life ... induced much ill health ... the natives become 'bewildered and dull by the new life around them; they lose the motives for exertion ...' [212; quoting a Mr Sproat] ... Dr Story remarks that death followed the attempts to civilise the natives. 'If left to themselves to roam as they were wont and undisturbed, they would have reared more children, and there would have been less mortality' [214; quoting from Bonwick, 388] ... Another careful observer of the natives, Mr Davis, remarks ... [on their increased deaths and fewer births due to] '... their change of living and food; but more so to their banishment from the mainland ... and consequent depression of spirits' [214; from Bonwick, 390; though Darwin includes those last words as part of the quotation, they are actually his rewriting of 'expressions of the deepest sorrow depicted on their countenances' in the original quote in Bonwick]." There is much more throughout this section on how changed habits of life produce ill health. The section ends with Darwin observing, as I have quoted previously, that the New Zealander compares his fate to that of the rat (this comparison is there in the original 1871 edition [1.240] so he may not have gotten this from Bonwick, 380, but from an earlier source). Any one of these places would have been an appropriate moment for Darwin to have uttered a lament, but it never comes.

Charles Napier, on the other hand, had this to say in 1835 about a change in the habits of the natives:

I have said that we rob the aborigines of Australia ... because, when we oblige them to concentrate their population, they must perish, or become civilized ... in short, they must make a sudden *change* in their mode of life, which their want of knowledge does not admit of their quickly doing, and, consequently, numbers must die. If this is not robbing them, I am at a loss to know what robbery means? We deprive them of a range of territory ... This is not JUST---our first act is one of progressive extirpation, and,

therefore, of great injustice. [Napier, 102-03; his emphases]

More honest than Darwin, Napier connects pressured changes in life habits to forced dispossession and to progressive extermination. He has no problem in pointing out that forced, sudden change is the same as robbing them. It is not just. Napier's solution in part (like Wallace's when he discussed the injustice of competition with a less advanced civilization) is to approach this more slowly and "they must be *won into a peaceful intercourse with us ...* and making savage and civilized equal in the eye of the law" (103; his emphasis). There is nothing like this in Darwin.

Darwin knows that sudden changes (or stress, as we would say today) constitute one of the causes of severe depression of spirit which in turn is one of the causes of extermination, but he relates it all without any sense of deep concern. He reports it so matter-of-factly. Placidly, as he might say. There is no sympathy here whatsoever and, for sure, no concern that this is an injustice about which something should be done. He never clearly states that invasion and dispossession produced the depression that natives feel. He sticks to the euphemism 'changed habits'. He did not write about slavery this way. Slavery incensed him. Extermination did not. He knows about the commonalities among all races. He knows the natives have emotions, tears, laughter, pain, joy, anger, sadness, and he knows that the enormity of this event---the approaching extinction!---must mean something tragic to them. But he says nothing in *Descent*. He treats it all as natural. Did he really feel nothing about this?

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It is revealing to contrast this treatment in *Descent* to what Darwin writes in *Origin*. I think it is possible to infer that Darwin did have strong feelings about this, too strong to write about directly, and therefore it comes through more on an unconscious level. There is more heart (albeit expressed in general terms) in *Origin's* Chapter X (covering extinction and other matters) than in the comparable Chapter 7 of *Descent*. In *Origin*, Darwin shows his awareness of the enormity of extinction. It is final, utter (355, 359, 380, 382). Once extinct, a species will never reappear (351, 353, 382). A species either changes and adapts or it disappears forever (352, 353). This is all from Chapter X. He is blunt about the meaning of extermination.

Nothing like this comes through in *Descent*. He tells us natives are going extinct, but he never says utterly extinct as he sometimes says in *Origin* (359, 380, 382). Strictly in terms of vocabulary, *Descent* which addresses the extermination of human beings is much colder than *Origin*. I can only guess

that his guilt feelings about what was happening to the Tasmanians and other natives were as enormous as extinction itself and that Darwin found it difficult to confront these feelings. In *Descent*, he holds back from hitting you in the face with the finality of extinction. He could not face it when it happened to humans. Imagine if Darwin had used the same descriptive power for human extinction in *Descent* that he used for species extinction in general in *Origin*. He might have said to himself, Oh my, this is terrible, we have to stop this. I believe he had those feelings when he was writing *Descent*, but kept them submerged.

One way to avoid confronting the significance of something is to use euphemisms, which Darwin does in *Descent*. *Origin* is not like that. As far as I can tell, Darwin does not employ any euphemisms in *Origin*. The occasional metaphor like 'the race for life', yes, but Darwin's vocabulary in *Origin*, whether metaphorical or not, is always vivid, strong, and accurately conveys what Darwin believes is going on in nature. In *Descent*, Darwin resorts to expressions that disguise more than they reveal, unless you are paying careful attention. A euphemism suppresses. That's its job. Something must not be allowed to come to full consciousness. It's bothering you, but it can only be let out in a diminished way. Deeper knowledge is effectively blocked.

What else is 'changed habits' but a disguised way of saying 'displacement and dispossession' just as 'come into contact' and 'waste away' are euphemisms for 'invade and destroy'. Darwin uses these three euphemisms in the long section on the extinction of races (the first, 'changed habits', he uses over and over again, sometimes in quotations from other writers; the next two are used once each on 212; he also uses 'weeded out' on 212, but I am not sure whether that is a euphemism or audaciously truthful). While, on the one hand, Darwin does seem to be aware of what is happening to the natives---their depressed spirits---on the other hand, he seems to be hiding something from himself by using euphemisms like 'come into contact' and 'changed habits'. He does not want to see the ultimate cause. Euphemism has replaced accurate scientific reporting.

'Coming into contact' is an especially odd euphemism when you consider how often Darwin was willing to use words like 'invade' and 'intruder' in *Origin* (e.g., 107, 108, 340, 359, 363, 429, 443). Never once in *Origin* that I am aware of does Darwin speak of one species coming into contact with another (actually, I found one use on 210 in Ch. VI, but it seems to be a case of artificial breeding he refers to here). They always invade or intrude or colonize. He is not euphemistic in *Origin*. *Descent* is decidedly different. There, 'coming into contact' is used for the encounter of Europeans with natives. (Everyone did it, including Wallace. This was not unique to Darwin.

Only a handful of humanitarians like Napier would say we rob the Aborigines.) It is not that he uses euphemisms a lot (except for 'changed habits' which he indulges in quite a bit). More significant is the way Darwin simply avoids saying in *Descent* that Europeans invaded other peoples' homelands, whereas he has no trouble using 'invade' or 'intrude' in *Origin* (the total for words derived from these two is about 12; the latter occurs mostly in the form of 'intruders'; in one way, this may not seem like a lot, but the point is they do occur in *Origin*, whereas they are absent from *Descent*).

Tony Barta too recognizes that Darwin's "skill with language also blunts the suggestion of responsibility" (Barta, "Darwin's Shooters", 124). Barta is commenting here on a passage from Darwin's *Diary*, but this applies with just as much, if not more, force to *The Descent of Man*. Barta believes that Darwin knew very well that "dispossession, destruction and disappearance of peoples" were the reality, but here I would slightly disagree in that Darwin shows no signs of allowing these thoughts to come to full consciousness; his skill with language did not just serve to blunt the truth for his readers, but for himself as well.

There is something comical about a man writing in *Origin* that plants and animals can invade the territories of other species---e.g., "It is also natural that the dominant, varying, and far-spreading species, which have already invaded to a certain extent the territories of other species ..." (363)---but who cannot bring himself to say that Europeans, and the British in particular, invaded the native lands of other people. Somehow the language of imperialism pervades his book of nature but is mostly absent from his book of man. Something is being suppressed, no?

He suppresses practically nothing in *The Origin of Species*. He is so honest in *Origin* that he lets slip his humanistic feeling that the instinct of slave-making ants is 'extraordinary and odious' (254). 'Odious' might seem like a point of comparison to *Descent* where, for example, Darwin calls savage music 'hideous' (116). But this language once again reveals a deep divide between the two books. One difference is that 'odious' and 'hideous' spring from different sources in Darwin. The former is from his humanitarianism and compassion, while the latter is a response from his anti-humanitarian feelings about people who are Other. He never calls the extermination of native human beings odious. The deeper problem is that despite the fact that Darwin finds the slave-making instinct in certain ants revolting, he can also call it wonderful (251, 254, 257), meaning that it is fascinating to contemplate and study. (Similarly, while he is horrified by those wasps that feed their larvae paralyzed live prey, they are still fit to be studied in detail.) Nothing like this sense of wonder occurs in *Descent* about Aborigines.

In his book on man, he never says savage music is hideous but wonderful to study, or savages are without government but maybe we should take a closer look, or they have low morals which fact is wonderful to study, or they do have tribes so let's see how they actually cohere as a society. I am holding Darwin to his own professed standard. He is the one who insisted, as I pointed out previously, that man is a part of nature and should be studied as such. That is not what he does in his book of man where he responds to the human activities of savages differently than he did with any other part of nature. He practiced double scientific standards. He treated the world of nature and the world of humans as separate domains with little in common. The former was always wonderful (amazing) to study, while the latter was sometimes so objectionable that it was not wonderful to study. I am just reporting Darwin's actual scientific practice.

A look at the number of occurrences of some words bears out this striking difference between the two books. In Chapter 3 (§5), I reported how often certain words in *Origin* appeared: 'beat' (mostly as 'beaten'), 15 times; various forms of 'compete', about 70; and 'dominant' or 'dominating', about 43. One would expect some of these to appear in *Descent*, since the theory is still about competition. I looked at the occurrences of these words in the Introduction and Part 1 of *Descent*, but not the second part about sexual selection. Excluding the second part, *Descent* is about 54% the length of *Origin* by my approximate calculations. So if these words occurred with anything like the same frequency in *Descent* as in *Origin*, then it should have been about 8 for 'beat', 38 for 'compete' and its derivatives, and 23 for 'dominant'. Instead, I found 1, 7, and 9 respectively for these words. (As for 'dominant', five of the nine were a repetition of the thought that man has become the most dominant animal on the planet, one was about dominant languages, and one dominant instincts.)

Those are huge discrepancies. It was not what I was expecting. I thought there might be some slight differences, but nothing dramatic. One can also see the disparity by just comparing the last summarizing chapters of each book. As we might expect, the final chapter of *Origin* often mentions Darwin's favorite words: competition (4 times), beat (2 times), and dominant (7 times). Not so in *Descent*. In the final chapter of that book, 'dominant' and 'competition' occur once each (on 679 and 688, respectively), and 'beat' not at all.

It is most unlikely that Darwin consciously decided to use these words less often. This could only be the outcome of an unconscious decision to write in a way that would be less obviously brutal. Darwin liked to stress man's nobility (one of the many differences between man and apes; *Descent*, 151), so when

he gets to man as his subject, he writes in a very different way than he does in *Origin*, despite his own claim that man should be studied "in the same spirit as a naturalist would any other animal" (*Descent*, 195). If he were really doing that, he would not need to use 'noble' as often as he does in *Descent*. Variants of 'noble' occur only once in *Origin* ('ennobled' in the next to last paragraph of the book), but about 20 times in *Descent*. It is the nobility of man in general, not just Europeans, that Darwin stresses (even savages are sometimes called noble; see *Descent*, 142, 155, 157). But this nobility is of course reflected better in the civilized peoples. To speak honestly about how Europeans in their greed and colonial drive for conquest treated Aborigines would have detracted from the presumed nobility that Darwin saw in his own culture.

There is another possible explanation for the difference in vocabulary between the two books. In *Descent*, Darwin is concerned biologically with one primary point: To prove that mankind has descended from lower life forms. The general theory of evolution is the issue, not natural selection. It is not necessary for him to go over again how we got here through natural selection, competition, domination, and beating other species and races. I think that could have contributed to the differences between the two books, but I don't think it is the whole explanation. It is true that *The Descent of Man* is more about evolution (descent from a common progenitor) than natural selection, but if that were completely so, there would be no need to mention natural selection at all or at best infrequently. In fact, 'natural selection' appears about 60 times in the first part of *Descent*, and in the last chapter, ten times with another four occurrences of 'struggle for existence' and one of 'battle for life'. 'Supplant', a more neutral sounding word, comes up 8 times in *Descent* and 9 for 'victory' and 'victorious'. He obviously had not lost sight of his particular theory of evolution. He just wanted it to appear less ruthless and murderous, and so avoided competition, beat, and dominant.

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Darwin was always sensitive to visible cruelty or cruelty that was too close. "How disgusting to be waited on by a man, who the day before was by your representation flogged for some trifling misdemeanour?" This is from his visit to New South Wales at the end of January 1836 (*Diary*, 406) and just before he arrived in Tasmania in February. He did not like being near openly practiced cruelty in any shape or form. We saw other examples in Chapter 1. But if the suffering was invisible or nearly so, Darwin could ignore it. Euphemisms helped increase that invisibility. Here he did the opposite of what a good scientist should be doing and what he must have learned from Malthus, as we saw, if from no one else: To make the unconscious conscious,

the imperceptible perceptible. He knew that a scientist's fundamental task is to reveal, not conceal, but he made a choice not to do that with colonialism and native peoples.

Darwin said that a civilized man, even a boy, would rush to save a drowning stranger. I don't see that Darwin rushed to the aid of the drowning savages. Perhaps he meant some, not all, civilized men would do this. Wallace, Napier, Gerland, Merivale, Bannister and others would be examples of civilized men who tried to aid the drowning savages. And if the savage, as Darwin also said, is the one who is indifferent to the fate of strangers, then here too Wallace was right. Some white Europeans were the true savages.

In the last paragraph of "How to Civilize Savages" (1865; S113orig), in addition to being critical of Christian missionary activities (which Darwin had defended about thirty years earlier in his very first published piece), Wallace recorded a few horrifying anecdotes of what some white people were doing in the colonies. One advocated poisoning the food of natives in Australia as more expedient than shooting them, though Wallace does not say whether this was carried out. He personally heard a Brazilian friar boast of saving the government the expense of a long war by giving a tribe of Indians "clothing infected with the smallpox, which disease soon nearly exterminated them." Then there was this: "We have heard, on good authority, that in Australia a man has been known to prove the goodness of a rifle he wanted to sell, by shooting a child from the back of a native woman who was passing at some distance." You can tell that Wallace is beside himself with disgust.

Darwin too was capable of writing like this---about legal slaves. I have quoted the famous passage from the last chapter of *Voyage of the Beagle* (430-31) in Chapter 2. He had come up close and personal to the ugly reality of slavery. But he never writes like this about the evils of colonialism, even though in that same voyage on the *Beagle* he had gotten as close to colonial horrors as he had to slavery.

And how is colonialism any different from enslavement? Isn't colonial subjugation just another form of slavery? Both aim at utter domination and dispossession of culturally different people and both play up and exaggerate the differences in order to justify their unholy acts. "There is among *civilized* men, an unholy, and unchristian-like contempt for those whom we choose to call savages" (Napier, 97-98, his emphasis). Both are brutally indifferent to the life and health of their subjects. Why object to one and not the other? And two years after Napier, the House Select Committee remarked: "An evil remains very similar in character, and not altogether unfit to be compared with them in the amount of misery it produces. The oppression of the natives of barbarous countries is a practice which pleads no claim to indulgence"

(*Report*, 75; see my Ch.4, §2).

Colonial subjects were not only dispossessed of their land, but their lifestyle as well. You can continue to exist, said the colonial power, but only if you give up everything you know and adopt a new way of living---which was a disingenuous promise, since it quickly became apparent that adapting was not possible for many of these peoples and that their futile attempts to do so would lead to depression and their demise. Colonialism could be so much worse than slavery. When it leads to extinction, as Darwin and so many others believed was inevitable, there is no coming back from that. Slaves have the hope of rebelling one day. What are an extinct people to do? Rise up from the dead? What sort of hope can a disappeared people muster? Even if the descendants of a people have survived, but their ancient culture has been destroyed, they can never be the people they once were, as Kotzebue recognized (in 1821 no less!): They "have lost all the peculiarities of their ancestors, all their arts, and, for the most part, forgotten their language" (3.80). They have been effectively erased.

Darwin had become as familiar with the brutality of colonialism as he had with slavery in that same long journey. In Australia and Argentina, and other places as well, Europeans went on killing sprees to get rid of natives. About thirty years before Wallace's essay on civilizing savages, Darwin knew about these things and even had some personal contact with at least one perpetrator or the men who worked for him. In Argentina, General Juan Manuel de Rosas led a campaign of mass slaughter of the native Indians. He also made possible Darwin's exploration of the interior by giving him safe passage. Darwin exclaimed to one of his informers (as he calls him), about the recent cold-blooded massacre of women who appeared to be over twenty years old, that this slaughter was "rather inhuman". The informant responded, "Why, what can be done? They breed so!" (*Voyage*, 85).

Darwin was clearly appalled, as Desmond and Moore point out (*Sacred Cause*, 90). At the same time, Darwin could still proclaim this:

If this warfare is successful, that is if all the Indians are butchered, a grand extent of country will be gained for the production of cattle: & the vallies of the [Argentine rivers] will be most productive in corn. [*Diary*, 181]

When an informant tells him about something that he and his fellow soldiers just did, that is too close for comfort and Darwin is horrified. But where there is some distance between him and the war of subjugation, putting the war a little closer to invisibility, Darwin is solicitous of the colonial cause, highly reluctant to criticize it too openly. He felt and acted very differently about

slavery.

Others of Darwin's time were not so backpedaling. It was possible to be both anti-slavery and anti-colonial, or at least anti-the-atrocities of colonialism, including extermination of native peoples. Dr. James Cowles Prichard and Dr. Thomas Hodgkin, both Quakers (though Prichard became an Anglican), actively opposed the colonists' misdeeds and publicized the horrors of what was going on. Hodgkin helped to found the British Aborigines' Protection Society whose motto was *Ab Uno Sanguine* (Of One Blood). This was in part the result of the investigation from 1835 to 1837 of the House of Commons Select Committee on Aborigines in British Settlements at which Hodgkin, among many others, had testified. Prichard and Hodgkin spoke at the 1839 meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS). Darwin was present and heard Prichard's remarks. (For more on all this, see D & M, *Sacred Cause*, 142-45, 150-51.) But he never seems to have felt the need to take or call for any action. Wallace was in his mid-teens at this time.

In *This Whispering in Our Hearts*, Henry Reynolds provides many examples of how aware some people were that violent dispossession was precisely what was happening to natives in Australia. Many contemporary critics of colonialism actually used the word 'dispossess' (15, 17, 68, 120). George Robinson wrote of "a Complete System of Expulsion and Extermination" (49). Robert Lyon accused the British of pursuing a policy to "possess themselves of the lands they require by powder and ball" (83). "Forcible possession" was another expression that was used (37) and references to usurping the land were very popular (7, 9, 37). But this goes beyond mere vocabulary. There was a deep awareness that natives had been robbed and not compensated for their loss. Charles Napier, as we saw, wrote in 1835, "We rob the natives of their land, we rob them of *their* food ..." (Napier, 96). In 1870, James Bonwick explained that white people "came not to share the soil with the dark men, but to appropriate it," and the natives could "quietly submit to slavery; or they could refuse to sell their birthright of freedom, and take the consequences [i.e., war]" (*Last*, 28).

One might expect that the Aborigines themselves knew what was being done to them. Francis Tuckfield, a Methodist missionary in Australia, recorded in his journal (around 1840?) that blacks complained to him that "they are driven from this favoured haunt and from their other favoured haunts and threatened if they do not leave immediately ... and their language is ... 'My country all you gone. The white men have stolen it.'" (Reynolds, *Whispering*, 33). Robinson frequently met Aborigines who recounted to him what the white settlers had done, both in Van Diemen's Land and in mainland

Australia. In his journal for the latter, he wrote of their bitterness over the mischief done by bad white people who had shot many blacks and taken their women and children ('lubra and pickaninnie') so that "by and by blackfellow all gone. They were poor now White man had taken their good country, no ask for it but took it. Black men show white men plenty grass, and water and then White men say be off come be off and drive them away and no let him stop" (Sept. 17, 1841; Reynolds, *Whispering*, 50-51).

In his earlier journal for Van Diemen's Land, for November 23, 1829, Robinson recorded some of the complaints that natives made to him: "They have a tradition amongst them that white men have usurped their territory, have driven them into the forests, have killed their game and thus robbed them of their chief subsistence, have ravished their wives and daughters, have murdered and butchered their fellow-countrymen" (P, F, 88).

Even government officials knew what the Aborigines were thinking. In a letter (January 1828) to Colonial Secretary George Murray, Governor Arthur in Van Diemen's Land was aware of the natives' point of view: "They already complain that the white people have taken possession of their country, encroached upon their hunting grounds, and destroyed their natural food, the kangaroo; and they doubtless would be exasperated to the last degree to be banished altogether from their favourite haunts" (in Bischoff, 187).

White humanitarians, many of them missionaries, were indignant. "John Saunders took the view that the settlers had robbed the Aborigines 'without any sanctions' that he could find 'either in natural or revealed law'" (Reynolds, *Whispering*, 36). This was in 1838. Saunders also observed that "we descended as invaders upon his territory and took possession of the soil" (37). Robinson said in an 1832 letter that he was "at a loss to conceive by what tenure we hold the country for it does not appear to be that we either hold it by right of conquest or right of purchase" (36). *The Colonist* editorialized in 1838 that what the British had done was a "piratical invasion" (38). R.M. Lyon wrote, "Is it not amusing to hear the invaders of a country complaining of the manner in which the inhabitants attack their enemies and defend themselves?" (38). The title of Lyon's 1839 book is noteworthy: *Australia: An Appeal to the World on Behalf of the Younger Branch of the Family of Shem*.

They might quibble about the exact words to be used to describe this but they were generally in agreement about the injustice of it all. At one point in the testimony before the Select Committee (#4372), the Committee suggested that "it is nothing short of usurpation and robbery to take from them their soil and means of subsistence, without a fair and adequate compensation," to which Dandeson Coates replied that he agreed as to usurpation, "but I am unwilling to describe it as robbery" (Coates, 95). Saxe Bannister, however,

had no hesitation in identifying the system of conquest as "for the most part ... little better than marauding on a large scale" (*Colonization*, 192).

There were also plenty of comments that a 'full equivalent' or 'remuneration' had not been paid for the lands taken (Reynolds, *Whispering*, 5, 9, 38f, 68) and suggestions that restitution should be the next step (5, 7, 9, 45, 85). In 1824, one letter writer to the *Sydney Gazette* could ask, "Rather than trespass any further, should we not endeavour now to make reparation ..." (5). These references have been culled from Reynolds's *This Whispering in Our Hearts*. I would like to add an example from the 1837 paper by Andrew Maconochie which I referred to earlier (Ch. 4, §2). He had sent it to the Colonial Secretary and among his suggestions for improving the colonial system, which he considered a worse evil than slavery, there is this: "When a new territory is occupied, and the original rights of the natives ranging over it are consequently infringed, the *first* claim to a share of its increased value is surely *theirs*?" He was willing to grant that the "large balance [is] for ourselves," but the natives have "an admitted right" to a portion and "... this will give us a *right*, which, without it, it would be difficult to prove that we possess, to appropriate the remainder" (P, W, 1005; Maconochie's emphases).

In *Humane Policy* (1840), Saxe Bannister quoted a Dr. Andrew Smith who had observed that anyone who knew the history of the Bushmen in South Africa would understand that their hostility towards white people was well justified and therefore, "Until something like restitution be made for the numerous injuries that have been inflicted upon them, or some sensible and conciliatory measures be adopted to destroy the recollection of past misfortunes, nothing like friendly intercourse can be expected, without being maintained by force of arms" (36). The necessity of maintaining a force was one reason why humanitarians like Bannister insisted that inhumanity was far more expensive to society than a humane approach. Humanism and justice were much cheaper in the long run. Bannister deplored any system in which "millions went for war, a few thousands only for civilization," as he put it in his testimony before the Select Committee (*Report*, "Minutes", 9).

In April 1837, James Backhouse would write to the Governor of New South Wales that the Aborigines "had their lands usurped, without an attempt at purchase by treaty, or any offer of reasonable compensation" (*Extracts*, Fifth Part, 50). There were constant reminders of the injustice of this. Bannister pointed out that their "only crime is, that they precede us in the possession of lands, which we desire to enjoy to their exclusion" (*Humane* [1830], vi). The Andrew Smith whom Bannister quoted (see above) decried the situation where "the majority of the population of South Africa owes existence and prosperity more to the possession of power than to the exercise

of justice" (*Humane* [1840], 36).

In Chapter 6, at the end of §7, I quoted from the Rev. J. Beecham's testimony before the 1837 House Select Committee (#4367). He gave his opinion that "Christian instruction and social improvement" would be "a fair remuneration for the loss of their lands" (Coates, 93). In a letter to the Select Committee's chairman, Thomas Buxton, concerning the colony of Western Australia, Backhouse called civilization "the boon proposed by the British Government ... in compensation for the occupation of their lands," but he goes on to state that, "Nothing, in fact, worth mentioning, has been done for their civilization or protection" (*Extracts*, Fifth Part, 56).

It should be stressed that Maconochie, Backhouse, Bannister, the Select Committee itself with its Chairman Buxton and most of its witnesses, all wrote and spoke, like almost every humanitarian of the time, as confirmed imperialists (emigration to the colonies will go on, the *Report*, 75-76, insisted, but violence and fraud must not be tolerated, and further on, 83, the encroachment may be unjust but "there is no reason to suppose that either justice or humanity would now be consulted by receding from it"). Most assumed the natives were inferior. They had no problem with the notion that the English have a certain right to resources which they can put to better use, as Europeans saw it. It is right that the bulk of the benefits, or "large balance for ourselves" (see Maconochie above), should go to the British colonists, but something should be given to the natives. We cannot take all their land and give them nothing in return. One gentleman, J.R. Holden, responded in agreement with Maconochie, stating that "... a tithe of this revenue is the least that ought to be spent for the benefit of its aboriginal inhabitants" (*P, W*, 1008). Needless to say, this was never done. The Select Committee was honest in referring to Beecham's suggestion (offering Christianity as compensation) as "the only compensation we can afford" (#4370; Coates, 95).

The Committee was not insensitive to the hypocrisy of making so much money out of buying and selling land that did not belong to us. In London, speculators were buying land in South Australia at a minimum price fixed by Parliament "before a single European had landed on the spot" (*Report*, 79). The Committee therefore idealistically suggested that some portion from land sales be set aside for the education and protection of the natives. That was another dream that did not fare well. The Act establishing the colony of South Australia is included in the Appendix (Item #7) of Napier's book. Section VI of the Act called for some of the money from land sales to "constitute an 'Emigration Fund' ... [for] conveying poor emigrants" to the new colony. For that they were willing to spend money. Nothing had changed half a century later when G.W. Rusden indignantly reproved authorities for spending so

much on immigration and killing Aborigines, and precious little on defending Aborigines (see §3 of this chapter). A budget is often a good sign of a government's priorities and even whether certain subjects rate at all.

In the case of the Tasmanians, when all the remaining Aborigines were removed from Van Diemen's Land and placed on Flinders Island, with the boast that this was being carried out for their benefit to save them from extermination, the government spent less and less on them as time went by (Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 140). "They were no longer considered the survivors of the unjust dispossession of their country, but rather as the expensive and ungrateful inmates of an asylum" (*ibid.*).

When all is said and done, I have to admire the 1837 *Report* for combining honesty about how little could be done for Aborigines with an inability to drop the hope for something more equitable. Again and again, it agonizes over the injustice of it all. It cannot get over the enormity of making a lot of money from the sales of land unjustly taken, while the Aborigines get nothing out of it, so the *Report* keeps returning to the possibility of imagining what *a little justice* would look like, if it were only possible. Near the end, it sneaks in a proposal that perhaps some expenditure (taken for example from the massive amount earned from selling land in New South Wales) could be devoted to the maintenance of missionaries who would educate the Aborigines and, more importantly, for Protectors to defend their interests. Among the duties of the Protectors would be to provide employment for the natives and "Especially they should claim for the maintenance of the Aborigines such lands as may be necessary for their support," and if they don't take to agriculture, then give them room to hunt (*Report*, 83). But the source of the Committee's agony was something they could not quite confront: They could not give up on colonization.

What should we have expected of Darwin? What demands do we have a right to put on him, demands that cannot be dismissed even by the claim that we are judging him in hindsight? I don't think we could have expected him all on his own to have put a damper on colonialism's worst abuses anymore than we'd have expected him to singlehandedly decrease or end slavery. There is only so much one person can do. I admire him for speaking up to the man who worked for General Rosas, a genocidal despot as Desmond and Moore call him (*Sacred Cause*, 90). That was a brave thing to do. But just as he reported on and denounced the inhumanity of slavery (after it was basically over in the British empire), he could have done as much for the ongoing cruelties of colonial repression. He could have reported it, memorialized it, tried to stir the larger society to action. Many of the Select Committee's suggestions made no headway precisely because it was so utterly alone in

pushing for them.

As I said previously, colonialism was just another form of slavery. A little less ruthless in some ways, just as cruel in other ways, and always just as dispossessing as slavery. "Lancelot Threlkeld reported his horror soon after arriving in Newcastle [in 1824] that he had heard the shrieks of girls about eight or nine being taken by force by 'the vile men' of the town" (Reynolds, *Whispering*, 34). I would not expect Darwin to have been aware of this particular report in a piece of personal correspondence, but he certainly knew about such atrocities from Bonwick's book and from James Bischoff's 1832 history of Tasmania which I will get to in more detail in the next chapter. Why did Darwin blind himself to all that? Other people of his time did not and reported on what was happening under colonialism, people like Prichard, Hodgkin and Thomas Fowell Buxton (the elder), MP, who was an active abolitionist as well as instrumental in promoting knowledge of the plight of the Aborigines of the world and trying to alleviate it. Buxton was also chairman of that Select Committee on Aborigines. Their *Report*, of which he was either the principle author or into which he had considerable input, compared the injustices of slavery and colonialism. Darwin participated only in the anti-slavery position and left Aborigines to themselves.

Yet so many writers on Darwin find it hard to bring this up. One sin which Darwin did not commit: He did not give himself god-like status. Others did that for him. Why? What is going on here? If I carefully lay out some of Darwin's faults, it is not because Darwin is the issue. Criticizing Darwin is almost the furthest thing from my mind. He was human, he wasn't perfect. No sin in that. Far more troubling are the misrepresentations made about Darwin by his idolizers, but we cannot be clear about those misstatements until we get straight Darwin's own position from what he actually wrote and failed to write. Darwin's blindness about colonialism, as interesting as it is, is not nearly as interesting as the blindness of western academics about Darwin and, more generally, about how science is often affected by the cultural prejudices of the time.

Darwin was very outspoken on the inferiority of most savages. He accepted their extermination, which is not the same as openly advocating it, but acceptance, especially wide acceptance, does help to deter anyone who might be opposed to it. He was also very uncomfortable with some of its excesses as committed by people like Rosas. He was not trying to hide anything. To be clear: He was honest about his prejudices and acquiescence to extermination as a natural development. Only millions of Europeans held the same beliefs. As to the primary cause of the extermination, he indulged in euphemisms and was less than honest.

The idea that euphemisms were being used in connection with colonialism did exist in Darwin's time. Although I am not aware of whether anyone took Darwin to task for this, I did come across two examples of this kind of criticism in Reynolds's book. In an 1880 letter to the *Queenslander*, one signing as Outis asked, "How many among us understand the euphemistic word 'dispersal'?" (*Whispering*, 119;). He then describes the attack orchestrated by a white officer leading a band of black policemen on a camp of blacks "hewing down men, women, and children before them ... If it is advisable that, as a colony, we should indulge in wholesale murder of the race we are dispossessing, let us have the courage of our opinions and murder openly and deliberately---calling it *murder*, and not 'dispersal'" (119-20; his emphasis). Also, the first editorial in this *Queenslander* series, entitled *The Way We Civilize*, called dispersal "a convenient euphuism [*sic*] for wholesale massacre" (111).

Darwin's analysis in that section in *Descent* on extinction of the races roughly goes like this: Coming into contact with Europeans leads to changed habits which leads to depression which leads to infertility which leads to declining population and finally to extinction. Take note that Darwin's chain begins with two euphemisms. Instead of 'coming into contact' and 'changed habits', begin the progression of events with 'invasion and subjugation lead to dispossession which leads to depression, etc.' and the matter appears in a very different light.

It should be obvious that we are talking about violent dispossession and that the natives were dispossessed of so much more than land. Their whole way of living was upended and undone. In Australia, in 1880, the editor of the *Queenslander* recognized how violent and extensive the dispossession was in *The Way We Civilize* (the above letter from Outis was published as a part of that series). An anonymous author wrote the editorials. The first one contained this description:

Their lives and their property, the nets, canoes, and weapons which represent as much labor to them as the stock and buildings of the white settler, are held by the Europeans as being at their absolute disposal. Their goods are taken, their children forcibly stolen, their women carried away, entirely at the caprice of the white men. The least show of resistance is answered by a rifle bullet ... the majority of outsiders who take no part in the outrages have been either apathetic or inclined to shield their companions, and the white brutes who fancied the amusement, have murdered, ravished, and robbed the blacks without let or hindrance. [in

If this was natural, it was natural in the way that being hit by a giant meteor is natural. It was as natural as slavery which Darwin did not regard as natural at all. Darwin does see a connection between changed habits, depression, and declining population. But even with the euphemisms, he somehow forgets to stress that these savage tribes had survived well in their environment for thousands of years and *only now* in the 19th century are they in trouble. He does not allow himself to see that they have been dispossessed of their land *and* culture just as surely as slaves have been. One could say that 'changed conditions of life' is also a euphemism for *de facto* slavery. This euphemism was used by a man who was opposed to legalized slavery. It demonstrates once again that being an abolitionist, as Darwin was, is not necessarily a sign of deep humanitarianism. Here the euphemisms allowed him to be less than clear. On the question of colonialism, his honesty and scientific scholarship was lacking.

The younger Darwin was capable of seeing that savages were very well adapted to their environment and had no need for improvement. Tierra del Fuego was "one of the most inhospitable countries" in the judgment of Darwin and many others. And yet: "There is no reason to believe that the Fuegians decrease in number; therefore we must suppose that they enjoy a sufficient share of happiness (of whatever kind it may be) to render life worth living. Nature by making habit omnipotent, and its effects hereditary, has fitted the Fuegian to the climate and the productions of his country" (*Narrative*, 237; he made it 'his miserable country' in *Voyage*, 183; *Diary*, 223-24). That is an admirable insight for any naturalist. But the older Darwin abandoned this and refused to emphasize that in general it was the Europeans, not the local nature, who brought that decrease in numbers for savages, and further, he refused to acknowledge that this non-local activity is not the way natural selection is supposed to work.

But as to his basic prejudices and nonchalant attitude towards a devastation as enormous as extermination, Darwin is forthright. He does not try to hide it. Why do his admirers? What is the purpose? What are they trying to gain? Why are they so hostile to anyone who disagrees with them? What are they afraid of? Whose voices are they trying to throttle? Neither I nor anyone else may be able to answer these questions, but that doesn't mean they should not be asked. Asking even unanswerable questions is not a sin. It keeps the home brain burning. It's good for what ails you.

If words like evidence, the search for truth, justice, and academic freedom are to mean anything, then we have to challenge the excessive praise heaped

on Charles Darwin and the theory that was misused from the day he offered it. He was indeed a great scientist and a kind man, but these qualities were not always in evidence. If we are not allowed to say this and prove this because some people think that something of the divine shines from Darwin, then the above words are meaningless and academic freedom is a farce. Darwin was honest about some of his biases. If his followers cannot be, then shame on them, not on him.

~ 6 ~

One of the things they wanted to do at that 1839 BAAS meeting, if it was not possible to save the fast disappearing natives, was to create a record of what these cultures had been like. They wanted to gather information by making up a questionnaire and distributing it to travelers who could be of help in getting answers. Margaret Hodgen describes some of the things they were after: "their languages, family life, sports and amusements, ceremonies, foods, dress, treatment of the sick, funerals, works of art, government, laws, and religion" (Hodgen, *Anthropology, History*, 3). Darwin joined their committee so that he could contribute to what would be on the questionnaire. Desmond and Moore see Darwin's fingerprints on it in the queries about the breeding of their domestic animals, marriages, births, deaths, and diseases (*Sacred Cause*, 151). The Association allocated all of £5 for the project.

Getting merchants and travelers to gather information about foreign cultures based on a questionnaire was not a new idea. They had been doing it as far back as the 16th century (see Hodgen, *Early Anthropology*, 185-190). There is some genuine curiosity about other peoples in this, but it was also very much prompted by commercial interests. If you are going to be engaged in trade or any kind of business with people, it is a good idea to get to know your potential business partners, rivals, and customers. Thus, question #16 in Albrecht Meier's list (published in German in 1587, translated into English in 1589; see Hodgen, 186; I am modernizing the English spelling): "What offenses are there most common, and most punished, or tolerated." It is useful information to help you stay on their good side and not offend anyone. And #23 can also come in handy and contribute to goodwill: "The variety and manner of their exercises for pastime and recreation."

Hodgen points out that scientists of the time actually had very little interest in this. This was primarily carried out for the sake of mercantile activity. Even when the Royal Society in Oxford got in on the act in the late 17th century, their interests too were for the sake of "the material prospects of the colonists" and not to gain knowledge as such (Hodgen, 189). She quotes one member of the Society, Thomas Sprat, who observed that "the consideration of Man and

humane affairs' would have affected the group 'with a thousand various disquiets'" (189). It was too overwhelming to think about the varieties of mankind. They chose to avoid it. It was only business interests that prompted them to pay any attention.

We also get a sense that colonial conquest was on their mind. Hence, #20 from Meier's list of questions: "The disposition and spirit of the people: whether warlike and valiant, or faint hearted and effeminate: their store or want of military furniture, and provisions: whether they, or their Ancestors have been famous for victories, or infamous for cowardliness and overthrows, yea or no." In other words, how easy or tough will it be to combat these people and subdue them. A lot of thought and planning went into colonial ventures. It was not a haphazard process.

The interests of scientists in 1839, when ethnography had been established as a legitimate field and even the word anthropology was beginning to be used, were prompted less by mercantile interests and more by curiosity, and probably by desperation and maybe even a little guilt, as these other races had only just been discovered and now many were bound towards extinction, or so everyone believed. There is something ghoulish in this. The natives are dying and rather than rush to save them as one would to save a drowning person, all they could think to do was to carry out their own ideas about what it means to gain knowledge of an alien culture. It makes me shiver. I know Prichard, Hodgkin, Bannister and many others struggled valiantly to do what they could for the native populations. Darwin, however, didn't. It does seem that he limited his interest to that questionnaire. This was only a few years after he returned from his *Beagle* voyage, when he had the opportunity to see what was happening to Aborigines. He was more interested in gaining information from them before they disappeared forever than in saving them from disappearing. Yet Darwin would tell us in *Descent* that a civilized man or boy would rush to save a drowning man.

His behavior in 1839 is repeated in the twelve page section on the extinction of races in Chapter 7 of *Descent*. Darwin is gathering information and brushing aside questions of justice, even as he pretends to be concerned about the causes of extinction. If he was all that concerned, he would not have used those deceptive expressions 'changed habits', 'waste away', 'come into contact', and 'immigration'.

And he would not have made a selective reference to the work of Dr. Georg Gerland, German anthropologist and author of *Über das Aussterben der Naturvölker (On the Extinction of Primitive Peoples)* (1868). Darwin references him three times in Chapter 7 in notes 31, 32, and 34 (211-12) to support the points, respectively, that man can resist conditions unfavorable for

his existence, that decreasing numbers usually leads to extinction, and that new diseases are generated when distinct peoples first meet. In addition, he cites Gerland for his information on infanticide among savages (141 n32, 644 n54, and 660 n13). He does not tell his readers, or himself apparently, what Gerland really thought about the primary causes of their extinction, even though he had someone take pains to translate some of this in the margins of his copy of Gerland's book.

Gerland was a student of Theodor Waitz, another German anthropologist who had written about primitive peoples. According to Sven Lindqvist, Gerland considered the various alleged causes of the disappearance of native peoples, such as tribal warfare, primitive hygiene, cannibalism, human sacrifice, the environment, and more. Gerland concluded that European diseases played a major role, but, says Lindqvist, "an even more decisive factor is the hostile behavior of the whites, constituting one of the blackest chapters in the whole history of mankind. What could be called 'cultural violence' is even more efficacious than physical violence, Gerland says ... Europeans destroy out of rapacity or lack of understanding the basis of everything the natives thought, felt, and believed" ("*Exterminate All the Brutes*", 142-43). Lindqvist's summary is fair.

Gerland also mentioned the bloodthirstiness of whites, which leads Lindqvist to provide the only quote he offers from Gerland's book: "the cruelties have been carried out fairly uniformly by whole populations in the colonies or anyhow have been approved by them; yes, even today violence is not always condemned." Finally, Lindqvist gets this out of Gerland: "It is no law of nature that primitive people must die out ... Nowhere have we found any physical or mental inability to develop among them, Gerland ends. If the natural rights of the natives are respected, they will live on" (143). This is not quite accurate. Gerland did believe that primitives had some internal faults which would eventually lead them to extinction, but the European contribution to this was far greater and Gerland did not accept this as inevitable, as I will explain below. Recall that James Bonwick quoted a writer who made a similar point about the civilized extermination of native peoples not being inevitable (*Last*, 376) and that Darwin read Bonwick's book too. Darwin was familiar with at least two writers who argued that the eradication of indigenous peoples was not a foregone conclusion.

It was Lindqvist who first brought Gerland to my attention. Nothing in Darwin's *Descent* prepared me for what I would find in Gerland's book, which is available online and not just any copy but Darwin's own copy with his helper's marginal translation/summary of various points in the text; neither Darwin nor his helper offer their own commentary. If not for Lindqvist, I

would have had no reason to search for Gerland's book. Because Gerland's holistic approach to evolution led him to very different insights about the place of savages in the world, his book deserves an extended treatment.

~ 7 ~

Gerland reviews much of the violence that colonizing Europe was perpetrating against primitive peoples, races, nations (*Naturvölker*, which in Darwin's annotations is rendered as savage races or savages). Hardly any country is left out: England, Spain, Portugal, Holland, America, Russia, France (though Germany had no colonies as yet, he even includes some sporadic hostile acts by Germans, but praises German missionary activity; see Gerland, 135). This is reminiscent of Saxe Bannister's comment a few decades earlier: "There is, indeed, little distinction to be made between any of the European governments in their treatment of their colonised subjects" (*Humane* [1830], 6). These were "events which tarnish all colonial history" (7).

For Gerland, European behavior towards natives was reprehensible, greedy, and bloodthirsty (see especially Chapters 16, 17, and 22 in Gerland, but really throughout the book). In Chapter 22, he argues that 19th century Europe has not morally advanced beyond the brutality and inhumanity of the 16th century Spanish empire. If we have lost some ways of violence, we have gained in ways of falsehood and deceit. At the end of Chapter 17, after recounting what happened to the Tasmanians, he asks his readers to ponder the fact that all these horrors were committed in the 19th century; in other words, *our* modern century. Gerland and others had a very high opinion of their century and believed it had failed to live up to its promise.

As a reminder: I am going over Gerland's book *Über das Aussterben der Naturvölker* in excruciating detail because Darwin read it or had someone read it for him and accurately translate, or summarize, many of his points in the margins of his copy. Darwin was very aware of Gerland's arguments and the information he provided. That he chose not to inform the readers of *The Descent of Man* of any of these points is significant.

There are many ways of being cruel. Gerland identifies racism as one such way. His usual way of referring to racism is to call it arrogance (*Hochmuth*). The English, Gerland notes, are known for their "rigid, racial arrogance" (130; *starren Raçenhochmuth*; cf. 112). But not only the English. "The English and Dutch have distinguished themselves by indescribable [or, unspeakable] arrogance and hatred towards all people of color, which has been no less harmful to primitive peoples than overt hostility" (Gerland, 134-35; *Die Engländer und Holländer zeichnen sich durch unaussprechlichen Hochmuth*

und Hass gegen jede farbige Bevölkerung aus, durch welchen sie den Naturvölkern fast nicht mindern Schaden gethan haben, als durch offene Feindseligkeiten; cf. 91, 93). The arrogance of caste (*Kastenhochmuth*) of white people is another expression Gerland uses (98). (If the English is awkward in any part of my translations, it is because I wanted to stay close to the German; alternative meanings of words are in brackets in my translations; in the renditions of Gerland found in Darwin's copy, I use brackets to make suggestions where the handwriting was illegible to me or sometimes a ? following an unclear word, as in the following.) The translation in Darwin's copy of the above sentence (lower left-hand margin on 134) is as follows: "The English and Dutch are distinguished among all others for their scorn [?] & hatred & [this second & might be crossed out] which has worked as much harm as their more open enmity."

(Langfield Ward, whom I will get to in the last section of this chapter, writing just a few years after Gerland, also frequently refers to contempt for the natives; see Ward, 16, 44, 72, 114, 130. In that last reference, he says of his fellow Englishmen, "No colonists have exhibited a greater repugnance than ours, to mingling freely with aborigines.")

Gerland also presents information and testimony from authors such as George Grey, Alexander von Humboldt, James Bischoff, and more. (For Humboldt on the Guahiba Indians, see Gerland, 105; for Grey and Bischoff, see 113-15.) Darwin, when he was younger, read the ones I have just listed. If he needed any reminder of what certain European authors had reported on some of the atrocities committed by colonialism, here was Gerland performing that service for him. In fact, Gerland even reminds Darwin of what Darwin himself had said in the first edition of his journal with regard to events in Tasmania. He quotes Darwin's remark about "the infamous conduct of some of our countrymen" (*Narrative*, 533; also in *Journal*, 447), which in Gerland's German runs "«schändlichen Betragen» der Engländer" (Gerland, 115).

In none of these places on other authors in Gerland's book does Darwin's helper make any translation in the margins, though he or she did so earlier in the book where Darwin is mentioned in several places (I am assuming that most of these annotations were made at Darwin's direction). That could mean either that Darwin had no interest in this material or that he was already familiar with it and did not need an additional reminder. In any case, Gerland made it fresh in Darwin's mind as he was writing *The Descent of Man*.

For my purposes, one of the most striking things about Gerland is his holistic sense of nature and the way he applies this to indigenous peoples. The evolutionists before Darwin (primarily E. Darwin, Lamarck, Rafinesque, and

Chambers) also embraced holism, but they said little to nothing about the meaning of this with regard to Aboriginal populations. With Gerland, we have a chance to see how a European scientist would incorporate indigenes into a holistic vision of evolution.

Before I get to that, I should first say something about Gerland's examination of the causes of the disappearance of primitive peoples. Like Darwin, he stresses that there is not one cause to account for this, but multiple causes (see Gerland's Ch. 18). Unlike Darwin, he includes western greed, arrogance (i.e., racism), and violence as major causes. Darwin never informs his readers of this despite his several references to Gerland. Gerland even includes *intentional extermination* as something that has happened from time to time---"the intention ... to exterminate them" (*der Absicht ... sie auszurotten*; 116) and "intentionally slaughters and exterminates" (*absichtlich mordet und ausrottet*; 117). Once their program of conquest got under way, European countries for the most part did not approach indigenous peoples in a friendly, peaceful manner. This was a huge problem as Gerland saw it. It created a very cruel destruction of the spirit of these peoples.

Gerland explains that even under the best of circumstances, it is very difficult to assimilate or adapt to another civilization. The mental effort is exhausting and debilitating (a point he emphasizes in Ch. 15). Had Europeans approached indigenous cultures in an amicable manner (and Europeans were anything but amicable), it would have been hard enough to take to another language, another way of life, new mental concepts and intuitions, new modes of commerce, legal ideas, and religion (Ch. 15). As it was, the difficulties were increased enormously not only by the physical brutality, but by the constant attacks on the minds and spirits of these peoples. Demoralization and melancholy come up a lot in several chapters (the annotations in Darwin's copy acknowledge this by using 'demoralisation' in the marginalia on 94 and 95). Gerland stresses how often and deeply Europeans wounded the pride and sense of right of primitive peoples (see the last few pages of Ch. 14). Darwin's helper translates on 94, "One of the characteristics of savages is their pride & injury of their pride is the hardest thing they had to bear. Not less remarkable is their feeling of justice." Pride was wounded mainly by the destruction of their culture which leads to "endless humiliation" (see here, two paragraphs below) and to depression (98).

The physical dispossession of their land played a part in this too, which I previously discussed in Chapter 6 (§5). As I said there, it was dispossession that was deceptively covered up with the enigmatic "poisonous breaths". Darwin nevertheless believed there was something to this idea of a mysterious breath and, in *Descent*, incorrectly cited Gerland as another supporter of this

idea that there was a mystery to the disappearance of natives, when in fact Gerland was bent on exposing the falseness of it. (It is possible that Darwin was merely citing Gerland as his source for the Pöppig quote, but even if that is so, he still failed to point out Gerland's opposition to this idea.) Destruction of their sustenance and being pushed off their land were major contributing factors to the disappearance of natives. That was the reality behind the so-called poisonous breaths.

At the end of Chapter 15, Gerland gives two examples (from different countries) of natives who were well educated in western ways. One became a lawyer, the other a doctor. Both suffered from melancholy. The doctor eventually threw off all traces of civilization and returned to a savage way of life. The lawyer, a Choctaw Indian, committed suicide. While others would attribute the suicide to his melancholy nature, Gerland remarks that the melancholy was in part due to the "arrogance of caste" (*Kastenhochmuth*) of North-American whites (98). Gerland considers "endless humiliation on one side and overexertion on the other" (*die ewige Demüthigung auf der einen, die Ueberanstrengung auf der anderen Seite*) to be twin causes of their demoralization (98; by 'overexertion' Gerland is referring to the enormous mental effort it takes to adapt to another culture, especially when that culture has been introduced too quickly; the end of Ch. 13 is another place where Gerland stresses how devastating is the sudden upheaval of everything one has known).

"One cannot emphasize strongly enough this destruction of the entire spiritual [or, mental] and ethical life of nations, if one wants to find the reasons for their extinction" (Gerland, 94; *Diese Vernichtung aber des gesammten geistigen und ethischen Lebens der Nationen kann man gar nicht stark genug betonen, wenn man die Gründe für ihr Aussterben aufsuchen will*; it is a point he returns to fairly often, e.g., at the end of Ch. 16). This was noteworthy enough for Darwin's helper to translate (on 94): "This destruction of their spiritual and ethical life cannot be overrated in considering the grounds for their extinction. Nothing is as depressing as a sense of powerlessness & desolation."

Gerland quotes another writer who was quoted by his teacher Theodor Waitz to the effect that a people can only disappear when its courage, energy, and self-respect have been ruined by oppression, slavery, and vice. As summed up in Darwin's marginalia on 94, "Every race must perish says Waiz when their self esteem is gone." In his own words, Gerland says that nothing oppresses the spirit of a people (*den Volksgeist*) more than "the feeling [or, self-consciousness] of its own powerlessness and lostness [or, forlornness]" (94; *das Gefühl der eigenen Ohnmacht und Verlorenheit*; in Darwin's copy,

the translator's choice of 'desolation' for the last word, see above, is very good, I think). Europeans have done their utmost to carry out this horrible cruelty:

On the other hand, Europeans bear the heaviest responsibility here for they have intentionally trampled underfoot the rights of these peoples; they look at primitive peoples as hardly human, not even willing to allow them their human self-confidence, but also trampling it underfoot through political steps, as the United States did, and the French in Tahiti and the English in Australia; and by means of a boundless arrogance and hatred, they further trample these peoples underfoot by excluding them from all community and, by that, from all civilization, subsequently depriving them continually of land and sources of food. [Gerland, 93]

And the German:

Theils aber tragen auch hier die Europäer die schwerste Verantwortlichkeit, denn sie haben die Rechte dieser Völker absichtlich mit Füßen getreten, sie haben, da sie die Naturvölker kaum für Menschen ansahen, nicht einmal ihr menschliches Selbstbewusstsein ihnen lassen mögen, sondern auch dieses, und oft von Staateswegen, wie die Vereinigten Staaten, wie Frankreich in Tahiti, wie die Engländer in Australien, mit Füßen getreten; und man tritt es durch den grenzenlosen Hochmuth und Hass, mit dem man diese Völker von aller Gemeinschaft und damit von aller Kultur ausschliesst, nachdem man ihnen häufig Land und Lebensmittel genommen, auch ferner mit Füßen.

All the natives can do, Gerland adds, is respond with sporadic violence. Keep in mind that 'arrogance' (*Hochmuth*) is the word that Gerland often uses for what we would call racism.

At the same time, Gerland was impressed by the resiliency and vitality of primitives. They have resisted the European onslaught. Extermination or near-extirmination has happened only on islands, in relatively small, confined places, where the movements of natives have been constricted. Gerland mentions Tasmania, the Mariana Islands, and the Antilles (Gerland, 118). In wider places, Europeans for all their superiority have been unable to completely eradicate the natives. Gerland clearly admires "the vital [or, life] force" (*diese Lebenskraft*) in human beings, which he finds equally distributed among all branches of mankind though it might be rather stronger among primitive peoples (120). In primitives, it has enabled them to fend off utter

destruction. Considering all the horrors inflicted on these peoples, "one becomes more astonished by their tenacious endurance than by their disappearance" (94; *und man wird sich mehr über die zähe Ausdauer, als über das Hinschwinden derselben verwundern*; cf. 107, they are still here after hundreds of years of oppression). (As I discussed in Chapter 6, at the end of §5, Gerland rejected any idea that indigenous peoples were biologically less well organized than whites: "this supposition surely collapses by itself;" *so fällt damit schon von selbst die Annahme*, 122.) When discussing the Spanish oppression of Indians in Mexico, the real wonder or miracle (*Wunder*), as he says, is not that entire groups of natives have expired due to the "breaths of civilization" (*Hauche der Kultur*, which Gerland puts in quotation marks in his text), but that in spite of all the evil (*Leiden*, suffering, affliction) done to them, they have not been entirely eliminated (106-07).

This is where a bit of a contradiction creeps into Gerland's assessment. While he very much admired the life force of primitives and did not think them in any way biologically inferior to whites, he also thought they had a number of vices or self-destructive tendencies. They were indolent, rigid in their habits, and under the domination of nature (36-38 for the first two; 84, 121 for the last). This in itself is not necessarily a contradiction. All he is saying is that the life force of any people has its limitations and may not be completely resistant to every vice or evil that comes along. "However it is well to take note that the indestructibility of these toughened peoples has its limit" (121; *Doch ist wohl zu beachten, dass auch die Unverwüstlichkeit dieser härteren Völker ihre Grenze hat*). Among the vices, or immoral excesses (*Ausschweifungen*), which he saw were drunkenness (some tribes had their own native intoxicants) and sexual immorality. Gerland maintained an awareness that some European reports of these vices were exaggerated and self-serving (in order to justify enslaving or eradicating natives, or to cover up European brutality), yet when these false reports were removed, some genuine problems remained, or so he thought. The main drawback in the life of indigenous peoples was that they were rigid in their ways and unable to rise above nature (84, 121). "They have not achieved any rule over nature which surrounds them" (121; *Sie hatten sich keine Herrschaft über die sie umgebende Natur errungen*).

Gerland never explains how the self-destructiveness jives with the vitality. Granted that the life force does not make any people all-powerful (I think Gerland would apply this to Europeans too). In and of itself this makes some sense. The contradiction appears in the following way. Gerland believed that the internal self-destructive tendencies in primitive peoples were serious enough that this was leading to their extinction, slowly but surely, sooner or

later (the last paragraph of Ch. 18). Earlier, he said, "It is no exaggeration to maintain that, even if they were alone in the world without any outside hostile influence, and considering their actual development, or better, their hardening, they will still little by little fade away and die out" (37-38; *es nicht übertrieben, zu behaupten, dass, auch wenn sie allein auf der Welt wären, ohne jeglichen feindseligen Einfluss von aussen her, sie dennoch, wie jetzt ihre Entwicklung oder wohl besser ihre verhärtung ist, nach und nach langsam vergehen und erlöschen würden*).

What Gerland avoided thinking about is how it could be that the same nature that sustained these native peoples for thousands of years would all of sudden, without any radical change in their environment (putting the arrival of Europeans to the side), turn on them, in a sense, and lead them gradually into oblivion. For thousands of years, the Aborigines of the world had lived with the balance always having been in favor of their vital force. There were no radical disturbances or developments in nature to change this. Now their affirmation of life was over, no longer strong enough to repel the usual inimical forces of nature? It is a very odd position to take and yet many European authors believed that this was precisely the predicament faced by indigenes. Their own defects were leading them to ruin.

It was especially odd in Gerland's case to have believed in the gradual self-extermination of native peoples---he who was otherwise so generous in his understanding of natives and so aware of how self-serving were the negative depictions Europeans made about them. I can only explain it by referring again to Agnes Arber's point that the prevailing intellectual atmosphere is humiliatingly compulsive. No one completely escapes its overreach. Everyone was making this point, so Gerland feels obliged to follow suit. If, like Gerland, you succumb to it only for a brief moment in a way that does not affect the entirety of your thoughts, count yourself very lucky indeed.

Perhaps too one could say that in Gerland we have an example of what F. Scott Fitzgerald meant when he said that a sign of a good mind is that it can think two contradictory thoughts and still function. Gerland continued to function very well. This one contradiction in his thoughts did not undermine his good insights; it even led to his observing a rather intriguing irony. The intrusion of Europeans into the culture and lives of Aborigines in so many places meant that Europeans had become the principle cause of pushing them to the precipice of extinction (116), but Europeans could also be the means of saving primitives from being at the mercy of nature. Whatever may have happened to natives if they had been left to their own devices (or lack of them), the entry of Europeans into the mix had changed the game. Gerland saw that very clearly.

For one thing, European actions had replaced nature as the chief dilemma facing natives. Europe was now the primary exterminating force. And Gerland did not believe that extermination at the hands of Europeans was inevitable. In this one sense, Gerland rejected inevitability. The demise of indigenous peoples did not have to happen. Their doom was no longer sealed. European extermination was not irrevocable. Whatever deleterious actions the bearers of civilization were carrying out could be undone. European culture could be and should be the means of rescuing the natives from ruin.

Gerland was no admirer of the primitive way of life. He did not admire their superstitions and their own cruelties. He did not think their subjection to the whims of nature was a good thing. Above all, he thought thousands of years of little development had left them stuck in harmful habits. Nature by itself was not an educative force and offered them no way out. What primitives needed was "a swift kick" (122; *ein plötzlicher Anstoss*) to jolt them out of their rigid habits. For that jolt, "the action [or, intervention] of civilization is necessary" (ibid.; *es war das Eingreifen der Kultur nothwendig*). Although he does not spell it out in this passage from the end of Chapter 18, he likely had in mind very positive contributions like teaching them about medicines and agricultural skills. Unfortunately, what civilization had brought so far was "much blood and misery" (ibid.; *das viele Blut und Elend*). The great sin would be if Europe did not change its violent input and continued to contribute to the ruin of indigenous people so that it came sooner rather than later.

Gerland focused his attention on the danger of extinction from Europeans. He understood that it was the combination of outright violence or bloodthirstiness, dispossession, racism (or arrogance), humiliation, and despondency that was creating this danger. He did not believe that it was a mysterious poisonous breath. Western civilization was carrying out concrete acts and carrying on with concrete attitudes that could be carefully delineated. Like Merivale, Gerland believed the causes could be pinpointed *and* were preventable. Darwin believed a little bit in the first (but focused on different causes) and not at all in the second. What put Darwin miles apart from a handful of investigators, like Merivale and Gerland, is that he based his own ideas on that sense of entitlement that was pervasive among most western intellectuals in the 19th century: We in the west are entitled to take and take and take, and will not stop until it becomes a complete take-over. Only a few western thinkers could not go along with this.

The other significant difference between Gerland and Darwin is that Gerland was a dedicated holistic thinker. Gerland sets forth his beliefs about holism in the first couple of pages of the last chapter. He sees the wholeness

of nature as "striving for greater perfection, strength [or, stability], and security of existence" (*eine grössere Vollkommenheit, Festigkeit und Sicherheit der Existenz anstreben*). He calls this the "the law of evolution" (*Das Gesetz dieser Entwicklung*) and it operates not only in nature as a totality but in each individual as well. Everything in nature and the whole of nature itself aims for the ultimate goal which is simply "preservation and advancement" (*Erhaltung und Förderung*). Everything wants to live and advance. This includes the sub-parts of nature. Nature can be broken down into individuals subordinate (*unterordnet*) to species, species to genus, and genus to family. In general, each limited part is subordinate to, or subsumed under, the greater or larger part, and in a sense, the limited entity can be sacrificed (*aufopfert*) to the interests of the greater part.

At first glance, these last thoughts look like Darwin's "groups subordinate to groups" all over again, and that business about sacrifice, *if taken out of context*, might make it seem all the more Darwinian. But banish any thought that Gerland is expounding a system of domination. Gerland's fundamental point is that all individuals, species, etc., are subservient to the whole of nature and to the law of development or evolution. The term *aufopfert* can also mean devoted to. Each part of nature is devoted to, or integrated in, the interests of the sub-whole just above it and all the lesser wholes devote themselves to the completeness of nature and to the striving for life which each fulfills as best it can.

Nature wants to create life, not death and absolutely not any inferiority of life resulting from one group being forced to serve a supposedly superior form of life in another group. *You do not elevate the whole by degrading any part of it*. I believe that is a firm rule with Gerland. Nature strives to elevate all to the final goal of advancement for all---to achieve security, strength, safety. Each blessed part of the whole shares in this goal.

Human beings are a part of nature, a part of the same whole that every other organism is a part of, and therefore, the same law of evolution applies to us. We humans are not a law unto ourselves. We don't get to establish another law just for us. "We stand under the same whole as all other organisms, except that we are in a distinct position" (Gerland, 142; *dass wir unter ganz denselben stehen, wie die übrigen Organismen alle, nur dass unsere Stellung verschieden ist*). If nature wants preservation and advancement for all, we don't get to cut that off for some parts of nature in our own selfish interests. This is by no means a stretch of what Gerland means, as his next remarks demonstrate:

Now indeed the chief purpose of nature is the preservation and

advancement of the whole, so must it also be for us human beings, namely, above all the preservation and advancement of human society, for our primary sphere of activity is naturally among our own particular race. Yet it would be a very bad way to serve the whole, if we wished to crush [stamp out] similar viable germs [buds, sprouts], simply because they have not developed [evolved] the same spring [bloom, prime] and the same race [behavior, character] as we have. Who knows towards what final purpose of nature they also can serve! [Gerland, 142]

And the German:

Wie nun also der Natur Erhaltung und Förderung des Ganzen Hauptzweck ist, so muss er es auch uns Menschen sein, und zwar zunächst Erhaltung und Förderung der menschlichen Gesellschaft, da unsere Thätigkeit zunächst unserer eigenen Gattung naturmässig gehört. Das aber heisst schlecht dem Ganzen dienen, wenn man lebensfähige Keime desselben, bloss weil sie nicht im gleichen Lenz und nach gleicher Art mit uns sich entwickelt haben, zertreten wollte. Wer weiss, zu welchem Endzweck auch sie der Natur dienen können!

We should be very clear that Gerland was not comparing primitive peoples to germs (*Keime*) in the sense of bacteria. The word means buds, sprouts, the first shoots of life. He is also comparing indigenes to spring (*Lenz*). I believe his overall meaning is that just because native peoples have not blossomed in the same way we have, that gives us no right to stamp them out (*zertreten*). I also believe, though I am not entirely sure about this, that by 'human society' he means all human beings on the planet, so that it is regard for the whole race of human beings that we have to attend to and not just our part. There is in this a real humility that is absent from Darwin's system of thought. Next to a holistic thinker like Gerland, Darwin is as arrogant as western civilization ever gets.

Gerland's entire thought process seems to be this (expanding only ever so slightly on his words by reading between the lines):

We should not overrate the importance or naturalness of extinction. Especially in cases where we, the western civilized nations, are playing a role in the extermination, it is presumptuous of us to declare that extinction is a natural outcome---and this is because the ultimate purpose of nature, both for itself as a totality and for all within it, seems to be preserving life rather than destroying it. (Darwin would probably have agreed with this last statement,

but not with what follows.) The ending of life may sometimes happen, but it should never be taken as a final goal in itself. (Darwin refers to extinction and extermination so often in *Origin*, they appear to be major results that nature is driving towards. Gerland does not specifically criticize Darwin, but he is definitely concerned to oppose this point of view which is represented by Darwin among others.) Life rather than death should be our guide.

It is the life of the whole that matters, as if all of nature constituted a single organism. That is nature's primary object. Because each part of nature contributes to the whole and because we are more ignorant than wise about the whole and the interconnectedness of everything, we have no business deciding that the function of any one part or another has expired. What I like about Gerland's evolutionary thinking is that it tries to incorporate ignorance into the system. We don't understand all that is happening, so let us err on the side of life, not death. Whereas the approach of Darwin and most scientists of the time was guided by the idea that however ignorant we may be, we can be sure that nature wants us to be on top and wants inferior parts to be eliminated.

To condense and rephrase in smoother English the last two sentences in the previous blocked quote from Gerland: "Who knows but that primitive peoples, sprouting life in their own right, do not also serve nature's ultimate goal!" That is a holistic thinker for you. (Any suggestion that dying can be a contribution to the final goal would be a complete perversion of Gerland's meaning.) We don't get to put an expiration date on anything. That would be sheer arrogance. Does nature want anything to disappear? We should not assume so. We should always assume nature needs each part for some purpose and wants to preserve life as much as possible. This contradicts some of what Gerland said previously about primitive peoples having serious defects which were slowly leading them to extinction. He was not perfect. I think he made a mistake there and went off the rails. But those earlier thoughts do not go to the heart of what he was aiming at. The real essence of his thinking was captured by something I heard in a film or TV show I recently saw (I cannot remember which one): Every child that is born God wants to be born. You could say the same of species and races.

Gerland's thoughts continue: We in the more advanced nations have a responsibility to imitate nature in this respect. All human races, actually sub-races, together on this planet should be looked on as one whole race. We ourselves are only a sub-race. We are not the whole thing, and we are certainly not the whole of nature. We should help our fellow human beings to achieve the best life they can because it serves the whole race of humans. If we are going to appoint ourselves leaders, we should lead the whole towards

more life, not towards destruction. Gerland actually says, "the sole task before civilized nations, when faced with the uncivilized, can only be to carry civilization to them too, and not to exterminate them by ample and effective means" (Gerland, 143; *die einzige Aufgabe schon civilisirter Nationen uncivilisirten gegenüber kann nur die sein, die Civilisation auch zu jenen binzutragen, nicht aber durch die reichlicheren und wirksameren Mittel derselben jene vertilgen*). Or as H. Merivale said, we are not predestined to become the murderers of indigenous peoples.

When we take it upon ourselves to exterminate another people or facilitate their destruction when other causes are in operation (like the infertility of the women), we stand outside the laws of nature and especially the law of evolution. Again, this is real humility and it is, I think, why western scientists have traditionally found holism an unacceptable approach. It does not support the west's arrogance towards nature and other peoples, and its quest for power.

Even if I am mistaken about some of the steps in this reasoning, I am certain of Gerland's conclusion. He considered that "an essential task of civilization [is] the preservation of less developed peoples" (Gerland, 142; *die Erhaltung der minder entwickelten Völker für eine wesentliche Aufgabe der Kultur*). Any attempt by the civilized to rush native peoples towards annihilation would mean we ourselves have returned to a state of barbarity. Darwin understood at least this much of what Gerland was saying. The last lines of the annotation in the marginalia on 143 of his copy of Gerland go like this: "Now nothing is more degrading to civilised than to sink back into savagery & the destructive exterminating [exterminatory?] wars of the nations & degraded [illegible; them?] generally. There is here another reason for the preservation of savages." And on 142, the annotation is: "But it wld be very bad for humanity to tread out germs capable of life only because they are not of the same nature with us." As explained above, 'germs' (*Keime*) here does not mean bacteria, but seedlings, buds, sprouts. Earlier in Gerland's book (on 135), the translated summary reads: "The Inhuman and bloodthirsty way in which savages have been treated shows that the gulf which separates civilised and savages is not so great as has been thought---for these are essentially savage traits."

If Darwin had ever really believed (which is highly unlikely) his remark to Lyell in that 1860 letter about European savagery being a judgment from a *remote* future, here was Gerland in 1868 forcefully reminding him that the future was now. Whatever awareness he gained from Gerland, he would submerge it again under the euphemisms in *Descent*.

Based on all we know about Darwin's writings, it is pretty obvious that he

did not share Gerland's view. He never expressed any such ideas in *The Descent of Man*. In Gerland, Darwin came face to face (by virtue of the translations in the margins) with an evolutionist whose understanding of the main causes of the impending extinction of indigenous peoples was different from his own and whose sense of man's relation to the rest of nature, especially to native peoples, was more humane than his, and yet, what is truly stunning, Darwin never acknowledged these differences nor the different approaches to evolution from which they stem. Readers of *Descent* would have had no clue about any of this. Gerland believed that the extermination of savages or native peoples by civilized powers is a violation of the fundamental law of nature to preserve and elevate. It is not natural and it is not a mysterious poisonous breath. No matter how many causes seem to be contributing to this, it is not inevitable and the part played by European countries is not one of the laws of nature. The greed and bloodthirstiness that brought Europeans to these other lands is not part of the struggle for survival. If anything, it is a struggle for luxuries and status that has nothing to do with survival of the fittest. It is closer to survival of the shittiest. And it raises the question of who are the real savages.

~ 8 ~

Gerland's sophisticated and sympathetic discussion of savage races and extermination is absent from *Descent*. Darwin's own exposition is very different. He begins this way: "Extermination follows chiefly from the competition of tribe with tribe, and race with race" (*Descent*, 211). He means savage tribes competing with each other, and not European, civilized tribes competing with the savage. He then lists various factors such as periodic famines, wars (i.e., between primitive tribes), accidents, sickness, the stealing of women, infanticide (which comes up a lot in this book), and "especially lessened fertility", another one of his favorites. And what happens when Europeans enter the picture? "When civilised nations come into contact with barbarians the struggle is short ... [the causes are complex, but] The grade of their civilisation seems to be a most important element in the success of competing nations" (212). Among the complex causes which "lead to the victory of civilised nations," Darwin mentions that "the cultivation of the land will be fatal in many ways to savages, for they cannot, or will not, change their habits" (212). Darwin skips the point that the savages have been violently dispossessed of their land and way of life and that this dispossession meant they no longer had access to their usual sources of food. The euphemism of inability to change their habits puts the burden on the natives, as if in the first place it were their responsibility to find new sources of food.

He also mentions new diseases and "spirituous liquors". Only one time (in the paragraph on the Tasmanians) does he bring up "fighting with the English." That's it. He cites several writers who consider the profligacy of native women to be another cause leading to extinction, but he seems not to be convinced of this. Darwin, however, is fond of saying (at least twice, on 213 and 216; and cf. 217, 218, 219) that "the most potent of all the causes seems to be lessened fertility" (216). Strikingly, he observes that "infertility has coincided too closely with the arrival of Europeans ..." (219) and compares this to what happens to wild animals when they are captured (219-20), deducing a general "law of the susceptibility of the reproductive system to changed conditions of life" (220). How did these conditions get changed? Darwin never says. Oh yes, coming into contact.

Throughout, Darwin is clinical in his recitation of statistics and causes. I have read this section several times, and for the life of me, I cannot detect any compassion coming to the surface. His final word on extinction of races is that it is "a highly complex problem, depending on many causes" (221-22). Fine. And true. But apparently, he had no room in this complexity for European rapacity, bloodthirstiness, and constant humiliation of the natives, even though he knew Gerland considered these important factors. Concerning the Tasmanians, Darwin does not mention that colonists' kidnapping of women and children contributed to the decline in birth rates. And he certainly had to know that others, like Gerland and Bonwick (and maybe Prichard, Hodgkins, and Buxton), did consider European violence to be the major factor. He read the same in Bischoff's book (coming up in the next chapter). Recall that Darwin had also read Humboldt who presented a horrifying example of one such kidnapping and recommended legislation to curb the excesses of missionaries. Darwin's silence or blindness or both is stunning.

I previously discussed Walter Bagehot in the third chapter. Darwin refers to him several times in *Descent* and particularly for his point that savages did not disappear before the empires of classical civilization but they are vanishing rapidly before modern civilization (*Descent*, 212-13). What Darwin does not tell his readers is how candid Bagehot was about imperialism, even admitting (perhaps inadvertently on Bagehot's part) that Europe's superiority lay in its ability to kill with impunity, while the natives could not return the favor. Darwin hides from his readers information in a book about how murderous western civilization is. Even so, as I pointed out earlier, his quotation of Bagehot is the closest Darwin comes to acknowledging that western civilization was responsible for killing the savages and this was perhaps why he later regretted quoting Bagehot on this.

In the same way, he kept silent about Gerland's fuller analysis of the causes

of the extinction of natives. There is also a third book, James Bonwick's *The Last of the Tasmanians*, which Darwin underreported to his readers in *Descent*. Another book I have not mentioned as yet, though I have mentioned the author Theodor Waitz (Gerland's teacher), was *Introduction to Anthropology* (1863), the first volume of Waitz's series *Anthropology of Primitive Peoples*. As with Gerland's book, Darwin cites it several times in *Descent*, but never tells his readers any of what Waitz says about the injustices committed against indigenous peoples. That makes at least four books whose full contents Darwin misrepresented. It seems that he did not want his readers to know of alternate points of view, a very different approach from his practice in *Origin*.

It is also very much worth noting that in most of these books which Darwin read, not only those by Gerland, Waitz, Bonwick (all cited in *Descent*), but also earlier, such as those by George Grey, James Bischoff, and John Stokes, Darwin would have read about *the same injustices* over and over again (like the legal disadvantages arrayed against natives and the violence and kidnappings that went unpunished). Sometimes it seems like everyone was writing about the mistreatment of the Aborigines. It certainly came up often enough for Darwin to have been plenty aware. Paul Edmund de Strzelecki also addressed some of these injustices in 1845 in *Physical Description of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land*, another book Darwin read. Edward Eyre, who had been appointed Protector of Aborigines in Australia by Grey, did his share of covering this in Volume 2 of his *Journals of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia* (1845). (This is the same Edward Eyre who twenty years later would be responsible for the Morant Bay massacre in Jamaica.)

But Darwin had outfitted himself with a monolithic vision of savages, which had no room in it for injustices. What ailed savages was biology and nothing more. He had reduced all their problems to the biological. The infertility of the women was the major issue for Darwin. He would also throw in infanticide and had no hesitation in describing savages as immoral, but he made that too seem like a matter of biology. It was all biology: "If bad tendencies are [biologically] transmitted, it is probable that good ones are likewise transmitted ... Except through the principle of the transmission of moral tendencies, we cannot understand the differences believed to exist in this respect between the various races of mankind" (*Descent*, 148; Darwin is quite clear in this paragraph that he means the biological inheritance of moral and immoral qualities, which he considers probable). Savages were closer to the animal world, so what could one expect of them? For Gerland, since the arrival of Europeans, the extermination facing indigenous peoples was

primarily a cultural and historical problem, while Darwin made it a biological problem. Gerland was following a humanitarian view that others shared.

Eyre looked at this situation that "wherever European colonies have been established in Australia, the native races in that neighborhood are rapidly decreasing" with the "melancholy result ... that ... if nothing be done to check it, the whole of the aboriginal tribes of Australia will be swept away from the face of the earth" (2.157). His reasoning as to causes is quite different from Darwin's. Basing himself on an independent report, he seems to have shared the belief that the primary causes were greed and denial of civil rights: "The source of all these evils, and of all this injustice, is the unreserved appropriation of native lands, and the denial, in the first instance of colonization, of equal civil rights" (2.168; this is actually a quote from a report, of which Eyre wholly approves, of the Aborigines' Protection Society, March, 1841). This might seem ironic in the case of a man who had no feeling for the rights of blacks in Jamaica, but whatever happened to change Eyre twenty years later should not affect our estimation of how observant he was in 1845.

All the humanitarian writers were essentially making the same point. That is why Napier would write in 1835 that if he were made Governor of South Australia, "I will not leave England without laws, that shall give the same protection to the savage as to myself, and those who go with me" (Napier, 96; cf. 103, "treating the natives as human beings, like ourselves, and making savage and civilized equal in the eye of the law"). But as far as Darwin was concerned, if savages were faced with extinction, it was mainly biology that had created their dilemma. Independently of each other, Tony Barta and I have reached similar conclusions. Barta writes in "Mr Darwin's Shooters" (119): "My concern is the confusion of natural history with human history that Darwin promoted, and the consequences of fusing the two." And: "But the legacy of Darwin promoted the idea that it is natural for beings with more power to displace others, and to intervene in nature for such ends" (135-36). Desmond and Moore use similar language in *Sacred Cause*, when they state that "Darwin began to naturalize the genocide" (148) and when they admit that his attitude towards colonialism was very different from his position on slavery: "It is interesting, given the [Darwin] family's emotional anti-slavery views, that Darwin's biologizing of genocide should appear to be so dispassionate" (*Sacred Cause*, 150). That is quite the understatement. Desmond and Moore miss an opportunity to make a major point here: Darwin did not just biologize genocide, he biologized everything about the native peoples of the world.

In theory, Darwin believed that it was all biology for all peoples in all

places and all times. But he was reluctant to carry out pure biological thinking on the home front, while he had no hesitation in doing it to the Other from another land. Perhaps it is this more than anything else that captures his racism. And not so much doing it to the Other as assuming it and making a host of assumptions without the data to back them up. He was eager to use the biological inferiority of Others as his preferred explanation for their supposed failure, their perceived immoralities, and their inevitable extermination when confronted by western powers.

Biologizing savage traits was a relentless activity among European writers. Darwin was no different. He biologized moral, intellectual, and every kind of characteristic one could think of. A humanitarian like Gerland would look deeper and see racism as one of the underlying factors of the melancholy situation of savages, where others saw only implacable biology. As one more example of this (which I briefly reviewed in Ch. 3, §3), everyone else found the wandering life style of many indigenous peoples objectionable and lamented their refusal to settle down like civilized people do. Western scientists usually considered this one of the most inferior things about savages, and perhaps a sign of their inherent, biological laziness. Darwin made several disparaging references to it in *Descent* (158, 162, 168, 211). "Nomadic habits ... have in every case been highly detrimental" to the development of civilization (158); he called it a "relic of barbarism" (162).

This was part of a general trend among western writers to depict western civilization as bringing only good things to these primitive peoples and the savages rejecting them because they were too inferior (too stupid, too lazy, too ignorant) to appreciate the benefits. Gerland saw it differently. Civilization did not treat savages as human beings entitled to equal rights and actually offered savages very little (little more than slavery by another name). In the case of nomadic habits versus a more settled life, Gerland asked: Why should they settle down? When they do and take jobs, they are paid very little and always less than Europeans for the same work. "Naturally, they would rather go about wandering and begging" (Gerland, 114; *Natürlich schweifen sie lieber bettelnd umher*). They continued to be treated as inferior people, as if they were wild animals, regardless of their lifestyle.

Saxe Bannister made a similar observation in his 1822 *Remarks* on North American Indians. He pointed out that some Indians complained that when they do settle down and cultivate the ground, white men come and take it away, so why should they bother to practice agriculture? (*Remarks*, 30-31.) In another book, Bannister cites a writer from 1803 who made his own criticism of what was wrong with this depiction in the case of Hottentots in South Africa (*Humane* [1830], 194). The charge of "being prone to a life of

vagrancy" was made to express contempt for them and make them out to be inferior. But the truth? "Doubtless, ill usage often drives them to such a life." Their wandering, this writer said, is comparable to "attempting to shake off the yoke of a tyrant. The act only proves worthiness of character by indicating a love of freedom." Some people were capable of assessing whether our so-called "knowledge" of indigenous people was based on prejudice and whether there was another way to understand their lifestyle. Honest anthropology mattered to these observers in a way that it did not to scientists like Darwin.

Once you start looking, it is not all that hard to find more and more of this sort of thing. Helen Hunt reported something similar in *A Century of Dishonor*. In 1869, President Grant appointed a commission to visit Indian reservations and examine their situation. Their report contained this question: "Why should the Indian be expected to plant corn, fence lands, build houses, or do anything but get food from day to day, when experience has taught him that the product of his labor will be seized by the white man to-morrow?" (Hunt, 339.) Such insights are not only the result of a humanitarian attitude. They rather indicate what might be called *being perceptive*. Darwin never considered the unjust treatment of natives as part of the picture. Would doing so have meant to Darwin "turn[ing] renegade to natural science", as he put it in his last letter to Wallace (ARW 1.319)? That might be an unfair suggestion, but it is shocking how much Darwin limited his vision of natives, when others of his time were more expansive, and some of whom, like Gerland, he had read and he still could not see it.

What Gerland concluded from such unfair characterizations of savages is that savages had not rejected civilization so much as civilization had rejected them (Gerland, 114; *Nicht sie haben die Kultur, die Kultur hat sie von sich gestossen*). If there were any intellectual justice in the world, that would be one of the most memorable insights of the last three centuries. It should be etched on everyone's conscience. Who rejected whom? Gerland answers that civilization rejected primitives, not the other way around. But in the English speaking world, the choice has been not to translate Gerland. As for those who wrote in English, like Saxe Bannister, their insights have been buried under a deliberate silent treatment. The less we see, the more we know.

This is not to say that Gerland was absolutely right on every point he raised. He also thought natives had vices which contributed to their problems. But these vices paled compared to the injustices inflicted on them. As for nomadic habits, this probably had more than one explanation. I do not think that Gerland was arguing that racism was the only explanation for it and other aspects of savage life which Europeans found inferior. But he was right to constantly remind his readers that racism was one factor that must be

considered, whereas too many of the investigators into this subject ignored the very obvious racism that dogged the footsteps of indigenes.

Was Darwin aware that there were some writers who were arguing in effect that the extermination of indigenous peoples, not to mention countless other injuries they faced, was *not a biological problem* because it was a moral problem? That is extremely difficult to determine. I can only say Darwin did not show it in his published writings. Some writers were certainly clear in making their point that what Europeans were doing was a moral choice, not a biological necessity. I think Darwin suppressed an explicit realization of what they were saying. What we can be sure of is that Darwin constantly read such authors, some of whom were perhaps only implicitly making this argument. Not many put it that starkly that biologizing every human development was a radical distortion of human reality. But consciously or otherwise, Darwin constantly faced this difference between himself and certain other writers---and he chose not to think about it.

In fact, in those very same pages early on in the sixth edition of Malthus's *Essay*, which inspired Darwin to come up with the theory of natural selection, he was also reading Malthus's point that while the population principle applied biologically in a pure way to the world of animals and plants, it could not apply to human beings in the same way and, furthermore, it would be absolutely unthinkable to apply it to the extermination of native populations. Man's ability to reason and to make choices which animals would never make, said Malthus, removed him from the strict application of a biological process. But Darwin in his eagerness for colonial conquest ran right past these warning posts and treated *everything* about humans as biological.

Forty years after Malthus, the same warning trilled from the pen of Georg Gerland. In the last paragraph of his book, Gerland argued that the development of mankind has long been "under natural law" (*unter naturalistischem Gesetz*), and this is "the 'struggle for existence' in which the stronger conquers" (*Der »Kampf ums Dasein«, in welchem es der Stärkere ist, welcher siegt*), but this should not be applied to the extermination confronting indigenous tribes. He believed that the stronger human races do not have to wipe out the weaker or "destroy [them] with pleasure and for no reason [literally, without serving any need or necessity]" (*mit Lust und ohne Bedürfniss zerstörend*). They can instead lift (*emporhebt*) the weaker to their own level. For Gerland, "the moral choice of mankind must rule" (*die sittliche Wahl des Menschen herrschen*). "Man," he says, "is capable of reason and love" (*Mensch ist der Vernunft und der Liebe fähig*). By choosing these qualities, "the collective [human race] will have taken another big step on the road it must travel towards the liberation of the spirit from the cruel shackles

of external nature" (*die Gesamtheit hätte einen grossen Schritt weiter gethan auf der Bahn, die sie gehen muss, in der Befreiung des Geistes von den rohen Fesseln der äusseren Natur*).

Darwin paid enough attention to have his helper translate this, scribbling it at the bottom of page 144 and continuing on the top of 145, and even though this just repeats what I have already indicated, it is worth seeing exactly what Darwin read:

Till now the development of mankind depends upon natural laws--the struggle for existence shows itself all powerful---But man is capable of reason & love, & shd show his strength in elevating the weaker races to his level instead of exterminating them---then would the spirit & moral choice of mankind rule, & the totality would have made a great step forwards on the road of this emancipation of the spirit from the rough fetters of the external nature.

In this last paragraph, Gerland came as close as anyone of his time did to pointedly declaring that biology and morality (or culture) are very different things. Human beings do not have to be stuck with irrational nature (*unvernünftigen Natur*) or "the cruel chains of nature" (*den rohen Fesseln der äusseren Natur*) or even simply stuck "under natural law" (*unter naturalistischem Gesetz*) and "the struggle for existence" (*Der »Kampf ums Dasein«*). Human beings can choose reason and love (*der Vernunft und der Liebe*) over brutal nature and in making this moral choice (*sittliche Wahl*), we also choose the elevation, not the extermination, of native peoples. This means that the extermination we witness in our time is a choice, not a natural outcome. And though Darwin clearly heard this argument, he turned his back on it by not even acknowledging it in his published work.

The constant biologizing of every feature of indigenous people, which Darwin along with so many others engaged in, is comparable to the habit of using euphemisms. Just as euphemisms cover up a harsher reality, so biologizing blocks us from seeing the cultural problems of racism and injustice. "Great is our sin" if we turn man-made problems into natural ones. The purpose in both cases is to make us not see. And both euphemisms and biologizing thereby become silent admissions that something is being covered up.

If Darwin had read only the first four chapters of James Bonwick's book

(taking us through page 130), this is some of what he would have encountered: repeated references to the abduction of Aboriginal children (41, 44, 50, 53, 54, 59, 110-11); violations of women (e.g., 61); many mentions of the originally peaceful nature of the savages (e.g., 44); from page 62 to 67, at least ten massacres of the natives recounted; many government orders given over the years, beginning in 1810, to punish blacks and whites equally for murders, but only blacks ever getting punished (72-73, 76); Aborigines aware of white hatred of darker-skinned people (77); two examples of natives helping a white person in distress (the farmer, 67, and the young girl, 39, whom I previously mentioned); and one reference to Christian savages (59; later on, 215, Bonwick also quotes George Robinson's use of white heathen). If this were not enough, the rest of Bonwick's book has many more examples of the same.

Darwin would also have read of many sad tales of black violence (or outrages, as Bonwick often puts it for the actions of both races) against whites. But the overall impression one gets is that the Aborigines acted out of frustration more than anything else. There were no concerted attacks on white settlements, just isolated violent acts on this individual or that family. The Aborigines were being driven to the wall, constantly harassed and destroyed. If they killed one farmer, often because one of their children or a woman had been kidnapped, a massacre was the white response. The Aborigines were drowning in fantastic violence and did not know what to do about it except lash out. Justice in the courts was out of the question.

Bonwick mentions one tribe that had been reduced in ten years from 300 fighting men to 22 (128). They were disappearing to the point that extinction was approaching. I don't think any of us can appreciate what that felt like. They knew they had no hope of driving out or killing all the colonists. The lifeblood of their culture was trickling out through their fingers and nothing they could do would stop it. Bonwick recognized that they struck back out of "blind fury" (128). "The exasperated Aborigines saw no hope before them, and seemed resolved to die as warriors that, in defending their land, were resolved to do the enemy as much mischief as possible" (129). Bonwick also quotes an old white servant who said of one tribe, the Ouse River, or Big River, tribe: "I admire their pluck. They knew they were the weaker, but they felt they were the injured, and they sought revenge against many odds. They were brave fellows. I'd have done the same" (128).

Further on, Bonwick describes the surrender of this tribe to George Robinson. They had kept the settlers and military at bay for so long. It had been quite expensive to finally capture them (30,000 pounds according to Robinson). Whom did they meet in this fierce tribe? Sixteen men with

wooden spears, nine women and one child. Bonwick admiringly says, "... their enemies cannot deny to them the attributes of courage and military tact ... George Arthur rightly termed them a noble race" (226).

Henry Reynolds emphasizes, "Aboriginal achievements [in war and peace] are underplayed [by scholars] in order to accentuate the cruelty of the whites" (*Fate*, 205). He objects to the "negative and demeaning image of the Tasmanians" (204) who are so often depicted as only "helpless victims" (206). He also quotes 19th century historian James E. Calder who was critical of any historian who "will do them an injustice if he fails to record that, as a body, they held their ground bravely for 30 years against the invaders of their beautiful domains" (ibid.) In peace too, it was Aborigines like Truganini who did much of the negotiating for Robinson (see Reynolds, *Fate*, 139-43; Bonwick called the old Aboriginal women "the real arbiters of war," *Last*, 225). I mention all this because I have been guilty of presenting a one-sided image of Tasmanians and other Aborigines as victims. My excuse is that my purpose has been to point out the severe injustices that were ignored by Darwin and to contrast this to his attitude towards slavery. But I hope I have offered enough quotes from Bonwick to demonstrate that Bonwick did not see them only as helpless victims. The ability to make war and peace with some success, by the way, is evidence of considerable organizational skills---which makes Darwin's opinion that savages have no government and little intelligence out of sync with the evidence.

There were many voices in Darwin's time that protested what was happening to natives under colonization. Darwin's younger self was one of them in a very slight way. In the first chapter, I reported his three remarks that some Europeans could behave like savages. Just to repeat the only one that related to colonialism (the other two concerned slavery): "The country [Argentina] will be in the hands of white Gaucho savages instead of copper-coloured Indians. The former being a little superior in civilization, as they are inferior in every moral virtue" (*Diary*, 181). This is about forty years before *The Descent of Man* and almost thirty before Wallace's essay "How To Civilize Savages".

It is noteworthy that Darwin could separate civilization and morality like that. He still considered the Gauchos slightly superior in civilization while low in morals. I can only guess that by civilization he meant the Gauchos had access to European inventions, knowledge (of agriculture, for example), literature, etc. Wallace was a little clearer, I think, that certain Europeans were unqualifiedly savages. It is further interesting that, in *The Descent of Man*, Darwin does include morals in his idea of civilization. As we previously saw, Darwin counted the qualities of self-sacrifice---patriotism, courage, fidelity,

obedience, sympathy (e.g., *Descent*, 157)---to be chief among civilized virtues and accused savages of being low in morals. There is an inconsistency in Darwin on this point. Apparently, low morals did not disqualify the Spanish in Argentina (or, I dare say, the British in their colonies) from being civilized, but he uses low morals to disqualify the savages from being considered civilized. Or maybe it is not an absolute inconsistency. Maybe it is just the disparity between the young Darwin and the older Darwin. Wallace seemed to get more youthful the older he became.

Recall that Wallace called violent Europeans the true savages. In Argentina, Darwin was doing the same. It is striking too that he *seems* to imply that the Indians did have morals and that they were higher than those of the Spanish invaders. (Or did he mean that the Gauchos were inferior to some general standard of morality? Hard to tell.) If he did mean that the Indians were higher in morals, it was the last time he would say this about savages. In *Descent*, he has a very different opinion. The younger Darwin could equate low morals and savagery. You could say this kind of thinking was in the air. The government authorities in Tasmania (see below), Darwin in his Diary, Napier in his book on colonization, Gerland writing on the extinction of savages, Wallace in his published essay---all were capable of discerning that immoral actions constituted savagery. Many other authors wrote in similar fashion. The sad part about Darwin is that he deleted this from his published work whereas he let stand his blasts against slavery, which had been illegal in the British empire since 1834, when the legislation took effect, and was not really a major issue for Britons after that (except, as previously noted, the repercussions of emancipation continued to be debated).

Wallace was a stronger voice in part because he maintained this view of the potential savagery of western civilization throughout his adult life. There were also other voices that we should not forget. There was a conscience that existed in the west about its own behavior and that conscience found expression in many places. Darwin had a faint insight into this but gave it up as he grew older and expressed his mature scientific views. What follows is a brief review of some of the voices that tried to influence public policy. They should be added to the ones I noted in Chapters 2 and 3 (e.g., Bonwick, Bannister, Napier, Buxton, Hodgkin, etc.).

Consider this from an 1813 Government Proclamation in Tasmania (eighteen years before Darwin began his voyage). White colonists frequently stole native children to use as cheap or slave labor. The authorities tried to put a stop to it (unsuccessfully) in a number of orders, including this Proclamation from the Governor which stated in part:

Let any man put his hand to his heart and ask which is the savage--the white man who robs the parent of his children, or the black man who boldly steps forward to resent the injury, and recover his stolen offspring; the conclusion, alas! is too obvious. [Bonwick, *Last*, 41]

A year later Lieutenant-Governor Thomas Davey again publicly expressed his "utter indignation and abhorrence thereof" (in Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 62). When I get to Bischoff's history of Van Diemen's Land, we will see that government officials in the 1820s and 1830s never lost this consciousness of the evils that were done to the native people.

Then there was J. Langfield Ward's *Colonization in Its Bearing on the Extinction of the Aboriginal Races* (1874). It was Sven Lindqvist who brought Ward to my attention in *The Skull Measurer's Mistake* (75, 78-80). Ward is another voice from Darwin's own time and place. Hardly anyone mentions Ward let alone discusses him. It took a while to find the book. I have many paperback reprints of 19th century books and access to the pdf digital copies of such books on hathitrust.org. But Ward's is the only one of which I have an 1874 original edition in its burgundy cloth cover. I cannot express how much I treasure it. Embossed on the cover in gold lettering is the inscription "Le Bas Prize, 1873." This was an annual prize established in 1848 to honor the Rev. Charles Webb Le Bas, a Fellow of Trinity College. No one remembers it now. (I believe, though I am not sure, that it was last awarded in the 1890s.)

I once had a philosophy teacher, Professor Henry Wolz at Queens College in New York, who taught us that it is not always the big name writers, the classics, to whom we should look for truth, but to value the smaller figures for insights and glimpses of precious bits of truth which will surprise us. Many years later, I had an acting teacher, Jane Dentinger at Warren Robertson's Theater Workshop, who made the same point. Don't look down on the lesser playwrights, she told us. They too may have created characters on the page that are worth fleshing out. Forget the word 'lesser'. An actor's job is not to make judgments of artistic worth based on degree of fame, but to find life in the text---*any text*---and bring it out. This should be a golden rule for the study of history as well. Instead, academia gears itself to look for those who achieved renown and glory, and especially for anything or anyone that advanced the quest for power. Any voices in the past that did not do that get lost. This is not an accidental lostness. This is deliberate.

My teachers taught me well. Famous voices aren't the only ones we should be listening to. There are obscure voices that had something worthwhile to say. We should pay attention. Some of them were pushed into obscurity by

the powers that be precisely because they had valuable and compelling insights to offer. They were a threat to the interests of power or were perceived to be threatening. In the 19th century, anyone who did not give *unqualified support* to imperialism was deemed to be such a threat. And famous voices, like John Locke, whose fame could not be undone and who sided with the obscure, had to be rewritten to disguise what they said (see next chapter, §4, for the disappearing act performed on Locke). It would be a betrayal of everything I learned from my teachers, Wolz and Dentinger, if I did not apply their teaching to history. I have to do this, you understand.

At first glance, Langfield Ward does not give the impression of being a strong humanitarian. Deep down he is. It just takes a little diligence to see it. He generally does not adopt the voice of moral indignation to make his points. He is quite willing to put a good slant on colonialism and see good intentions even when they are dubious. He blames the colonists far more than the government for misdeeds and even then, he often seems to limit the blame to a few bad elements among the colonists. He characterizes the early settlers as displaying "self-denial, courage, and audacity ... [and] perseverance" and praises them for developing self-reliant colonies which will be able to receive the excess population of the mother country (Ward, L., 4).

This is probably due in part to his desire to conciliate his fellow Britons and reassure them that the British empire is a vast improvement over the Spanish sort with its monstrous atrocities. When the British kill natives, it is almost inadvertently: "if the aborigines must perish before our advance, it will not be by acts of monstrous injustice, but by the insinuating, though perhaps quite as fatal, causes which civilization brings along with it" (31). The colonists did not seek "perpetual warfare" but slipped into it through inefficiency (46-47). He holds Europeans "answerable" for introducing intoxicating liquors and diseases, but adds, "it is hard to see what more could have been done than has been done [to reduce the resulting harm]" (90).

In all this, Ward is a committed colonialist. He believes Europeans have a right to colonize and cultivate distant lands: "vast tracts of country cannot be abandoned to a few hunters; the world we inhabit was given us for something beyond that" (12). But there is a lot more going on in his little book. Ward is quite a few steps above George Grey. If he is not nearly on the level of a Saxe Bannister or a Charles Napier with their passionate concern for the rights of the natives, he is not that far behind them. Ward is a committed colonialist in whom humanitarianism has made deep inroads. His conscience nags at him. Native tribes are disappearing and that seems to him catastrophically wrong and preventable. "Is there no power to prevent the extinction of those tribes, whose downfall the colonists have primarily been the cause ... Must we

unresistingly allow their villages to be deserted and fall in ruins, their languages to be forgotten, and their very names blotted out? Undoubtedly duty bids us use our endeavours to stop this extinction" (100). (I believe that Ward and many other humanitarians were horrified not only by the loss of lives, but by the destruction of languages, as language represents the soul of a people.)

Ward understands that there is an inherent greed in colonialism as a whole which is unfair and devastating to the native population. 'Aggrandisement' comes up a couple of times (18, 102) and even 'cupidity' (110). As long as cultivation is profitable to the colonists, "the natives will be continually dispossessed" (94; cf. 21). Dispossession (or encroachment) is one of the causes of war. A native tribe "cannot be expected to acquiesce tamely in the gradual appropriation of its territory" (71). Dispossession Ward considers to be an indirect cause of extinction as it brings on war and aids disease (95), so that "the colonists have primarily been the cause" of the extinction of tribes (100). With great understatement, he says that even in colonies where we have done much better, "we have not always used fair means in extending our territory" (47; cf. 64). He considers "the land question" the most difficult of all (75). He is sympathetic to Aboriginal inhabitants who have been forced to live in a corner of their land and then been dispossessed of even that corner (91-92). By the end of his book, he is recommending as "the things needful ... a resolution to deal on equitable principles with the natives, a willingness to respect their rights, and a determination to avoid all disputes where it is possible to do so" (134; he refers to "human rights" on 102).

Ward can be patronizing when he speaks of civilizing and protecting the natives, but even so, he comes up with something I have not encountered in any other writer of the time, at least not as explicitly as it appears in his book. For Ward, one of the purposes of civilizing the natives, or elevating them as he sometimes puts it, is "thereby fortifying them against the impending danger" of extinction which results from colonization (101). As he explains, "the advantage of civilization to the native is that he is thereby enabled to offer more effectual resistance to the too rapid advance of the colonist" (114; cf. 97). The natives will be better "able to mingle and compete with the Europeans" (124). He even includes in this that they will "keep pace in military knowledge" (97). Ward was arguing that natives should use civilization to combat civilization and that would be the best use to which they could put the civilizing process.

This is a daring suggestion on Ward's part---and smart, as he was saying to the natives that if you want to compete with Europeans, you will have to learn some of their ways. I am not sure that he realized the full implications of what

he was saying, but that may be unfair of me. Like Merivale and a few other humanitarians of the time, Ward hoped for amalgamation of the races (which would include intermarriage; see 130). He seems to anticipate that the natives will not remain "a distinct people" (129) and he clearly thought the arts and sciences of western civilization were superior to indigenous cultures. Yet in suggesting that learning western civilized ways can serve as "a stronger barrier of defence" (97) against colonization and offer "more effectual resistance" (114), he was implying that natives can use some aspects of civilization to ward off its takeover and to maintain their own culture. Civilization for them would not be the outcome of colonialism, but a means of resisting and defeating it. To use civilization to defeat civilization--it's a grand thought. Perhaps Ward unconsciously hoped for this result, prompted by a consideration of all the injustices perpetrated against indigenes.

Those injustices included the natives being unable to obtain redress in a judicial system that did not serve them at all (at the end, in Note A, he gives examples of white people getting away with the murder of Aborigines). Ward knows that some natives have been forced into slavery (e.g., the Hottentots; see 53, 138). He is horrified by the extermination of native children and believes the colonists have thus surpassed the natives in cruelty (76). When children are involved in or made the special object of extermination, "there is no hope for the nation" (*ibid.*) because the country cannot recover itself. Ward is clearly addressing acts of genocide, "this extermination, so opposed to all notions of humanity which civilization has introduced into wars," which cruelty he points out has been frequent in the wars against Indians. Further on, he notes that Europeans have developed rules of humane warfare among themselves and asks, "why should not the same rules apply to conflicts with savages as to contests with civilized nations?" (108). Ward anticipated Raphaël Lemkin's warnings about genocide by seventy years.

Ward reads an 1874 report on what is happening in South Africa (in Natal), detailing the enslavement of women and children and the seizure of cattle, and comments, "No one, who hopes for the spread of humanity and freedom, can read this paragraph without pain and humiliation" (140). The soul of Ward's book is contained in that one line. It is "pain and humiliation" more than indignation that prompts him to write. You have to imagine a man who is ashamed of himself and his culture, whenever he hears of the injustices and atrocities it has committed, to appreciate why he picked up his pen at all.

He is clearly no Darwinian. He denies that the civilized or the stronger have a right to take advantage of those they regard as the weaker party, or treat them with contempt (100, 102, 114); he sees "the narrow-minded feelings of contempt for savages" (16) which he refers to more than once. And

he is no Darwinian when he opposes the belief of "some scientific men and travellers in various countries" that natives are destined to become extinct when they come in contact with the white man (40).

As with Napier (see Ch. 3, §3), I can offer two contrasting passages from Langfield Ward. On the one hand, he can make British colonization seem utterly benign. Our colonists "did not, as the Spaniards did, set out with a purpose to subjugate and bring slavery on every tribe" (46). English colonists often

have endeavoured to gain possession of the land by fair purchase or barter, have suffered the natives to practice their own customs, have encouraged trading with them in an equitable manner, and have visited any offence against a native with severe punishment [5; this last especially sounds like wishful thinking] ... the simple plan they proposed to themselves was to raise up a settlement, acquire adjacent lands by purchase, leaving this area to be enlarged as the colony increased, and carry on trade with the Indians in an equitable manner, but not to secure more territory than was sufficient for their present needs, and not to interfere with the happiness and contentment of their neighbours. They were exhorted on setting out to practise all possible forbearance to the natives ... [46]

Further on, he says, "the colonists, who in spite of their fierce wars and massacres, had always endeavoured to exercise a benevolent policy to the Indians, while living at peace with them" (61).

On the other hand, he sees the injustice of all colonization:

If the unhappy aborigines have been mercilessly chased from one district to another, so that they become strangers in the land of their birth, if they have had to suffer the extirpating effects of wars waged against them while they were defending what they might justly consider theirs, and if they have had to mourn the swift reduction of their numbers by diseases brought in by the colonists, we must expect them, if they have a spark of manliness in them, to make a stand against the usurper's further progress; and if in their endeavours to drive back the invader they commit crimes or acts of treachery ... we must reflect that their minds have been embittered by the long series of insults, barbarities, and oppressions, suffered at the hands of those who have banished them; we must think of them as men who have had hard measure

dealt them; we must not give way to the desire for retaliation ... we must repress vindictive feelings, and as Christians we must be compassionate. [98-99; cf. 110]

In sum, Ward is an imperfect humanitarian, but he is a humanitarian of some depth. What is significant is that his book comes out in 1874, the same year as the second edition of *The Descent of Man*, and he offers such a contrast in thought. He does not believe extermination is inevitable; he does not exaggerate, as Darwin does, the importance of infanticide as compared to the multitude of causes of depopulation brought by colonization (98); he does not use 'changed conditions of life' when dispossession is the right word. Ward may be imperfect, but he is an example of what a little conscience will do. Look at Langfield Ward in 1874 and at Charles Darwin in the same year. One is famous, the other is not. One writes a celebrated book, the other a forgotten, slight volume. One is touched by humanitarian concerns, the other will not be moved. Darwin does not even come up to Ward's imperfect level of humanitarianism. That is as telling as any other fact I have presented.

Since I have mentioned Ward's horror of genocide, I have to bring up Raphaël Lemkin. He was the one who coined the term *genocide* in 1944 to describe the Holocaust (more on this in the next chapter, §9). Before Lemkin, the equivalent word was 'extermination', though sometimes 'barbarism' and 'savagery' served as well (in 1933, before he coined 'genocide', Lemkin himself used expressions such as 'the crime of barbarity' and 'the crime of vandalism', which he conceived of as the malicious destruction of a culture; see Lemkin, *Axis*, 93). It was from him that I first learned of the likes of James Bonwick and Herman Merivale and others in a chapter entitled "Tasmania" for his never completed book on the history of genocide. It was written in the late 1940s or the 1950s. Ann Curthoys's introduction to Lemkin's manuscript was also particularly instructive for me. She took special note of Dr Francis Russell Nixon (Bishop of Tasmania from 1842-63) who was very critical of settler cruelty in *The Cruise of the Beacon: A Narrative of a Visit to the Islands in Bass's Straits* (1857).

Lemkin quoted Dr Nixon on the many cases of cruelty to the blacks which "make us blush for humanity when we read them" (Lemkin, "Tasmania", 192) and provided a lengthy quote from Merivale who spoke of "the ferocity and treachery which have marked the conduct of civilized men, too often of civilized governments, in their relations with savages" (192). He also referenced the 1813 remarks of Lieutenant-Governor Thomas Davey who considered the actions of British subjects to have "so ignominiously ... stained the honour of his country and of himself" and those of his successor William

Sorell who in 1817 was equally horrified (192). The Hobart Town *Colonial Times* in April 1836, the Sydney *Australian* in October 1830, and the Melbourne *Argus* (no date given by Lemkin) all published articles very critical of the atrocities (193-95). It was Lemkin who first made me aware of the *Argus* article which pointedly commented that the Tasmanians had literally been 'civilized off the face of the earth,' a quote Lemkin got from Bonwick's book (*Last*, 351).

As I explained in the third chapter (§1), Darwin used a similar expression in an 1860 letter to Lyell (CCD 8.379): "White man is 'improving off the face of the earth' even races nearly his equals." That expression manages to achieve being both euphemistic and vividly confessional at the same time, in that it seems to be self-mocking of its own pretension to improve. It was Lemkin who made me think about the difference between Darwin and the *Argus* in their use of this expression. The context in Darwin's case makes it very clear that he was not being critical of the white man. Darwin is quite serious that removing other races from the face of the earth is an improvement. He affirms rather than criticizes this development. In the same letter, he fully approves of Lyell's point that "man [is] now keeping down any new man which might be developed," which he calls a good simile. He is not being at all ironical or biting when he speaks of "improving off the face of the earth," though that may have been the original purpose of the saying as used by others.

Think of how the *Argus's* "civilized off the face of the earth" compares to Darwin's "... the civilised races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace, the savage races throughout the world" (*Descent*, 183) and tell me which one is more truthful. Darwin certainly sounds like he is merely stating an objective fact. If Darwin implies anything at all, it would be a hidden assumption that the civilized are triumphing by virtue of some superiority they have. We can't help it if we're so good at what we do that other cultures disappear before us. The Australian newspaper's use of this phrase, on the other hand, exposes the aggressiveness of this quality of being 'civilized', and if it implies anything at all, it would be that the civilized are hypocrites (because the truly civilized shouldn't be wiping anything or anyone off the face of the earth). There seems to be a certain pride in Darwin's use of the expression, while the newspaper uses the same phrase to express shame over what is happening. The very same statement, as used by Darwin and the newspaper, comes from different moral universes.

An unnamed colonial writer in 1838 (two years after Darwin ended his journey round the world) described the regimented, Christian life the native Tasmanians were forced to live on Flinders Island ("everything, in a word,

which gratifies superficial examination") and concluded "they have no free agency ... they cannot escape from their prison ... it must be a place of extensive *ennui* to them: as moral agents now, they are lower than when they were savages ..." (in Lemkin, "Tasmania", 190; I've expanded his quote from the original in Bonwick, 256). Herman Merivale said in his eighteenth lecture, "The history of the European settlements in America, Africa, and Australia, presents every where the same general features---a wide and sweeping destruction of native races by the uncontrolled violence of individuals and colonial authorities, followed by tardy attempts on the part of governments to repair the acknowledged crime" (2.153). That is an excellent summary of what was happening.

The following too would have been read by Darwin in Bonwick, which I quoted in Chapter 4 (§2), and is worth repeating. It is from the journal of Quaker missionary George Washington Walker, commenting on the treatment of Tasmanian women by white sealers:

... we cannot regard the situation of the aboriginal females ... as differing materially from slavery ... The object of these men in retaining the women, most of whom, it is asserted, were originally kidnapped, is obviously for the gratification of their lust, and for the sake of the labour they can exact from them. In resorting to coercion in order to extort the services ... great cruelty appears to have been used ... [Bonwick, 304; which Lemkin, 182, also quoted in part]

So Darwin knew that some people pointed out the practical comparison to slavery, and yet it seems to have made no impression on him. Much later at the end of the century, Alfred Wallace said native tribes were condemned to "a modified form of slavery" (*Wonderful*, 372).

Bonwick (34) also quoted W.C. Wentworth writing in 1823 on the natives of Tasmania: "Their deep-rooted animosity, however, did not arise so much from the ferocious nature of these savages, as from the inconsiderate and unpardonable conduct of our countrymen, shortly after the foundation of the settlement on the river Derwent" (also quoted in Lemkin, 171-72, with some slight errors). Many other reports of the time made the same point and particularly emphasized that it was the rape and abduction of their women that prompted violent reprisals from the Tasmanians (see essay by Henry Reynolds in Manne, 131-32).

Reynolds points out that even when the natives were not being killed outright, they had to live on the run in order to avoid white settlers and parties of armed forces: "... how quickly and frequently they had to flee. They clearly

lived with constant danger and acute anxiety for months and years on end" (in Manne, 130). That left them in a "constant state of alarm" as one military officer observed in March 1830. This officer continued that "the frequent change of positions rendered necessary to avoid the parties must be very harassing to themselves and their families" (ibid.). Living in flight contributed to their deaths and especially to the deaths of their children. I don't know if Darwin read John West's *A History of Tasmania* published in 1852, as he does not mention West in *Descent*, but there is a pertinent quote from his book offered by Reynolds which does bear on one point Darwin repeatedly makes:

Thus, in their harassing life, parents and children had been divided, and families had been broken up in melancholy confusion ... Infanticide and distress, rapid flight, and all the casualties of a protracted conflict, threatened them with speedy destruction. [West, 2.66; quoted by Reynolds in Manne, 130]

(Note the word 'melancholy' put to more meaningful use here than Darwin's perfunctory mention of it.) Where Darwin attributes infanticide to immorality, West considers it one of the results of the conflict. West was not the only one to see it this way. Darwin read Bonwick's *The Last of the Tasmanians* which also raised this point. Bonwick says the settlers noticed "a marked decrease of children" among the blacks during their prolonged war with them and attributes this to the tribes being "hard-pressed" in their flight so that sometimes they killed their children to prevent their cries being heard and sometimes to keep them from falling into the enemies' hands (*Last*, 106). Bonwick also quoted a Dr. Story: "Their being at war with the Whites may have caused the mothers to neglect their children ..." (388). *The especially interesting thing about this last quote is that Darwin omitted it, though he quoted another part of Dr. Story's remarks from the same page in Bonwick* (see *Descent*, 214; presented previously in this chapter). This is apparently a case of Darwin erasing a piece of evidence that was right under his nose.

Meanwhile, the same year that the second edition of *Descent* appeared, Langfield Ward registered his opinion that infanticide was a slight problem "weighed in the balance against the manifold causes of depopulation which [colonization] has introduced" (Ward, 98).

I don't have all the facts on infanticide, and I seriously doubt that Darwin did either, but he constantly brings up infanticide as evidence for the low morals of savages. Mostly he considers infanticide as something they practice because they cannot support all their children (*Descent*, 65, 141, 168, 211, 296-97, 644, and especially 659-61), yet in his last reference in *Descent* to this, he clearly considers it an example of how indecent savages are,

practicing "infanticide without remorse" (689). How did he know there was no remorse? Humboldt would have been appalled by Darwin's opinion. Never once does Darwin consider that some of this may have been the result of European savagery, driving the natives to live on the run (the part of Dr. Story's remarks that Darwin did quote vaguely hints at this, but not nearly as clearly as the part Darwin did not quote). For someone who believes in appreciating the complexity of every problem---and Darwin did this better than most scientists---that is a serious omission in this case.

Darwin also read Wallace's *Malay Archipelago* (1869). He would have seen there that Wallace spotted another cause of infant mortality in certain areas he visited. The women had to work on plantations. They either took their infants with them or left them at home in the care of other children. "Under neither of these circumstances can infants be properly attended to, and great mortality is the result ..." (1.257). Wallace suggested that the government and missionaries had a responsibility to improve this. His solution, however, only amounted to inducing the women to becoming more domestic, based on their willingness to adopt European customs.

There were never as many voices protesting colonial abuses as there were protesting slavery, but the number was considerable enough. Darwin was obviously aware of some of them, if only from Bonwick's book. I sometimes wonder why the movement to end colonial crimes was smaller and less effective than the anti-slavery movement, and why the latter gained favor in the upper classes in a way that the former never did. In 1788, there were 103 petitions with thousands of signatures demanding the end of the slave trade. By 1833, there were 5,000 petitions with 1.5 million signatures demanding the abolition of slavery. Nothing like that ever happened to support the natives in Britain's colonies.

I would hazard a guess that many perceived that the slavery system was not all that economically advantageous to the rest of society (there was more to be said against it than in its favor), while the colonial system brought Europe tremendous economic gains which the upper classes were reluctant to let go of. With slavery, they were only stealing labor, but colonial oppression stole enormous resources, including land, as well as labor. That made it much more valuable than slavery ever was. I am not alone in thinking this (see Brantlinger's essay in Gilbert; also Holt, 22-33).

As I observed in Chapter 3 (§6), Wallace knew that violence was not the only way you can kill off a people. You can also do it in peaceful ways. You can strangle a people through competition. Competition between unequal parties can be dreadfully damaging to the weaker one. He held this view in that 1865 essay "On the Progress of Civilisation in Northern Celebes" (S104);

he repeats some of this in *Malay* (1.254-57). As I pointed out, Wallace's criticism of unbridled competition and free trade is very similar to the unbridled "civilized off the face of the earth" from the Australian newspaper mentioned above. He was not alone in seeing the possible disastrous effects of competing. Montagu Hawtrey was another and so was Constantine Rafinesque. They all took a dim view of just how beneficial competition was. But competition was at the heart of Darwin's system.

There were many alternative voices in Darwin's time. Wallace was speaking for many of them when he wrote, "Our system [of colonization] has always failed. We demoralize and we extirpate, but we never really civilize" (*Malay*, 1.257). I would remind the academic and publishing elite that just because you suppress voices, this does not mean they did not exist.

The problem was and continues to be this: When people like Wallace or Langfield Ward or Bannister or Napier or any of the ones quoted by Lemkin expressed their observations and ideas, there was no feedback, no debate. Most intellectuals in the mid-19th century would have put the pamphlet or journal down in disgust, if they had chanced upon reading such things. So how can these facts and ideas grow in fruitful discussion? The atmosphere of hostility is so intense, there is no chance for anything to happen. Darwin, though he read Gerland, Bonwick, and likely all of Wallace's essays, cannot even acknowledge the existence of their arguments and facts. Instead of a different point of view being debated, it gets the silent treatment. This is a model of one way to suppress academic freedom.

I offer an analogy here that will offend many people, but I think it is highly appropriate. Ursula Hegi, author of the novel *Stones from the River* and the non-fiction *Tearing the Silence: On Being German in America*, emigrated from Germany when she was eighteen. She was born in 1946. Growing up, she could never get straight answers from her parents and teachers about the war and learned nothing about the Holocaust. All they would say was, "We suffered, too." This was "held up to many of our generation as the *only* lens to see through. If our parents had spoken to us about their responsibility for their actions or lack of action during the war, if they had grieved for the Jews and Gypsies and homosexuals and political prisoners who were murdered, and if then, in addition to all this, they had told us, 'We suffered, too,' their victimhood would have become part of the total lens. Taken by itself, it is flawed. Incomplete. A lie" (*Tearing*, 15; her emphasis).

If Darwin had included the sheer violence, brutality, and excessive greed of colonialism in his discussion of the causes of the extinction of native races, then his statement that this is a complex problem would have had some meaning. As it is, it is rather empty and serves as another misdirection. We

are told to look at the complexity, but his complexity omits the murderous brutality that was taking place and the ways the natives were forced to live on the run, and that means we won't see these things. Similarly, if Dawkins, Gopnik, and others acknowledged that Darwin frequently spoke of competition between races and how some tribes or nations prevail over other tribes and nations because of their superior qualities and that he conveniently passed over the tremendous cruelties and injustices that went into this competition, then their attempted argument that Darwin was not a racist might carry some weight. As it is, their argument is flawed. Incomplete. A lie.

Summing up what we can glean from the section "On the Extinction of the Races of Man" in Chapter 7 of *Descent*, we have Darwin:

- a) rather coldly reciting the statistics that point towards the inevitable eradication of native populations; no hint that he feels this is an injustice or mourns their loss;
- b) discussing the causes of this extinction, but except for one bare mention of war with the British, does not emphasize that the colonists were employing violent means to a great degree (murder, theft, rape, and kidnapping have no existence in his analysis);
- c) using the euphemisms 'come in contact' and 'changed habits' for, respectively, 'invasion and conquest' and 'dispossession and displacement';
- d) demonstrating an awareness that coming into contact (invasion) and changed habits (dispossession) were having a depressing effect on the spirit of the natives, but never quite grasping the emotional and moral significance of this;
- e) several times mentioning the book by Georg Gerland, but never telling us Gerland's conclusion that the main cause of extinction was the bloodthirstiness of Europeans, nor informing us of Gerland's belief that European extermination of the races was *not* inevitable, if only they were treated with fairness and dignity;
- f) similarly citing James Bonwick's book for a couple of items, but leaving out most of the worst abuses which he relates (such as the kidnapping of native women and children) and omitting Bonwick's quotation of a writer who said that the extinction of uncivilized races is not inevitable and that anyone who says it is, is "barbarous and uncivilized himself" (*Last*, 376); and,
- g) selectively quoting Dr. Story from Bonwick's book, resulting in his readers not seeing Story's comment that for the Aborigines, "being at war with the Whites may have caused the mothers to neglect their

children ..." (388).

And yet there is more.

11

GENOCIDE BY ANY OTHER NAME

Many things in this little book may sound harsh and severe ... But facts are stubborn things, and certain facts very unpleasant to hear. And if the terrible gaping wound does exist, is it right to keep it concealed?

---John B. Gribble (16) in 1884

There is a kind of forgetfulness that impairs reason and knowledge because it prevents recognition.

---Johannes Fabian (*Memory*, 68)

A theory on why we stop remembering: there is a part of our story that we do not know how to tell to ourselves and we will away its existence for so long that finally our brain agrees to a trade: I will let you forget this, but you will never feel whole.

---Laura van den Berg, *Find Me* (243)

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I am not driving towards a judgment of whether Darwin was moral or immoral or whether his theory was. I am content to "judge", or better, understand, Darwin by his own standards and the standards of science as he espoused it---for he had a genuine understanding of what science really is. He knew it depended on an accurate gathering of the facts, not a selective viewing. We owe Darwin that much---that we be just as accurate about him. The question is: Did he apply science as he understood it to man?

I am thrilled that Darwin insisted that man be considered a part of nature as much as anything else and studied as such. He refused to place man in a special category all by himself. But he did not stay true to that when he treated the matter of civilized and savage races in their relationship to each other. He does not write about the races of mankind the way he writes about

finches, beetles, and earthworms. If a bird whistled a bad tune, Darwin would probably not call it hideous as he called savage music (*Descent*, 116; I should note that Wallace did not like savage music either; in that essay on civilization in Northern Celebes, he called native music "monotonous and melancholy", S104, 66; probably few Europeans liked their music, but there must have been some exceptions; see Fabian, *Out of*, 114-20). Of a screeching bird, Darwin would more likely say something like 'It has a disconcerting effect upon our ears.' On the other hand, even when it came to birds, he was capable of sometimes judging their songs, as he does in Notebook C 256: "Their soft-billed birds are inferior to ours, & our lark ranks very high."

This difference between listening to a bird's song and a man's highlights an important point: It is almost impossible to write about human beings with so-called objectivity. When we study animals and plants, we can do so with a certain bemused detachment or marvel in aesthetic wonder at the sights and behaviors before us, even if some of it is brutal. But when human beings study other human beings, such detachment is more fantasy than reality. The experience of other human cultures stirs things in us that other animals do not. It could be fear or envy or admiration or disgust, but whatever it is, we are hardly neutral. It is dishonest to pretend we can be objective about what makes any of us human, about what is valuable in the human species and what is not.

What makes us human is a more vital issue to us than 'why does the robin sing?' or 'how does the earthworm turn?' We are never going to be neutral about 'why do fools fall in love?' or 'where should the king of Hawaii be seated at a British royal banquet?' The extinction of a race was not a coldly calculated possibility, as Darwin makes it appear, but as emotionally significant to the human, colonial observer, even the so-called scientist, as it was to the victim. Darwin never lets us know this.

What might be called the good, spiritual side of evolutionary theory has two points to it: diversity and humility. Darwin was not as faithful to these insights as his idolizers would like us to believe. Actually, these points are not unique to evolutionists. They would be true for most biologists or, the popular term in Darwin's day, naturalists, which is what Darwin and Wallace were. One of the reasons, probably the main reason, for becoming a naturalist in Darwin's time (or even today) was because you were enthralled by the sheer diversity in nature. You became a naturalist to learn more and to celebrate that diversity. This was not a special insight from the angle of evolution. It had long been known to and practiced by European naturalists and philosophers.

They marveled at the splendor of many species. They embraced what Hodgen calls "the principles of plenitude and continuity" (*Early*, 414). I

presented this earlier in Chapter 9, §1, in my discussion of the chain of being. She cites Albert Magnus (13th century) for the idea that "Nature ... makes no animal kinds separate, or without something intermediate between them" (414) and Nicholas Cusanus (15th century) for a similar view. As she also notes, "Nature never makes leaps" had become a principle centuries before Darwin. The gradations between species are so fine that you could always find another species between any two no matter how close they were. Such close relationships between species led many to wonder about the origin of species. So too Darwin and Wallace and Chambers and many others.

But when it came to human diversity, Europeans were not quite so enamored and made an exception for man. Darwin followed suit. They changed the rules of the game to accept only uniformity and get rid of what they didn't like or didn't understand or just outright feared. Darwin was no different. One cannot help but get the strong impression from *The Descent of Man* that Darwin had one single idea of what it means to be civilized, that Europeans will hopefully evolve even higher on the scale of civilization one day (as he implies in the last paragraph of *Descent*), and that most, if not all, of the diverse human cultures beneath Europe will soon disappear from the earth. This is a shocking point of view in a man who otherwise was enchanted by and honored the diversity of organic life on this planet, even arguing that natural selection accounts for this almost infinite diversity (e.g., *Origin*, 480).

Here is an example of Darwin on diversity in nature. After discussing flying bats, flying lemurs and squirrels (even flying fish on the next page)---the point being that he can see how by gradations nature could develop wings proper from more primitive forms which function only as gliders---he muses on the different functions of wings in birds (*Origin*, 214). Besides their use for flight, they also serve as flappers in the logger-headed duck, as fins in the water and front legs on the land in penguins, as sails with the ostrich, and no apparent purpose in the Apteryx. "Yet the structure of each of these birds is good for it, under the conditions of life to which it is exposed, for each has to live by a struggle" (214). But in *Descent*, he never says the structure of each human culture is good for it "under the conditions of life to which it is exposed." He never extends that generous sort of reasoning to savage cultures, but dismisses them as low in morals. Darwin the naturalist and Darwin the anthropologist were not the same creature. (The one, and only, as far as I know, grand exception to this is Darwin's comment in his journal that the Fuegians have been suited to their land, which seems so inhospitable to us, and likely find some happiness there; see *Voyage*, 183. He seems to be saying that nature has done this and we should honor that. But this is not an insight that lasted long for Darwin.)

For Darwin, natural selection produces more and more diversity, *except* in the case of man with whom it produced diversity up to a point but was now headed in the opposite direction towards uniformity. Wallace thought this way too early on. He too could write in 1864 that "... it must inevitably follow that the higher--the more intellectual and moral--must displace the lower and more degraded races ... his [man's] mental constitution may continue to advance and improve till the world is again inhabited by a single homogeneous race ..." ("Origin of Human Races", S093, clxix). (And there are evolutionists today who believe we are headed towards a single uniform race. Flannery, *Here on Earth*, 75, n58, mentions S. Wells as one.)

It is clear that diversity of human cultures held no charm for Darwin. He would not wax ecstatic over the diverse forms of music, marriage rites, forms of justice, rituals of all kinds, as he would over the varieties of beetles, birds, and more, and their intricate habits. 'Marvelous' and 'wonderful' are words he often used for all kinds of flora and fauna, but not for the various ways of being human. You will never hear him say marvelous is this marriage rite in some savage tribe. He did not remain faithful to what descent with modification should have taught him. It is another puzzle about Darwin and his society that may never be resolved, except to say that this was their racism and their fear, their very deep fear of the Other.

Along with diversity should go some humility. Gould says, "The evolutionary unity of human beings with all other organisms is the cardinal message of Darwin's revolution for nature's most arrogant species" (*Mismeasure*, 354). The only part of that statement I could unequivocally agree with are the last four words. Darwinists have it in bucket loads. Are they trying to corner the market on arrogance? Because that's what playing fast and loose with the evidence brings. It is a funny thing to see 'revolution' and a criticism of arrogance in the same sentence. 'Revolution' itself is pretty arrogant, not least because it is inaccurate in this case, as previously explained (in my discussion of Margaret Hodgen's point about the way Darwin accepted hierarchy, order, rank; see Ch. 1, §2). It is a misdirection so that we won't see what Darwin actually did. In theory, yes, maybe evolutionary theory should work this way and produce this humility, and it certainly did for *the previous evolutionists*, but while there is some of this in Darwin's work, he did not stay true to it. Older evolutionary theory worked this way and a new, improved version of it could. But it wasn't Darwin's version, at least not with respect to man.

When writing about earthworms, Darwin did embrace humility with a twinkle in his eye. But towards savages, he wasn't humble at all. He seems to have felt rather exalted as a European, and, at the same time, disgusted by the

savages. Some selective quotations, as Gould acknowledges (*Mismeasure*, 417), can show Darwin having a positive reaction to this or that Negro he met in his travels, but for most savages, as well as savages in general, he felt nothing but loathing. He made it very clear at the very end of *Descent* that being related to barbarians was a horrifying thought to him. He felt he had more in common with dogs and monkeys, and probably earthworms, than with savages.

There is also a lot of arrogance in the way Darwin cavalierly assumes that savages will become extinct because they cannot compete against civilized nations. Wallace too thought this way about savages at one point, but he quickly went on to gain the wisdom to see that western civilization had an overwhelming advantage and, therefore, we should slow down, back off, and give the natives some breathing room (or "breathing time," as Saxe Bannister put it; see *Colonization*, 12; also *Humane* [1830], 104n). For Darwin, it was: Let's proceed without let-up.

In theory Gould should be right. He beautifully expands on his thought about combating human arrogance by offering a question: "shall we judge among the dance of the bees, the song of the humpback whale, and human intelligence?" (*Mismeasure*, 354). Darwin did precisely that. He did indeed judge. In the last paragraph of *Descent*, he identified man as being "at the very summit of the organic scale" and talks about taking pride in this. Yet to take Gould at his word, we could add other things to his list. Not only something like savage music, along with the dance of the bees and, say, Bach and Beethoven, but also the savage way of living in harmony with nature instead of seeking to control and dominate it as we do. Isn't the savage way as good as ours in the scale of humility? Why isn't the savage way of relating to the land by roaming over large tracts just as good as the desire to fence it in and build things on it? An improved version of the theory of evolution might see it this way, but Darwin would probably have excluded many things about savages from the list.

This way of treating man does not match the humility Darwin exhibited when writing about almost everything else in nature. In putting man at the summit of organic being, he was implying that Europeans in particular were at the tippy top of this summit, given that in the preceding paragraph he expressed his preference for heroic little monkeys over barbarians (who might as human beings be on the summit too, but would be lower down on this summit). I agree with Gould and others that evolutionary theory should lead to a greater appreciation for the diversity of life and a sense of humility at man's place in the universe or even just on this planet, and it did for Darwin when he studied the flora and fauna of the world, but it had almost the exact

opposite effect when he studied human beings. And if anyone really believes in what Gould was saying, then why not celebrate someone like Robert Chambers who promoted humility in spades and made it an integral part of his system of evolution? If you claim to love humility as a lesson of evolutionary theory and you erase from history someone like Chambers, then your claim about humility rings false.

There is also something else misleading in the way Gould uses 'revolution' to describe Darwin's theory of common descent. (And just to remind everyone, what writer has not called this theory revolutionary, disregarding that the theory had been around for a very long time?) It is a disservice to so many who came before Darwin and were on the same road he was, at least with regard to one point. Despite the way Gould puts it in the above quote, the real nub of the controversy about evolution, as Gould well knew, was not that man was now one with nature, but that he was related to the apes. And even that was not the crucial issue. Darwin knew that this business about our close relation to monkeys was a three-ring circus. Being descended from a common ancestor with monkeys and apes was something you could get used to, as Darwin had. It was our relation to savages and barbarians that posed the real threat to western identity, and to Darwin too, as he frankly admitted. What would be the point of a theory that made us feel at one with nature and yet at odds with certain other human beings? That was the sticking point. To Darwin's great credit, as I noted earlier, he overcame his prejudices to see the genealogical bond among human beings---but that bond was ancient history to Darwin, it had no bearing whatsoever on human relations in the present.

His theory of common descent was not as revolutionary as most writers have made it out to be. The revolution preceded Darwin and would go on without him and even with his opposition to it. Many religious people had believed it for generations before Darwin. In Jewish culture, you can go back to the oldest oral traditions recorded in the Mishnah, Talmud, and other parts of rabbinic literature. Ben Azzai said (Sifra 89b) that the greatest verse in Torah was from Genesis 5:1: "This is the book of the generations of Adam [or, man]." (Keep in mind that for Darwin too it is all about genealogy and descent. That verse is a precursor to later evolutionary thinking.) It was Ben Azzai's opinion that this teaches us that we are all descended from one human being and that is why it is the greatest verse in Torah.

In the Mishnah, in the midst of discussing some trial rules (particularly the importance of carefully questioning witnesses in murder cases), one of the reasons given for why God began the human race with the creation of a single human being is that no one will be able to say my father was greater than your father (Sanhedrin 4:5)---that is, no one will be able to claim superior ancestry

and, therefore, this should promote peace among mankind. The Aborigines' Protection Society formulated their motto a couple of decades before *Origin* was published: *Ab Uno Sanguine* (Of One Blood). It comes from the Bible, Acts 17:26: God "made of one blood all nations of men," as translated by William Tyndale in the 16th century and adopted by the King James Version. That Darwin, and Chambers, gave this ancient idea a scientific underpinning is extremely interesting, but the "revolutionary" idea that we are all related had been around for a very long time. *Ab Uno Sanguine* was only one recent example.

In fact, contends George Boulukos, making a point often missed by scholars, up until late in the 18th century, the general "consensus backed by standard interpretations of scripture ... held that God had created all men in his image and therefore they all participated in a common humanity" (Boulukos, 10; also see 100-15). Religion promoted this view before scientists seriously considered it. It is not that the idea of black and white originating from different ancient parents was never offered before, say, 1780, but that when it was, it was hesitantly or with apologies for being a heterodox opinion, as for example, by John Atkins in 1735 (Atkins, 39; also see Boulukos, 60; Boulukos, 61, points out that, in 1680, Morgan Godwyn attacked as heretical the idea of what was later called polygenesis). Atkins does not say much other than to register his shock at seeing the "black Colour, and woolly Tegument of these *Guineans*" and his being unable to account for it (Atkins, 39). In general, there was "hesitancy, indirection, and lack of clarity in most early-century [18th] suggestions of difference" (Boulukos, 106).

What is fascinating is how quickly, from the late 18th century on, the view that human races have different origins (polygenesis) rose to challenge the commonly accepted view that all humans are related (monogenesis) and how quickly it was embraced by scientists who theoretically should have known better. In 1772, Samuel Estwick's pro-slavery argument admitted that "Negroes are human creatures" (Estwick, 64, 88), but, as Boulukos explains, he countered the meaningfulness of that with the contention that "there are profound and concrete differences between the various species of the human genus" (Boulukos, 102). "Estwick's position, marginal when he presented it as a last ditch defense of slavery in 1772, would become culturally central by the end of the 1780s" (103). Estwick also argued that English law recognized that Negroes could be treated as property.

I am not sure how marginal Estwick's position was. His pro-slavery tract is profoundly racist in a revealing way. At the end, though he has been arguing that slavery is allowable in England itself, not just in the colonies, he recommends new legislation to put an end to importing slaves into England

because he is convinced we need to "preserve the race of Britons from stain and contamination" (Estwick, 95). A racism that deep does not grow up overnight or in isolation from the beliefs of others. But I take Boulukos's point that Estwick had to deliver his ideas of Negro inferiority in a monogenist framework because that was the prevailing worldview.

Also, we should not forget the relationship between racism and antisemitism, a word I dislike immensely because it makes Jews seem like a people apart from all others. The word itself furthers the cause of antisemitism, making Jews feel a little too unique and way too isolated (divide and conquer is a firm principle of racism and the word antisemitism plays that game far too well). I prefer the term racism against Jews. For centuries, Europeans treated Jews with contempt, stereotyped them, demonized them, held them to be inferior, including being lazy and stupid (e.g., too stupid to understand their own scriptures), and denied them legal equality. All the classic elements of racism were in place. Yet those behavioral characteristics were not enough. Europeans became obsessed with physically differentiating Jews (hence the need for caricatures or a yellow badge). The Other had to be made physically visible and noticeably different. Europe practiced this racism for many centuries before it turned its sights on Africa and exacerbated slavery into a major institution. Enslaving Africans may have intensified racism from one point of view, but it did not create something new. I don't think the earliest expressions of belief in Africans' inferiority were as innocent as some scholars make them out to be. Europeans were tapping into the same hard racist ideas that had been developed for Jews.

Estwick made a big deal of the fact (for him) that English law treated Negroes as property and not as subjects of the King who are entitled to rights (Estwick 89-90; cf. 36-40). He grants that *if* Negroes are human subjects, then they are also due legal protections (88-89)---a major argument made by Granville Sharp---but it is their humanity that Estwick denies in the first place. This was not very different from what had long been the practice towards Jews, though they were never put into the category of property as Africans were. What was done to Jews is that they were treated as exceptional under the law. Special laws were passed for Jews precisely because they were the Other, not human beings in the full sense that Christians were, or, as in Czarist Russia, laws that gave rights or benefits to people would often add "except the Jews" (I'm not sure, but this may have occurred later in the 19th century). "Except the Negroes" could also serve to characterize the position on habeas corpus, and other English legal protections, that was favored by advocates of slavery. Estwick (90-91) argued that Negroes as property are "a legal exception to the writ [of Habeas Corpus]." Both Jews and Negroes were

treated as exceptional under the law.

I respect the argument that slavery of the late 18th and into the 19th century intensified racism insofar as this argument highlights the harm that slavery did. But when Boulukos and others argue that slavery somehow created a more hardcore racism, I have to disagree. The problem of deep racism goes way back. What developed were new, more effective means to carry it out; the racism itself was anything but new. In a similar vein, Richard Drayton points out that it is wrong to contrast the hardened racism of Victorian England with a previous, supposedly gentler age.

Here we must dissent from the popular hypothesis of a crucial 'hardening' of European attitudes to non-Europeans in the middle of the [19th] century ... Before ... most parties assume, lay a more gentle era ... [But for example] In 1823, when British humanitarianism is supposed to have been reaching towards its high-water mark, colonists and government responded with a campaign of terror to the Slave Rebellion in Demerara, as indeed they had on every other occasion of West or East Indian insurrection ... Those who seek to explain racism in the Second British Empire, as if it was merely a Victorian phenomenon, strangely seem to forget that it was the foundation of the First. Extraordinary violence was at all times part of the colonial repertoire, and no quarter was given to those who got in the way of Britain's interests, and who, at the same time, lacked the power to hold their place ... It was Europe's ability to abuse non-Europeans with relative impunity [which Walter Bagehot had singled out as a sign of superiority, please recall] which underlay the hardening of European racism ... It was not new European attitudes which propelled empire, rather it was a new capacity for agency beyond Europe which distilled to proof strength older arrogance, prejudice, ambition, and illusion. [Drayton, 225, 228-29]

Those last four qualities apply just as well to the European attitude towards Jews. As for scientific racism, Drayton rightly observes, "Biology merely provided a new vocabulary with which to express old explanations for dominance, subordination, and violence" (225).

There was a long previous history leading up to our modern manifestations of racism. Europeans had long exercised a power to confine Jews to ghettos and to stereotypes, as briefly discussed above, keeping them in a state of dispossession, and the same kind of power was used, for example, to seize

lands in Ireland and reform its agriculture, and so dispossess many natives. All of this was done to "improve" the world, as Drayton might point out. And it depended on a very deep racism already being in place, so that some people could be deemed less human than others, even if their humanity was nominally admitted.

Charles Darwin in his own fashion supported the idea of distinguishing human groups early on in Notebook C 217 where he challenged the idea that all men are brothers with the observation "yet differences carried a long way" (see previously, Ch.3, §6). Although in the end Darwin endorsed monogenesis, he was part of the movement that made polygenesis seem like a reasonable theory by emphasizing the significant differences (intellectual and moral), albeit *imagined* differences, between the races.

Not that monogenesis was a guarantee that its advocates would believe in equality and reject the idea of important racial differences. Darwin embraced both monogenesis and radical differences between the sub-species (as he preferred to identify them) of humanity, as explained in Chapter 5. He did not follow pro-slavery apologists who argued that racial differences justified slavery, but he did follow their view that radical differences were easily reconciled with monogenesis. And even more significantly, while he did not follow them to justify slavery, he did follow them to justify extermination---extermination of lower races, in Darwin's view, resulting from racial differences as surely and as naturally as night follows day---and this was true whether you were a monogenist or polygenist.

Long before Darwin, this lack of any real distinction between monogenesis and polygenesis had created problems. In the early debates over slavery, many monogenists advocated amelioration of slavery, not its abolition. For example, some novelists in the 18th century presented "reformers [who] improve slaves' lives only in order to enslave them more securely ... [they imply] slavery can be reformed by making it particularly suitable to Africans, which then suggests that Africans are suited to slavery ... [these novels] work within the rhetorical constraint of a monogenist framework to develop a sense of racial difference" (Boulukos, 117). This last point is not much different from what Darwin would do. No matter what theory they adopted, they had a hard time getting away from emphasizing racial differences.

I believe it was excessive greed more than anything else that lay behind this emphasis. However illusory and fantastical it was, certain powerful men in Europe saw or dreamed the possibility that Europe could dominate everyone on the planet and take over all the resources. That they called this improvement is irrelevant. This greed to have it all justified by turns slavery, the racism that continued after slavery, and the dehumanization, even unto

extermination, of colonized peoples. Why did pro-slavery and imperialist advocates dig their heels and theories in deeper whenever they were challenged? They did not want to let go of their economic advantages. "Let us restrain ourselves" (or proceed more slowly or give the natives breathing time) was not something they wanted to hear from humanitarians or anyone inclined in a humanitarian direction. I will have more to say about greed later on in this chapter. In the meantime, we should remember with some humility that before a terrific desire to have it all took over, it had once been the standard European view that all human beings were made in the same image. Professional science was a latecomer to this idea of the common humanity of all and finally joined in only after mucking it up with unfounded ideas of unbridgeable differences and polygenesis.

So far I have only suggested how Darwin failed to stay consistent with what I have called the spiritual side of evolution---the honoring of diversity and humility. There is another problem just as serious. He violated two particular details on the technical side of his brand of evolutionary theory as he himself expounded it.

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According to Darwin and Wallace, natural selection is a long, slow process. Incredibly long, incredibly slow. It needs a) time and plenty of it because b) the changes are so small. No huge leaps, no dramatic alterations. Natural selection inches along, maybe even millimeters along. Darwin is nothing less than emphatic on this point. Both Darwin and Wallace were, so too Chambers most of the time. Modifications due to natural selection accumulate over very long periods of time and each modification is *slight* giving the individual only a *slight advantage* over competitors. Darwin repeats this so often throughout *Origin of Species* that it could literally (I mean that metaphorically) make your head spin.

Thus: "That natural selection will always act with extreme slowness, I fully admit" (135), "The process of modification must be extremely slow" (351), "the slow process of modification through natural selection" (390), "insensibly small steps" (499), "many graduated steps" (505), "all changes are slowly effected" (508), all species "have changed slowly and in a graduated manner" (511), natural selection "can produce no great or sudden modification; it can act only by very short and slow steps" (517), species "are still slowly changing by the preservation and accumulation of successive slight favourable variations" (526). And finally, just to really drive the point home: "Natural selection ... will ... if it be a true principle, banish the belief ... of any great and sudden modification in their [organic beings'] structure"

(121-22).

Somebody else might want to modify the theory to include occasional catastrophes or cataclysms as playing a role, but Darwin would have none of it. The gradual change applies to both the birth of new species and extermination. Even in his earliest approach to this, in his 1842 essay, while he comments that sudden extermination may be possible (1842, 23, 26), he also says, "I shall doubt very sudden exterminations" (28). By the time he wrote the 1844 essay, he no longer needed doubt. He was sure. Extermination is always gradual (1844, 145, 147, 180, 210, 245).

In his later work on man, nowhere in the section on extinction or anywhere in *The Descent of Man* does Darwin appeal even once to cataclysm as a possible explanation for what is happening to native populations. He writes as if this process of extinction of the natives were a normal outcome of natural selection. Gerland had explained that there was nothing natural about it, but Darwin was not listening. He had insisted in *Origin* that catastrophe would never play a role in his thinking: In explaining how natural selection can help us figure out the length of time in the history of fossils, he comments, "... species are produced and exterminated by slowly acting and still existing causes, and not by miraculous acts of creation and by catastrophes ..." (*Origin*, 533). You will note that he is specifically saying that even as radical a result as extermination of a species is a slow process and does not come about suddenly.

Darwin even believed that extinction is generally a slower process than the production of new species: "... species and groups of species gradually disappear ... There is reason to believe that the complete extinction of the species of a group is generally a slower process than their production ..." (355; cf. 359). As we know, the appearance of new species in Darwin's theory is extremely slow, and now he tells us that extinction is even slower.

So what would you call the extermination of a native people within fifty to a hundred years (an incredibly short time in evolutionary terms) of "coming into contact" with Europeans? It is certainly not natural selection, not by Darwin's account of what natural selection is. It's murder. Not only was European colonialism happening too fast to qualify as natural selection, but Europeans had more than a slight advantage. Guns and cannons against spears and knives was not the kind of incremental advantage Darwin and Wallace envisioned. Yet Darwin treated colonialism as if it were a natural phenomenon and wouldn't even consider catastrophe as an explanation. Bizarre, no?

Recently (as I was writing this chapter), I was listening to a program on National Public Radio. They played a clip from an interview Richard

Dawkins gave at the 92nd Street Y (on the east side of Manhattan in New York City) where I once worked as an usher. He was making the point that for natural selection to work, it takes millions of deaths. This is horrifying to contemplate, he said, but, he added, Darwin saw a kind of savage beauty in this. I agree. Somebody please tell me where the savage beauty is in the following.

Below is a part of Tim Flannery's summary of what happened to the Tasmanians. The chronological context for this is as follows. The Dutchman Abel Tasman had "discovered" and named Van Diemen's Land in 1642, but it was over a century before European explorers regularly visited it and the continent of Australia. Captain James Cook first traveled to Australia in 1770. The first English Colony in Tasmania was established in 1803; less than a year later, the first massacre of Tasmanians occurred in 1804; by 1830, 300 Tasmanians were left (out of an original population of about 5,000-7,000); only 47 in 1847; and in 1876, five years after *The Descent of Man* first appeared, the last Tasmanian (as Europeans believed) died; her name was Truganini.

There [in a place later named Mount Victory], 30 people were murdered and their bodies thrown over a cliff. Elsewhere, police slaughtered 70 people and dashed out the brains of their children. Shepherds castrated men and Tasmanian women were tied to logs, burned with firebrands and forced to wear the heads of their freshly murdered husbands around their necks. In 1828 martial law was declared in Van Diemen's Land, and a five pound bounty was put on the head of each Tasmanian adult, two pounds being paid for each child. [Flannery, *Future Eaters*, 317]

Does anyone see the savage beauty in this? Because I sure don't. I am not being flippant or sarcastic. I agree with Darwin and Dawkins about the savage beauty in nature (sort of, I don't really have the stomach for it they do). But if that is how nature is and if what happened to the Tasmanians is not an example of savage beauty, then once again, we have another angle from which to conclude that European extermination of savages was not natural. Other unnatural aspects can also be pointed out. England had been sending its convicts to the Australian area---the least fit members of its society, as judged by English authorities---and convicts started the first settlement in Tasmania. Over 40% of convicts to Australia went to Tasmania. Hardly the way species normally behave. Perhaps one could say that the slaughter of the Tasmanians was a case of the unfit annihilating the fit.

There is a comparable list of horrors from a contemporary account in

Australia, which is worth quoting if only to make the point that Flannery's compilation is not a matter of hindsight (the part about wearing their husband's heads around their necks, however, may not have happened as often as his recitation suggests). People at the time had plenty of opportunity to know the extent of the violence. Lawrence Threlkeld was a missionary to New South Wales from 1826 to 1841. He wrote letters to the London Missionary Society to update them and later on annual reports for the colonial government (the ones for 1836 and 1837 were published and made available to the public) which detailed some of the atrocities he had learned of. The 1837 report contained the following:

the ripping open of the bellies of the Blacks alive;---the roasting of them in that state in triangularly made log fires, made for the very purpose;---the dashing of infants upon the stones; the confining of a party in a hut and letting them out singly through the doorway, to be butchered as they endeavoured to escape, together with many other atrocious acts of cruelty, which are but the sports of monsters boasting of superior intellect to that possessed by the wretched blacks. [Reynolds, *Whispering*, 65-66]

Does any of this match anything Darwin wrote about nature, savage beauty or anything else? I hardly think so. Here is the last sentence of Chapter III of *Origin*, where Darwin sums up the struggle for existence: "When we reflect on this struggle, we may console ourselves with the full belief, that the war of nature is not incessant, that no fear is felt, that death is generally prompt, and that the vigorous, the healthy, and the happy survive and multiply." Try consoling the Tasmanian women who were tied to logs "that no fear is felt, that death is generally prompt." Oh, I forgot, they're not here anymore.

No European was ever tried for any of these murders. There were a few, a very few, exceptions to this general trend of no legal punishment in mainland Australia, but in Tasmania it was a sickening, steadfast reality. And people were aware of it at the time. The *Hobart Town Times* in April 1836 observed that "... the Government, to its shame be it recorded, in no one instance, on no single occasion, ever punished, or threatened to punish, the acknowledged murderers of the aboriginal inhabitants" (Bonwick, *Last*, 70). Almost two hundred years later, Lyndall Ryan can confirm this for the whole history of that colony: "No colonist was ever charged in Van Diemen's Land, let alone committed for trial, for assaulting or killing an Aborigine" (*Tasmanian Aborigines*, 78).

The Colonial government often issued proclamations that white men would be punished for offences like murder and stealing Aborigine children. It

seems like every governor issued at least one. The intention to punish misdeeds by white men was openly stated, but never carried out. The earliest such order might have been in 1810 from Governor David Collins: Murderous violence against natives would be dealt with in the same way "as if such violence had been offered, or murder committed on, a civilized person" (Bonwick, *Last*, 40). In 1824, Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur similarly promised, among other things, "to forbid and prevent, and when perpetrated to punish, any ill-treatment towards them [the natives]" (ibid., 72). Bonwick comments on this last order, "It reads full of justice and benevolence, like the proclamations of Governors Collins, Davey, and Sorell, and was just as useless as those for any practical purpose" (72-73).

In 1829, a board with four painted panels was authorized by Arthur to be shown to the Tasmanian Aborigines. The first panel depicted racial harmony (i.e., a white woman holding a black baby, a black woman holding a white baby; and two children, black and white, holding hands) and the second, conciliation between the natives and the British military (leaders of the two groups are shaking hands). The last two panels showed first a black man killing a white man and being hung by the authorities, and then a white man killing a black man and getting the same punishment. (The four panels were reproduced in Bonwick, 85; also in Ryan, 114, and Reynolds, *Fate*, Plate 7.) In fact, it was only blacks that were punished for murder. "Both aggressors are subject to the same penalty; both are threatened, but the punishment falls only on one side," wrote Bonwick (*Last*, 76).

The panels strike me as disingenuous. The British were very good at telling natives what they thought the natives wanted to hear. They did it in the Treaty of Waitangi (1840) with the Maori of New Zealand. They promised them undisturbed possession of their lands (Article 2) and gave them "all the Rights and Privileges of British Subjects" (Article 3), but they also gave their own Queen Victoria full sovereignty (Article One), which they explained to the Maori as meaning that there would be one consistent system of law for settlers and natives, but in reality, they meant that the Queen controlled all the land (see Claudia Orange's book, 56-57, 64-65, 145-47, *et passim*). Similarly, the four panels of Tasmania painted a beautiful picture of what life would be like for the Tasmanians, full of justice and equality, but it was never going to be like that and it seems fairly clear that no British official sincerely intended it would be that way.

The panels were produced in 1829. Meanwhile, Arthur had issued that order in 1824 and yet no white man had been punished for murder or rape or child abduction. So he knew such orders were useless. One primary reason these orders were ineffective was that natives were not allowed to give

testimony in court, so how could there be any justice for them? "Both [Aborigines and Europeans] knew that native testimony was valueless in court, and were equally convinced that no English testimony would be likely to appear on behalf of the Aborigines" (Bonwick, *Last*, 73). In the last chapter, I noted that George Robinson believed "the legal disqualification to give evidence ... accelerated the destruction of Blacks by the Whites" (ibid., 328). Bonwick was probably referring to a statement in Robinson's 1843 report to Governor Gipps of New South Wales: "There is ... reason to fear that the destruction of the aboriginal natives has been accelerated from the known fact of their being incapacitated to give evidence in our courts of law" (quoted in Smandych, 257). Robinson was not alone in thinking this. John Hutt, the first Governor of Western Australia, was concerned about the lack of equality for Aborigines before the law. In an 1839 despatch to Colonial Secretary Lord Glenelg, he lamented the inability of Aborigines to give evidence: "From this source the most serious evils necessarily flow ... Exasperation, revenge and murder ensue, and eventually the weaker party are exterminated" (in Smandych, 263).

Darwin never offers the incapacity to give evidence in court as one of the causes of the impending extinction of Aborigines, though he had read Bonwick. He had also read about this issue in George Grey's 1841 book (see previously, the end of Ch. 4, §5). His silence on this is indicative of his own inability to think deeply about all the factors afflicting the Aborigines.

The same problem existed for slaves, which is yet another sign of how similar were the situations of slavery and colonialism. Before Britain gradually abolished slavery from 1834 to 1838 in the colonies, the government made various attempts to ameliorate the conditions of slaves. One of these came in 1831 when it ordered that slaves could act as witnesses in court. In the Crown colonies, ruled directly by the home government, the order was immediately effective, but in settler colonies, like Jamaica, it could only urge colonial legislatures to pass the law exactly as written in London. In the case of Jamaica, the British government even offered a bribe, consisting in reduction of sugar duties if they would adopt this rule "word for word". The white planters who dominated the Jamaican Assembly refused (see Heuman, 83). Money could not buy them or entice them to change their way of life.

In Van Diemen's Land and other colonies, the natives were not technically slaves, so this order would not apply to them. Significantly, it would be a longer time before anyone ever showed any commitment to make these legal changes for Aborigines. Despite the noble efforts of James Stephen, under-secretary in the Colonial Office, there was no amelioration policy for colonized natives. There was never any proposal, as far as I know, to allow

natives to offer witness testimony in court, not in Van Diemen's Land. Without such an order, declarations of equal justice were meaningless. Yet Secretary of State George Murray knew very well that equal justice would go a long way towards improving the situation in Van Diemen's Land. In April 1830, he wrote to Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur that "nothing, I am certain, will tend more effectually to check the evil than to bring before a court of justice any person who may have been instrumental to the death of a native" and ordered Arthur to make the colonists "duly aware of the serious consequences which will result to any person against whom a criminal prosecution may be undertaken" (in Boyce, *Van Diemen's Land*, 272). One has to wonder how serious Murray was because, without the legalization of native testimony, no such prosecutions would ever be undertaken.

In contrast to Murray and Arthur, Saxe Bannister, Attorney-General in New South Wales (and in later years, very active in the Aborigines' Protection Society), wrote in 1824 to the Colonial Office, remarking "on the continuing 'denial of Justice' caused to 'Black Natives' by the fact that a law had not yet been enacted to allow them to testify in court without taking an oath" (Smandych, 246; 'without taking an oath' refers to the fact that the natives did not share a belief in the Christian God and could not meaningfully swear on the Bible; therefore, humanitarians argued, they should be allowed to testify without an oath). Bannister was one of the first to push for this. But as Russell Smandych points out, others soon followed (Smandych, 247). The Colonial Office dragged its feet on the matter. It was not until 1843 that Parliament passed the *Colonial Evidence Act* (which James Stephen was instrumental in preparing), permitting colonies to pass measures allowing unsworn Aboriginal evidence in court (242, 272; Smandych cites the work of Jane Samson on this). This came too late for the Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land.

It was not only James Bonwick in his 1870 book who lamented the failure to punish white colonists for crimes against the natives. Charles Napier in 1835 also made a big deal of this. He frequently lambastes (in one way or another) officials for not following up humane orders with enforcement (xxv, 127, 129, 143, 176, 210-11, 212). He winds up with this: "Proclamations, alone, do no good. What do distant settlers care for a proclamation? nothing. When an execution takes place, then indeed, a proclamation *is* useful, to make the people understand the crime" (212; his emphasis and spelling). He added, "By our cruelties, we display our contempt of all laws, divine and human."

I think one reason they attempted to do this for slaves, when they would still not consider it for indigenes, was that they knew they were on their way to emancipation, so this was just another step in that direction. Slaves were partly acculturated to the majority society and it was expected that ex-slaves

would become part of the working class; the right to give legal testimony was coming anyway. It should be remembered that before the abolition of slavery, there were free people of color in colonies like Jamaica where the free browns and blacks fought for many years for their full civil rights. In Jamaica, this was finally achieved in 1830. Prior to that, there were attempts at piecemeal rights. The first petition by coloreds to gain the right to give evidence in court (along with a couple of other rights) was presented in 1792. The petition failed. They were not successful at winning this right until 1813. Interestingly, the Jamaican Assembly was worried enough about the implications of granting this right to the free coloreds that it felt compelled at the same time to state its resolution "that the free people of color in this island have no right or claim whatever to political power, or to interfere in the administration of the Government ..." (Heuman, 28). The right to give testimony in a court of law was always seen as potentially entailing more rights. It represented a kind of sharing of power. That was something white settlers were determined not to do for Aborigines.

Would it have made a difference if the right to testify had been granted to Aborigines in Tasmania? Most likely not. Since they were absolutely set on not sharing power, the settlers would have found ways to continue to deny justice to Aborigines, even if the law on legal testimony had been changed.

The experience in Western Australia of getting around such a right, as Amanda Nettelbeck astutely explains in her article, demonstrates that racism will have its way whatever the laws may be. "In 1841 ... Western Australia became the first Australian colony to have in operation an act for the legal admissibility of Aboriginal testimony, a measure that in theory would remove the profound disability facing Aboriginal people in the courts" (Nettelbeck, 361-62). In practice, what happened was that "... judicial punishment of settler crimes [against Aborigines] was limited by the readiness of settler juries, magistrates, and police to dismiss its [Aboriginal evidence's] reliability, at least when it incriminated settlers" (365). One attorney, Edward Landor, who defended a number of settlers, advised one jury, "not to be carried away by too eager a desire for equal justice between white and black" (375) and argued that Aboriginal testimony "'ought not to outweigh' that of the white witnesses" (375 n93). This in itself was legal as the law, then as now, always allowed for the value of testimony to be weighed by judges and juries. While Aboriginal testimony became legal, the system still deemed that it be given no weight.

(Be it noted: The entire back story to this was a little more complicated. As Smandych explains, that 1841 Act was disallowed [Parliament had not yet authorized such Acts], though the Legislative Council of Western Australia did not find out until very late. Meanwhile, the *Colonial Evidence Act* was

passed in 1843. Later that year, the Western Australian law was re-enacted and made permanent in 1849; see Smandych, 261-71.)

In the first fifty years of the history of the colony of Western Australia, 29 Europeans were tried for crimes against Aborigines, far more than in the other Australian colonies. Only one was convicted of murder and executed. Another 20 were found guilty and given sentences, usually of about three to five years, which were often reduced, or sometimes they were only fined (Nettelbeck, 364; also see chart at the end of her article). "Over the same period, Western Australia executed 25 Aboriginal people for the murder of Europeans" (364). This is hardly what anyone would call equal justice and certainly could not have made the Aborigines feel that they would find justice in the courts. This does not even take into account all the cases of accusations against white settlers which never made it to court because police and magistrates were dismissive of the value of the testimony of Aborigines. This seems to have been true throughout Australia. For New South Wales, Lisa Ford reports, "... killing---especially when committed by respectable men ... seldom made it past magisterial inquiry ... Yet the records are littered with hundreds of reports and allegations of settler-indigenous violence" (Ford, 104; cf. 176). New South Wales did not adopt an act allowing Aboriginal evidence until 1876 (see Smandych, 259.)

This last point by both Nettelbeck and Ford is not made merely in hindsight. It finds confirmation by a contemporary observer. In a March 16, 1838 letter to Thomas Buxton, chairman of that House Select Committee on Aborigines, James Backhouse wrote that, in the Australian colonies, with only a couple of exceptions, he was "not aware of any instance of investigation into the circumstances [of the violent or suspicious deaths of blacks] by coroners or other inquest ... but cases have come to our knowledge in which we have every reason to believe ... the verdict must have been wilful murder, in some instances against persons well known, and in others unknown" (*Extracts*, last letter in Fifth Part). Some contemporaries knew there were cases of white on black violence that never made it past the investigating magistrate (as Ford has noted). Court justice was an almost infinitely long way off for Aborigines.

The one small bit of legal reform in Western Australia did not bring it any closer. Oddly enough, this attempt to recognize the legal validity of Aboriginal evidence backfired. The immediate effect was that there were more cases brought against white people in Western Australia than in other colonies. The white settlers resented this. These prosecutions against settlers "helped create a perception in the settler community that the law too vigorously favored a policy of Aboriginal protection," even though the reality was that they did little to control violence against Aborigines (Nettelbeck,

365). "Ultimately, it seemed that resentment arose from the officially held principle that the law would punish settler crimes against Aboriginal people, despite the practical reality that meaningfully it did not" (386). The end result: "Quite possibly, this helped to create and maintain an aggressive 'frontier mentality' that lasted well after settlement was secured ..." (388). Magistrates would turn "a 'blind eye' to settler vigilantism" (379). Those who "served the economic development of the colony," as Nettelbeck puts it (369), would always get favored treatment. It is likely that Van Diemen's Land would have had a similar experience, if the admissibility of Aboriginal testimony had been allowed there.

Theodor Waitz, Gerland's teacher, also saw the problem and explained it in a book Darwin read. Why are whites generally acquitted, while the Aborigines are punished for their crimes? "This becomes intelligible when we find that the natives can neither be valid witnesses in a court of law, nor are allowed to bear firearms. Latterly, however, they have in New South Wales at least been admitted as witnesses, but in so limited a degree, that their oppression is but little mitigated by the favour accorded" (Waitz, 165). Waitz perceived how much colonial authorities dragged their feet to render any justice or fair treatment to natives. (Waitz was mistaken about New South Wales. His source was Eyre, 2.493. But Eyre mentions South Australia, not New South Wales, a different colony. Waitz however was correct about the limited nature of this early law. Indigenous testimony was allowed only if corroborated by white testimony, which was unlikely to ever happen. Native testimony alone was still disallowed. Eyre pointed out that this "completely neutralizes the boon it was intended to grant.")

The same conduct of clinging to a policy while appearing to make changes happened with the doctrine of *terra nullius* (land belonging to no one). The first impression the British had was that the land in Australia was thinly populated and the wandering natives had no sense of private property. It was not long before they learned that both these perceptions were wrong (Banner, 113-14). The first Governor of New South Wales could see this. "'The natives are far more numerous than they were supposed to be,' Arthur Phillip reported back to England" (113). Also, as Stuart Banner observes, "It was not long before other British writers pointed out ... that tribes were nomadic, but each within its own boundaries ... Aborigines were even discovered to divide land among individuals and to pass property rights down from one generation to the next" (114). James Backhouse was one such British writer. In a letter of January 27, 1838, Backhouse comments, "These tribes consist of several families residing in a neighbourhood, having some natural boundary, each of which families has its distinct hunting ground, with boundaries acknowledged

by the other tribes" (*Extracts*, Fifth Part, 45).

It did not matter. Once a policy, any policy, is in place, the beneficiaries of it do not want to make any changes. "To overturn the doctrine [of *terra nullius*] would be to upset every white person's title to his or her land. The result would be chaos---no one would be sure of who owned what" (Banner, 129). Chaos for the white settlers, not for the Aborigines. In 1835, the Colonial Office actually tried to reverse *terra nullius* for the new colony of South Australia and ordered the new Commission not to take land unjustly from the Aborigines. The South Australian Colonization Commission gave the appearance of respecting Aboriginal proprietary rights but added the words "wherever such right may be found to exist" (121). Of course, as Banner points out, it was unlikely that the Commission would find any such rights to exist and, in the end, it merely assigned small parcels of land to the Aborigines. "Despite the apparent change in land policy in the mid-1830s, the colonization of South Australia looked just the same as in the older Australian colonies. *Terra nullius* survived" (122). The law, like science, can always be manipulated to get to the preconceived end.

As far as Tasmania is concerned, the important point is that even if legalization of Aboriginal testimony would not have made a difference, as the experience of Western Australia shows, it is still significant that their testimony was deemed inadmissible. The government was sending a message to the colonists about what exactly it thought of Aborigines---about their small worth in the eyes of the government and how little the government was prepared to do to protect or respect them. It might just as well have declared open season on natives. Whatever the law was, it would be used against the natives.

"Settlers did not spurn the law, they used it," writes Lisa Ford in her book on early colonialism in New South Wales and Georgia in the United States (107). She continues, "Authority itself was enmeshed in and compromised by settler violence ... Settler-magistrates and constables were the foot-soldiers of the state." "Settler violence, then, was clothed in law---a law which, in important respects, settlers constituted and controlled" (85). This applied not only to overt forms of violence which would never be prosecuted, but to dispossession as well, which would never be deemed out of order. It was all made to appear legal and in conformity with proper procedures, not arbitrary and based on greed, which is what it really was.

In New Zealand, the Maori had a treaty with the British, the Treaty of Waitangi in which they were promised "all the Rights and Privileges of British Subjects." And what good did this do them? There were some advantages, like the right in limited circumstances to serve on juries (Orange,

181), but regarding their land, they were still subject to confiscations. In the 1860s, the British military began advancing into parts of New Zealand with the intention of clearing out the Maori and opening up the land to settlers (165). There had been skirmishes and engagements on and off for years. The question was whether the Maori were foreigners at war with the British or subjects in rebellion (182). Not all tribes had signed the treaty, but even for those which had, there was still much debate about what their status was.

One New Zealand politician reasoned that it did not matter. As Claudia Orange explains, "If Ngati Ruanui [an independent-minded Maori tribe; see 165] came under the treaty, they were rebels and stood to lose their land [as punishment]; if they denied the treaty, they lost their land by virtue of [the European right of] discovery. Either way, the tribe could not win" (203). "The case for the Maori, by contrast, had no prospect of success because the government was its own advocate, judge and jury" (204). With her usual understatement, Orange writes, "Maori were aware of the impossibility of their situation" (204). The British position was: Heads we win, tails you lose. It seems that all that being British subjects did for the Maori was that they could now lose their land as rebels for their recalcitrance in giving it up.

Similarly, in Australia, a correspondent for one colonial newspaper "suggested that the only benefits to Aborigines of being stamped with 'the dignity of British subjects' is that they have 'free quarters in our jails, and are duly hanged . . . with all the solemnities of the law'" (Nettelbeck, 386). They got the punishments of being subjects (if they did something wrong), but not the benefits. Again, the law was manipulated to get to a desired end.

In 1836, barrister Sydney Stephen, acting as defense counsel for an Aborigine accused of murdering another Aborigine, argued that if Aborigines were not protected by British law, then neither were they bound by it. As reported and summarized by the *Sydney Gazette* (Feb. 23, 1836; this is online; see Burton in Bibliography), Mr. Stephen argued that neither had Britain conquered this land nor was it ceded to them by the inhabitants, but rather British colonists had simply come to live there. Mr. Stephen's argument went on:

... we had come to reside among them, therefore in point of strictness and analogy to our law, we were bound to obey their laws, not they to obey ours. The reason why subjects of Great Britain were bound by the laws of their own country was, that they were protected by them; the natives were not protected by those laws, they were not admitted witnesses in Courts of Justice they could not claim any civil rights they could not obtain

recovery of, or compensation for, those lands which had been torn from them, and which they had held probably for centuries. It therefore followed they were not bound by laws which did not at the same time afford them protection. [also quoted in Smandych, 248]

This was not a novel argument. Others had made it. The 1837 *Report* of the House Select Committee cited an 1831 letter by Lord Goderich in which he said of the Indians of British Guiana, "They are brought into acquaintance with civilized life not to partake its blessings, but only to feel the severity of its penal sanctions" (*Report*, 10). Goderich used this to question (it is "a serious consideration") whether we are right to subject them to our laws.

Backhouse raised the issue in his March 1838 letter to Buxton: "practically the professed recognition of the aborigines of Australia as British subjects is, with little exception, a mere nullity, as regards their protection from outrage by the white inhabitants, while they are made to feel keenly the vengeance of British power, in case they commit depredations upon the invaders of their country, or attempt to avenge their own wrongs" (*Extracts*, Fifth Part, 54). One of the obstacles to justice for natives was that "a complete barrier is placed against their availing themselves of this protection, by the refusal of their evidence" (55). He asked, "is it not irrational to expect the uncivilized natives to abandon the practice of retaliation while they cannot be heard in their own defence in a court of justice" (*ibid.*). He also took note that native attacks of retaliation were made to appear to be attacks of unprovoked aggression (56).

In Australia, the court did not buy the barrister's argument. But the jury apparently did. The Aboriginal defendant, Jack Congo Murrell, was acquitted. "Murrell's jury accepted, it seems, that indigenious people were, to some degree, independent of British law" (Ford, 199). As one contemporary correspondent put it, subjecting the natives to British law "will have almost the cruelty and injustice of an *ex-post facto* law" (*ibid.*). Perhaps that was the jury's reasoning. (As the trial did not take place until May 13, 1836, many of the jury members would have had an opportunity to read or hear about Stephen's attempted defense. At the trial, they were briefly reminded of this issue. Stephen was ill on the day of the trial, but his court appointed replacement, Mr. Windeyer, briefly raised the issue of the natives' own customs. The trial judge ruled that the court had already decided this was inadmissible. No one really knows why the jury acquitted the defendant. It is also possible that it was indifferent to black on black crime.)

The jury's decision may have been good for Murrell, but the larger cause of

indigenous rights was thereby lost---for it was not Murrell's acquittal that affected the course of history, it was Judge William Burton's decision (April 11, 1836) rejecting Stephen's argument that affected future events. (Burton's opinion as well as the above and below contemporary colonial newspaper accounts of the case can be found online; see Burton in Bibliography.) The first and most powerful reason Judge Burton gave was:

although it be granted that the aboriginal natives of New Holland are entitled to be regarded by Civilized nations as a free and independent people, and are entitled to the possession of those rights which as such are valuable to them, yet the various tribes had not attained at the first settlement of the English people amongst them to such a position in point of numbers and civilization, and to such a form of Government and laws, as to be entitled to be recognized as so many *sovereign states governed by laws of their own*.

The next day, the *Sydney Gazette* summarized this first reason in part as saying that the natives "were not in such a position with regard to strength as to be considered free and independent tribes. They had no sovereignty."

On May 5, a correspondent for the *Sydney Herald* challenged this reason (and all the other reasons offered for prosecuting this Aborigine). This reason in particular amounted to declaring that might overcomes right. In opposition, the correspondent (whom I quoted above on the cruelty of an *ex-post facto* law) declared that "every free and independent body of people, be they what they may, have a right to make laws for the government of themselves." Their relative strength should make no difference on questions of right (this was exactly the thinking of John Locke as we will see in §4 of this chapter). If this is ignored, the prosecution and execution of the native will be "a legal murder." The correspondent also questioned whether there would be any fellow black natives on the jury and any blacks as witnesses (which, of course, there weren't).

Even when, as in this case, an individual Aborigine won, the larger group of Aborigines lost. Judge Burton's ruling on this point of law helped to establish that laying claim to a territory gave Britain sovereignty and jurisdiction over all residing there, so that, as Lisa Ford sums it up, "indigenous jurisdiction was an unacceptable anomaly" (Ford, 202).

The law is to be manipulated for our purposes and that means we must have complete control over the Aborigines. Doesn't Darwin's statement "man is not an *intruder*" (Notebook E 65) say the same thing? Europeans are not intruding and the imposition of their laws is not an intrusion. Indeed, Darwin's

statement is really just a succinct formulation of the colonial judge's reasoning. Darwin jotted down this thought in his Notebook approximately two years after Judge Burton's decision. You can hear buried in it the idea that European man is not subject to the laws of the countries he conquers; he legitimately brings with him, rather than intrudes, his own laws. It is not only European man as a physical entity who does not intrude. It is the European with all his culture and laws who is not intruding. It is a claim to sovereignty and jurisdiction. We have a right to transplant our whole system to foreign soil. Darwin's statement joins in manipulating natives, making them subject to European power, at the same time that it denies it is manipulating.

Had Darwin been born a hundred years earlier, or even fifty, he might not have been so sure that man never intrudes. Burton and Darwin were writing at a time when force or the threat of force was becoming the predominant mode of dealing with natives. At an earlier time, Darwin might have written instead 'man is a negotiator', when Britain was less sure of its power to decimate indigenous peoples. Man is, or was (in colonialism's history), a negotiator because he is in reality an intruder and needs those negotiating skills, until the day he gains an overwhelming advantage and then diplomacy is out the window and he can declare 'man is not an intruder' with all the righteousness that professional science and law can muster. Darwin considers none of this history of invader-native relations, yet he can claim mankind is "so incomparably better known than any other animal" (*Origin*, 92; cf. 1844, 89). We have such a long way to go before we really understand anything.

Judge Burton's decision came at a time when force and complete jurisdiction had come to be the acceptable ways of relating to the native people. But it had taken decades for Britain to reach this point. Even with respect to the doctrine of *terra nullius*, that concept did not at first mean we have jurisdiction over you. It only meant we take possession of the (supposedly unowned) land. It took a while to develop and enforce the idea of complete jurisdiction over the natives. Native customs and self-government had been honored to a great degree (Chapter 2 in Lisa Ford's book is especially good on this). European customs were understood as an intrusion, until the need for greater control was felt to be necessary by the new arrivals.

(Hence, natural selection made considerable cultural sense in Darwin's time. Previous evolutionists had a different cultural relationship to the Other, one not based on total control and domination. They may have believed in the superiority of western civilization with all its material benefits, but they did not assume its total domination in a world filled with many cultures. As I argued before, they did not fail to see natural selection. They simply were not looking for it. It would have made no cultural sense to them. In Darwin's time,

natural selection made plenty of cultural sense because it justified asserting control without negotiating for it.)

In Africa, missionary John Mackenzie had a number of conversations with natives which he recounts in *Austral Africa: Losing It or Ruling It* (1887). He gave them good advice about protecting their land by having the tribe assign title to pieces of land to individual tribal members and printed on the title would be the words "Not saleable---not transferable" (78). They came to him later to point out that they had followed his advice and many of them still lost their land. Why? Well, they had to pay to have an agent properly survey the land and some had been forced to sell their land to pay for the agent's expenses. "[S]ome people have had to sell their farms before they could prove to the English that they were their property" (79). One of the natives said, "Some say this is the English mode of warfare---by 'papers' and agents and courts" (80). Mackenzie notes, "This was said with contempt." They particularly complained that "the agents and common men cheat us." Mackenzie explained that the agents take advantage of their ignorance, but when the natives get to know "the English language and customs as well as you know cattle, you won't be afraid of the agents." What Mackenzie did not tell them, perhaps because he himself did not realize it, was that the ultimate rule was the one I stated above: Heads we win, tails you lose. Or as Arthur Dent says in Douglas Adams's *Hitchhiker's* (187), "It's not a question of whose habitat it is, it's a question of how hard you hit it."

The law and even science can always be manipulated. The biggest nothing that the law could reduce a people to was to leave them without rights, without self-government (or sovereignty), without justice, and without land. The biggest nothing that science could reduce them to was non-existence, inevitable extermination, doomed by nature. These were two parallel chokeholds that western civilization put on Aborigines around the world. When Darwin participated in this, he was only doing what his culture taught him to do.

If I say that racism and greed were at the bottom of this, I mean something like the following. For science and the law to achieve their ends in regard to indigenous peoples, the lawyers and scientists had to convince themselves first, and then the general population, that the indigenous are not like you or I. They are made of different material and therefore disconnected from our kind of humanity. The best way to achieve this is not to study the natives and "discover" they are in fact disconnected. Racism is not merely a belief in disconnections. It is about creating disconnections. The lawyers and scientists discovered nothing. They made their so-called discoveries come true. Law and science were manipulated to create those disconnections.

All this only reinforces my original point about what was happening in Van Diemen's Land, and even Robinson's point that legal disqualification of Aboriginal testimony accelerated the destruction of the blacks. Not allowed to testify, or discounting their evidence in any other ways, was a way of putting them outside the legal system and disconnecting them from Europeans. Like the Maori, Australian Aborigines, and Africans, the Tasmanians were in an impossible situation, as Claudia Orange might put it. It did not matter whether Aborigines in Van Diemen's Land were allowed to testify or not. If they were, then ways would be found to negate their evidence. The point is that, one way or another, the whole legal system was arrayed against them, despite noble sounding statements that they would be treated equally under the law. Legally, throughout Australia, Aborigines were rendered as a big fat zero. That raised the difficulty level for survival by quite a few notches, which suited scientists quite well. If they fared worse in Van Diemen's Land than in the rest of Australia, that is because Van Diemen's Land was an island and the settlers saw that it was entirely feasible to take over the whole thing and get rid of all the natives, every last one, until "answer came there none," as Lewis Carroll said. Total decimation in Tasmania was a realistic dream that could only be a fantasy for the continent of Australia. It was the fulfillment of all the colonists' greed. Since the law played a role in this and law is a function and responsibility of the government, that puts government at the center of the forces of genocide in Van Diemen's Land.

~ 3 ~

The Tasmanians fought back valiantly, as Tim Flannery remarks, but it was no use. They were at more than an incremental disadvantage. As cataclysms go, this was the cataclysm of cataclysms. The only way natives could have stood up to the onslaught of European invasion and brutality would have been to undergo descent with rather large and rapid modifications, and that, as Darwin would have admitted, is not something nature allows for. He may not have been aware of all the atrocities, but he had to have been aware of some of them. Some were reported by Bonwick. In the paragraph on Tasmanians in *Descent* (213), which I quoted from earlier, Darwin references "the famous hunt by all the colonists", but gives no details. It was called the Black Line, an effort initiated by Governor Arthur, whereby armed militia and settlers would sweep across the island in a supposedly solid line in an attempt to capture and/or drive the Aborigines into a small corner. It failed as a tactic to capture Aborigines, but succeeded in causing them considerable anxiety. As of Darwin's writing (in the 1874 revised edition of *Descent*), only three elderly women were alive. From an original population of 5,000 to 7,000. Perhaps

shame over what Britain had done explains his silence. Perhaps.

His awareness in fact would have gone back several decades. In the first published edition of his diary, in 1839, in the passage on the Tasmanians and the government decision to remove them to an island, Darwin remarks, "The correspondence to show the necessity of this step, which took place between the government at home and that of Van Diemen's Land, is very interesting; it is published in an appendix to Bischoff's History of Van Diemen's Land" (*Narrative*, 533). The book he is referring to is James Bischoff's *Sketch of the History of Van Diemen's Land* (1832), which I have brought up several times. The Appendix (185-260) is mostly a collection of long excerpts from letters between Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur of Van Diemen's Land and Secretary of State George Murray of the Colonial Office in London (the letters date from Jan. 10, 1828 to April 14, 1831), and also includes the March 19, 1830 Report of the Aborigines Committee in Hobart Town (203-31), which was appointed by Arthur, and their follow-up Report of February 4, 1831 (250-55; the follow-up report is brief and merely approves the idea of removing the natives to another island). (I will be referring to the first 1830 Report a number of times below; it should not be confused with the 1837 *Report of the House of Commons Select Committee on Aborigines*.)

On the very first page of the Appendix, Darwin would have read of random killings of natives and women being kidnapped. Arthur reiterates "seizing their women" in a later letter (200). The first Committee Report keeps returning to the outrage of the kidnapping of children (205-07) and points out how justified the natives are in their desire for revenge. Arthur acknowledges in the first letter that "... all aggression originated with the white inhabitants ..." (188) and in the follow-up letter of April 17, 1828, "we are undoubtedly the first aggressors, and the desperate characters amongst the prisoner population ... have no doubt committed the greatest outrages upon the natives ..." (190). (Darwin also points out that it all began with "the misconduct of the Whites" in *Diary*, 408; Feb. 5, 1836; he probably got that from these letters.) The Committee Report cites a previous governor, William Sorell, who noted that the native tribes were "seldom the assailants" (206). (It must be stressed: Darwin would have seen *all this information again and more* in James Bonwick's 1870 book. The year 1870 was not the first time Darwin had been made aware of these things. Bonwick's book was a strong reminder of what he had learned decades earlier. Gerland's book was yet another reminder.)

In that first letter, Arthur seems sensitive to how the natives see this: "They already complain that the white people have taken possession of their country, encroached upon their hunting grounds, and destroyed their natural food, the

kangaroo; and they doubtless would be exasperated to the last degree to be banished altogether from their favourite haunts" (187). Right off the bat, Darwin would have been made aware that a colonial governor was acknowledging that the natives have been dispossessed. In another letter, Arthur refers to "the harassing life they have endured" (203). Even Secretary George Murray in response recognizes that the natives are "possessed with the idea which they appear to entertain in regard to their own rights over the country, in comparison with those of the colonists" (192).

Throughout this history, government officials were continually made aware of the justified complaints of the natives. When George Robinson had brought in the last major tribe, he said this in his official report of January 25, 1832:

The chiefs assigned as a reason for their outrages upon the white inhabitants that they and their forefathers had been cruelly abused, that their country had been taken from them, their wives and daughters had been violated and taken away, and that they had experienced a multitude of wrongs from a variety of sources.
[P, W, 571]

In passing, I should note that on his journey around the world, the party Darwin traveled with showed admirable restraint in the use of violence (see his *Diary*, 134-35, 241; also, see FitzRoy, *Narrative*, 2.196). They had difficulty making the natives understand how lethal their weapons were without actually killing a few and this they chose not to do. In Tierra Del Fuego, Darwin writes, "it would have been shocking to have fired on such naked miserable creatures.---Yet their stones & slings are so destructive that it would have been absolutely necessary.---In treating with savages, Europæans labor under a great disadvantage, untill the cruel lesson is taught how deadly firearms are" (*Diary*, 134-35; Jan. 23, 1833). His party may have felt a disadvantage, but many Europeans did not and fully employed their weapons. Darwin's party learned that merely firing near their heads did not do the trick. On another occasion, "I feel sure they would not have moved till more than one had been wounded. This being the case we retreated" (*Diary*, 241).

Charles Napier would have thoroughly approved of acting with such discretion. Knowing when not to use violence was a high military virtue to him. He praised one Captain Stuart for "his dealings with the natives [in Southern Australia], as became a British officer, and an honest man; that is to say, firmly, humanely, and justly; he did not commit aggressions, and then treat the natives as criminals, because they showed a manly and most honourable spirit of resistance" (Napier, 162). I suppose it should also be said

that Darwin's party were not colonizers or a military expedition. They were only on a surveying mission. It would have been senseless in the extreme to get into violent encounters if they could be at all avoided. The example of the *Beagle* voyage is not comparable to the main colonizing venture. They were only the advance guard of colonialism and not the real thing.

Just to add some other observations, not found in Bischoff's Appendix, a popular newspaper like the *Colonial Times* was aware of the natives' point of view in its Dec. 1, 1826 issue, observing, "They look upon the white men, as robbing them of their land, depriving them of their subsistence, and in too many instances, violating their persons" (P, W, 7). A few months later, in February 1827, the *Colonial Times* admits that "we have taken possession of their country, and driven them from their land," but in May 1827, it editorialized that "the right of possession always lies in the strongest to possess ... there is less injustice in driving them from their country than at first view may appear" (in Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 91). In the end, they all tried to explain it away, but at least they did acknowledge that the injustice of dispossession was a real event.

For all his sensitivity, at least in verbally admitting the justice of the complaints of the natives, Arthur can still call them "a most treacherous race" (Bischoff, 200; also 240, 244). And stealing women and children from a people who did nothing to you, not to mention the theft of land without compensation, is not treacherous? There is an echo of Arthur's comment in the Committee Report which finds "in the disposition of the aborigines, a lurking spirit of cruelty and mischievous craft ... a wanton and a savage spirit ... impelling them to mischief and cruelty ..." (210). The Committee was aware that the previous Lieutenant-Governor Sorell found the natives "passive and inoffensive ... unless when previously attacked" (207), but it had doubts about the validity of this positive assessment. (In Chapter 3, §5, I quoted several writers of the period who found natives in various colonies quite friendly, thus confirming Sorell's opinion; research by Marie Fels into the situation in the southern part of Van Diemen's Land also suggests that relations between natives and settlers in the early years were amicable, only to deteriorate later on; see P, W, 3, and 10 n3. There is also this quote from the *Hobart Town Times* in 1824, "Perhaps, taken collectively, the sable Natives of this colony [Van Diemen's Land] are the most peaceful creatures in the world," in Bonwick, *Last*, 44.)

The bottom line for Arthur is that colonialism is inevitable and that the safety of the white colonists and their property hold priority: "His Majesty's subjects must be protected, and the outrages of the black natives must be repressed; and yet, if it can be avoided, these wretched people must not be

destroyed" (Bischoff, 201). Arthur has a conscience, but preventing total destruction is not foremost in his mind. It really comes in as an afterthought, something to be accomplished if we can somehow arrange it. Or as the *Colonial Times* put it on December 1, 1826, "the first thing is our own security; the second, the due and proper protection of the natives" (P, W, 7). Needless to say---or perhaps very needful to say---no one really sought "the due and proper protection of the natives." "Throughout the history of the settlement, there was scarcely one who had the welfare of the Aborigines at heart or who had any other interest than his own," observed Plomley (P, W, ix).

Astoundingly, in the same letter, Arthur still requests that more convicts be transported to this country (at least 2,000!), even though their behavior had been a big part of the problem (Bischoff, 202). He can deplore what the convicts have done ("the desperate characters amongst the prisoner population" in above letter on 190 in Bischoff) and still want more of them as a means of protection against the natives. (Note: There is a possibility that the convicts were excessively blamed in order to play down the faults of the settlers and military in this; see P, W, 9 n2.) Arthur was one of the best officials for the natives. He often would suggest that some means of conciliation should be found, which the settlers thought was foolish. But he was also capable of declaring martial law and improving the military response (see Ryan, 117). Ryan indicates that he may have used massacres of the natives as "a necessary strategy to force a quick surrender," though this failed to work (144). Plomley notes that those who came after Arthur "regarded the Aborigines as a group of people whom they had to support but were not obliged to cherish. This point of view led to a niggardly provision for their wants, and the reduction of services to a bare minimum" (P, W, ix).

The bottom line for the Committee, on the other hand, is more complicated. They do share Arthur's concerns that the whites must come first. Their list of nine recommendations at the end of their Report (Bischoff, 221-28) focuses on what should be done for the settlers. Number One is that they should be better armed. But this list was immediately preceded by their going over many of the atrocities committed by whites "to account for the enmity displayed by the black against the white population" (215), and recommendations numbers two and three on the list are, respectively, that the settlers should make sure their workers desist from disgraceful conduct towards the natives and that they should stop destroying their principal food source, kangaroos. After the list of nine recommendations, they add another suggestion that captured native women should be returned to their tribes (229). They also want force to be used in moderation and object to "a more

severe exertion of force against the natives" (230), considering that the first offenses were committed by whites.

One startling admission that comes out is a fear that must have been felt by many: "It is manifest that they [the natives] have lost the sense of the superiority of white men and the dread of the effects of fire arms which they formerly entertained ..." (219). Ryan informs us that one aboriginal woman, Tarenerorerer, who was given the name Walyer by whites, had been abducted as a young woman but escaped some years later and taught her clan how firearms work (*Tasmanian Aborigines*, 172).

In other words, the natives could no longer be easily terrorized into submission and they were getting better at fighting back. The *Colonial Times* on December 1, 1826 also lamented that "... the natives are no longer afraid of a white man---that they know, how a gun is fired off, it is useless [i.e., useless to think how things might have been different; how things might have been if they had not lost their fear] ... They have ceased to fear, and learn to abhor" (P, W, 7). Hence, there were calls to strike "some little degree of terror" in the hearts of the natives (*Colonial Times*, Nov. 17, 1826; P, W, 6); the colonizers' reaction was to ratchet up the terror, despite the uselessness of it. The natives' loss of fear made it even more necessary to remove them to another island, with the usual reason being given that this was as much for their protection as for the whites' (which Darwin also repeats in *Narrative*, 533; *Voyage*, 385). And if removal is not effected, then the only other choice would be extermination: "If not [removal], they will be hunted down like wild beasts, and destroyed!" (*Colonial Times*, Dec. 1, 1826; P, W, 7; in the original, these words are all in caps).

The overall impression of the Committee Report, however, is how much injustice and abuse had been suffered by the natives. The Report details some of the horrors of the abduction of women and children, describing one case of a native woman being forced by a white man to carry her husband's severed head suspended from her neck (Bischoff, 205). The Committee writes that the natives "sustained the most unjustifiable treatment in defending themselves against outrages which it was not to be expected that any race of men should submit to without resistance, or endure without imbibing a spirit of hatred and revenge" (205). They reiterate this further on (220): "... it is impossible to doubt, [the black natives] were first excited to general aggression, and systematic barbarity by the wrongs which they themselves experienced on the part of miscreants who were a disgrace to our name and nation and even to human nature."

Lyndall Ryan makes an extremely interesting observation about the Committee Report. The Committee, she notes in *Tasmanian Aborigines*,

interviewed many witnesses who reported some of the mass killings (of six or more natives) which had taken place, yet the Committee did not divulge this. "Overall, the committee heard details of at least six mass killings of Aborigines and acquired information about other atrocities" (Ryan, 125). The only massacre that the Committee included was the first one at Risdon Cove on May 3, 1804. In failing to report the more recent massacres, she says, "the committee absolved the government of responsibility for the war's escalation" (ibid.). This also made it appear that the acts of violence against the natives were random and scattered rather than a consistent policy of settlers and government police action alike. James Boyce makes a similar point: "... the report ignored the direct correlation between the outbreak of sustained resistance and the alienation of the best Aboriginal hunting grounds of the island to the free settlers ... all the wrongs endured by the Aborigines were presented as *past* events, while all responsibility for the *present* violence lay with the Aborigines" (*Van Diemen's*, 267; his emphases). He calls the Report a classic whitewash.

In Secretary Murray's response to the Report, he took note that the Committee did not really prove its point that the present state of hostilities was due to "a wanton and savage spirit" in the natives (Bischoff, 233). (On 210, the Committee accused the Aborigines of "the utmost wantonness and inhumanity.") To prove that, Murray said, "it would be necessary to have established the fact, that aggressions had not begun with the new settlers" (234) and that of course the Committee did not do. Napier was also critical of this part of the Report and noted that it did not comport with other parts of the Report: "the Committee do not adduce one single fact in support of their assertion, that the acts of violence committed by the natives arises from '*a wanton and savage spirit*,' which accusation against the blacks appears to be unworthy of the just sentiments that are found in the other parts of the report" (Napier, 210; his emphasis).

Murray's letter is the same one in which he said that the extermination of the natives would be unjust and inhumane and would leave "an indelible stain upon the character of the British government" (233), while at the same time arguing that it does not really matter who started it, the question now is "the remedy to be applied in the present conjuncture" (232). That remedy included the settler "tak[ing] upon himself a prominent part in the defence of the property threatened with an attack" (233). Murray also approved of sending more convicts if possible and increasing the field police (234). So the natives may not be all that wanton and savage, as he admits, and none of this is their fault, but this is all irrelevant, because protecting white property and lives is the ultimate, almost the only, goal, and this will require some force.

No matter the twists and turns their handwringing took, the true bottom line for all the officials was that white lives come first, which is why Bannister would recommend that an independent body be appointed to look out for the natives and that colored people should serve on this body (the House Committee *Report*, "Minutes", 15; also in his *Colonization*, 284-85). He knew the Colonial Office could not fairly represent both colonists and natives.

Just a couple of years before his famous "indelible stain" remark, Secretary Murray confirmed his real commitment. By all rights, this should be as famous as the "indelible stain". In July 1828, speaking in the House of Commons, Murray said that he shared humanitarian feelings for the natives, but "it is my duty to respect, not only the interests, but the prejudices of the colonists, their habits, and even the errors into which they have been led" (quoted by Bannister in *Humane* [1830], 179; he italicized most of this). *This is a powerful admission. It reflects the pessimism of all the officials that the prejudices of white society were in charge and that there was little that could be done about it.* There is something terribly wrong in the fact that the "indelible stain" remark should get so much attention, while this honest confession of what was really at stake should have been so utterly forgotten.

When information like this is erased from the historical record as recounted by scholars, it is far too easy to misrepresent the government as never having any bad intentions and to make out that its intentions were always good, if ineffectual. Like the Walrus, Murray had his humanitarian feelings for the natives and would weep for them, and, like the Walrus, he would do nothing about it, but go on consuming them or allow others to do it. The importance of Murray's statement is not just that it reveals the soul of imperialism, but that it reveals the collusion between government and the colonists. Many defenders of imperialism, who argue for its beneficence and clean intentions, are quick to assert that all the abuses of colonization came from the settlers and not from the government. This is merely an assertion made without any careful study of the evidence.

Bannister's disagreement with Murray's remark is noteworthy. There is an implication in Bannister's follow-up comments that if the Secretary's main assumption were valid, Bannister would go along with him. That is: If white society were overwhelmingly of one opinion, then it would probably be foolish and impractical to accomplish anything good for the indigenous population. What Bannister disagrees with is Murray's assessment of the reality on the ground, at least in South Africa (the main subject of this particular book) and probably in other colonies as well. He does not believe that the whites are uniformly prejudiced. There are many white people of

goodwill who want to see justice done for the natives, and therefore the prejudices of the white majority do not have to be mindlessly followed.

Bannister's rebuke is that the great fault here lies not with white society but with the government. He blames government for constantly catering to the prejudiced elements among the whites and not giving sufficient support to the humanitarian whites. Working in favor of black men (in this chapter he often refers to 'blacks') is in the best interests of all. Violence from prejudiced men and unequal dealing are the greatest threats. Bannister goes back to 1702 to make his point that in South Africa, the government has had a history of not punishing white oppressors of the blacks. There have always been white voices to criticize this. Bannister admits that the "degree of union and sympathy with the black" among whites is not that high, but it is not entirely absent either (*Humane* [1830], 180). His suggestion is that government could do much more to support the sympathizers, the "well-disposed people" (184), among the whites.

It was a general theme with Bannister that great responsibility in the first place lies with the government, not only for not doing enough to support justice and the people who favor it, but for doing too much to aid the wrongdoers (this is where an argument of bad intentions can be made). Concerning criminal proceedings in New South Wales, he said, "the government has sympathized too much with the oppressing class, and too little with the oppressed, to permit justice to have its course" (*Humane* [1830], ccxl). He took note that in 1812, a House of Commons committee reported "the unequal dispensing of justice between white people and natives" (ibid.) It was a recognized problem from very early on and repeatedly commented on, but no one ever took aggressive measures to correct it. In *British Colonization* (295-96), he strongly recommended that government officials who do wrong should be punished. No wonder he was accused of suffering from mental aberration.

The criticisms by Ryan and Boyce of the local Aborigines Committee's Report---that it failed to report most of the massacres of blacks by whites and that it put injustices against the natives into the past, while blaming them for the continuation of violence---seem to be accurate and are certainly based on greater knowledge than I have. Still, I have to say that what the Committee did report in its limited way about injustice and violence towards the Tasmanians was horrifying enough, despite their attempt to downplay *continuing, organized* white violence.

The Committee regretted that much of the ensuing native violence had not been directed at the guilty parties who injured them, but took in many innocent people. Protecting white lives and property had become everyone's

main concern. In a way, they all admit that they have no idea how to conciliate the natives and give them justice. It is just too late for any of that. Colonial settlement must continue uninterrupted. George Robinson, appointed by Arthur, began his mission in 1829 to save the Tasmanian Aborigines by establishing cordial relations. By the next year, he found himself writing to one of the members of the Committee that as far as achieving conciliation was concerned, "it was a mission too late" (Ryan, 170). His career with the Aborigines was mixed with humane intentions and duplicitous promises that they would be able to remain in or return to their homeland for extended visits.

Robinson wrote in his journal (Aug. 1830), "We should make some atonement for the misery we have entailed upon the original proprietors of this land" (P, F, 202-03). He makes this comment after observing, "The children have witnessed the massacre of their parents and their relations carried away into captivity by these merciless invaders, their country has been taken from them, and the kangaroo, their chief subsistence, have been slaughtered wholesale ..." The result of all this is an "enmity [which] is not the effect of a moment," but is rather "Like a fire burning underground ... We should fly to their relief." Earlier in his journal (Nov. 23, 1829), as I reported in the last chapter, Robinson recorded that the Aborigines would sit around the campfire and "recount the sufferings of their ancestors ... They have a tradition amongst them that white men have usurped their territory, have driven them into the forests, have killed their game and thus robbed them of their chief subsistence, have ravished their wives and daughters, have murdered and butchered their fellow-countrymen" (P, F, 88).

Yet what is the atonement that was offered? Did officials offer reparations or restitution? No. Did they at least offer a fine piece of land as an equivalent where they could thrive on their own? No. Did they offer any reforms in legal rights (like the ability to serve as legal witnesses)? No. The Aborigines were settled in 1834 on Flinders Island at Wybalenna which had no fresh water or fresh meat, everything had to be imported. Conditions were so bad that Major Thomas Ryan, who reported on this in 1836, "found it hard not to draw the conclusion that the Aborigines were being deliberately exterminated in a manner that involved considerable pain and suffering" (Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 228). In his report, he said, "... I tremble for the consequences, the race of Tasmania, like the last of the Mohicans will pine away and be extinct in a quarter of a century" (ibid.).

Many of the officials and semi-officials involved in this were worried. Not just about the looming extermination. They knew something was wrong and it was not hard to put a finger on it: They had taken everything from the natives

and given nothing in return. As Robinson said (above), "their country has been taken from them." Moral questions aside, it might not even have been legal. Robinson wrote to a friend that he was "at a loss to conceive by what tenure we hold the country for it does not appear to be that we either hold it by right of conquest or right of purchase" (in Reynolds, *Whispering*, 36). By 'right of conquest,' he probably meant 'as secured through a treaty enforcing that conquest.' Around the same time, W.J. Darling wrote to the Colonial Secretary, "their Country has been taken from them piecemeal without purchase or treaty, and they are now completely *expatriated*, forced to leave the haunts ... which they have frequented from infancy, and to take refuge on an Island comparatively trifling in extent" (P, W, 998). They got *bubkes* for what had been taken from them.

Lieutenant-Governor Arthur gave up any idea of a treaty in March 1831, in part because he did not think poor whites would observe it (Boyce, *Van Diemen's Land*, 284)---another example of government catering to the prejudices of white people who were ill-disposed towards the natives. Years later, he recommended to the Colonial Office that treaties and purchase of land should be negotiated in all future colonizing efforts and admitted that the lack of a treaty in Van Diemen's Land had been "a great oversight" (Reynolds, *Fate*, 122). Everyone knew what was going on. Humanitarians frequently said colonial policy was based on nothing else but 'might makes right.' As R.M. Lyon said in his 1839 book on Australia, there had been "no covenant of any kind" (i.e., no negotiation, no mutual consent) between Britain and the Aborigines, "We have taken possession of the country on the simple ground that *might is right*" (Reynolds, *Whispering*, 36; Lyon's emphasis). (Recall from the second chapter, near the end of §5, that the *Manchester Guardian* made the same criticism of Darwin's theory and that Darwin was dismissive of this criticism [CCD 8.189, text and n10].) This went entirely against what would have been the counsel of John Locke, had he been around at that time.

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One reason why some people were so aware of the injustice of what was being done to the Aborigines was John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*, particularly the *Second Treatise* on civil government, which had gone through many editions since its first publication in 1690. (I am using the oldest edition I could find, the fifth from 1728; I have modernized the spelling, except that I have retained initial caps for certain nouns, which was standard practice in Locke's time; all italics are his as well; all citations are from the *Second Treatise* unless otherwise noted.)

There has probably never been a more anti-might-makes-right philosopher

than John Locke. Robinson specifically recalled reading in Locke (in the same letter where he was at a loss to explain by what tenure they hold another people's land) that "no body has a right to take away a country which is the property of the original inhabitants without their own consent" and that if they do, then the inhabitants have become slaves (Reynolds, *Whispering*, 36-37). What Robinson was referring to comes from the end of §192 in the *Second Treatise*, which states that if the original inhabitants did not consent to giving up their property, then they are "direct Slaves under the Force of War." In that section, we are also told that the people who have had a government forced upon them "*retain a Right to the Possession of their Ancestors.*" One can see here one of the reasons extermination held such an appeal. If the original possessors are all eliminated, then there will be no descendants around to claim their ancestors' lands.

Locke's point is a vivid reminder that associating dispossession with slavery is a thought that had been around for a long time. (In the third chapter, I gave a number of examples of this from the 19th century.) I have yet to find any place in Darwin's writings where he shows an awareness that many people had made this point. It seems that he never gave this idea an ounce of consideration, despite his interest in seeing the injustice of legalized slavery come to an end. Darwin rather seems to affirm the right of the stronger to dispossess the weaker. Darwin's "Man is not an intruder" could also be interpreted as a restatement of this idea.

In an earlier section, Locke is even more emphatic about what a crime dispossession is: When an "Aggressor ... *unjustly invades* another Man's Right, [he] *can ... never come to have a Right over the Conquered ...*" (§176). He compares such unjust rulers to robbers and pirates. An unjust conqueror is like a robber who gains title to a man's estate by holding a dagger to his throat. "The Injury and the Crime is equal, whether committed by the wearer of a Crown, or some petty Villain. The Title of the Offender, and the Number of his Followers, make no difference in the Offence, unless it be to aggravate it." Think of what Locke is saying: Not only does might or status not make right, but it makes for less right and magnifies the crime. I am sure that the eyelids of many a 19th century imperialist would have fluttered in disbelief on reading that. To this day, too many scholars are prone to forget this part of Locke.

In §172, Locke will even compare an aggressor (of any nationality, not only the indigenous) who relies on force, rather than right and consent, to a "wild Beast, or noxious Brute." Use of force brings us closer to the animal world; it makes us inferior, not superior. This applies to all human beings; "wild Beast" is as applicable to the civilized as to primitive peoples. As for

the one who uses despotic or arbitrary power, "he renders himself liable to be destroyed by the injured Person, and the rest of Mankind, that will join with him in the Execution of Justice ..." I don't think any later humanitarian could have put it better.

Locke continues in §176 by allowing that the descendants of a conquered people may never get justice because no court will hear them, but he is clear that the land still belongs to them: "But the Conquered, or their Children, have no Court, no Arbitrator on Earth to appeal to. Then they may *appeal* [to heaven] ... and repeat their *Appeal*, till they recovered the native Right of their Ancestors ... If it be objected, this would cause endless trouble; I answer, No more than Justice does, where she lies open to all that appeal to her." Justice is always a pain in the ass, so live with it. He concludes this section by reiterating that "... he that *conquers in an unjust War, can thereby have no Title to the Subjection and Obedience of the Conquered*"---and that is why the descendants never lose their original title. All strong words. Or as Saxe Bannister so succinctly put it, "rights are never forgotten" (*Humane* [1830], 104). Remember those words: rights are never forgotten. One can see why Locke may have been such an influence on future humanitarians and why imperialists would consider him such an aggravation. Whether he knew it or not, Locke was creating immense difficulties for those polished, civilized men who came after him.

Twenty years earlier, Locke worked this kind of thinking very briefly into another document he drafted, "The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina" (1669). Article 97 proposes the necessity of religious tolerance in this American colony, "that civil peace may be maintained amidst diversity of opinions." He begins the Article this way: "But since the natives of that place, who will be concerned in our plantation, are utterly strangers to Christianity, *whose idolatry, ignorance, or mistake, gives us no right to expel or, use them ill ...*" (emphasis added). You cannot just go kicking people out of their own country.

It might be asked: if Locke really felt this way, what was he doing composing the governing document for a colony that would be taking land from the Indians? The most likely answer is that he believed there was plenty of land for everyone and more than the Indians could make use of themselves. He usually refers to excess or superabundant land as waste land, a common expression of the time (by 'waste' is meant vacant by virtue of not being utilized); waste was essentially a synonym for common land (cf. Drayton, 51). He talks about this in Chapter 5, "Of Property" (§§25-51), in the *Second Treatise*. Locke imagines how society developed from "the beginning of property" (§30), which conditions he believes still exist in undeveloped parts

of the world: "Thus in the Beginning all the World was *America*, and more so than that is now" (§49).

God "gave the World in common to all Mankind" (§32; which he repeats frequently throughout this chapter; e.g., §§25, 26, 34, 39). This is also a major theme in the first few sections of the *First Treatise* and, by mankind, he explains that he means "the whole species of Man" (*First*, §§30, 40), not only Europeans. But God also wanted human beings to labor and improve the land and its resources, so that a man could convert what is natural, and common to all, to "his private Right" by doing something productive with it (*Second*, §28; cf. §32). This would not deprive anyone else because there was land enough for everyone (§33). Such is his naiveté about this, that he gives the analogy of drinking water from a river. If anyone takes a drink, there is still plenty of water for everyone else. "And the Case of Land and Water, where there is enough of both, is perfectly the same" (§33). That is how abundant Locke imagines land is, at least in undeveloped parts of the world. He believes this to be the case in the new parts of the earth that have been discovered by Europeans: "there are still *great Tracts of Ground* to be found, which ... *lie waste*, and are more than the People who dwell on it do, or can make use of ..." (§45).

Many scholars will make a big deal of the fact that Locke emphasizes that labor, and not merely owning the land, gives land its value. It is primarily because of the work put into developing it that land acquires and increases in value. Locke devotes several sections to this (§§42-45). He even points out that Indians have not been as productive with the land as Europeans have (§41). But you have to read Locke very slowly and carefully on all these points. He was not giving license to Europeans or anyone else to enlarge their possessions beyond the dictates of justice. Locke was far more concerned with limiting property rights, based on the idea that God originally gave the world to all mankind. If we miss Locke's point that property rights must be limited, we cut out the heart of a major theme in Locke's writings.

Locke says that God did not want the world to "always remain common and uncultivated. He gave it to the use of the industrious and rational, (and *Labour* was to be *his Title* to it) ..." (§34). But Locke stresses that there must be "as good left" for others to use, and tells us this *twice* in this section. He continues further on: "No Man's Labour could subdue, or appropriate all ... Measure did confine every Man's *Possession* to a very moderate Proportion" (§36). Moderate ownership of land is what Locke intends. Not taking over everything is his major concern, which he returns to again and again. This is true not only at the beginnings of human society but even today. If a man or family goes to America and plants "in some Inland, vacant places of *America*

[note his specific mention of vacant], we shall find that the *Possessions* he could make himself, upon the *Measures* we have given, would not be very large, nor, even to this Day, prejudice the rest of Mankind" (§36). This is not a vision of an aggrandizing imperialism which Locke would have firmly opposed.

By contrasting Indians and Europeans in their degree of productive use of the land as he does in §41, he means to emphasize that labor creates value in property. His intention is not to belittle Indians or deprive them of their rights. Not even industriousness in developing land gives anyone a right to gobble up the whole. Limits to property rights is always on Locke's mind. It is extremely significant that we never see Locke make an argument that so many of his contemporaries made: Indians by virtue of underutilizing the land have no title to it (see Drayton, 55-56, for a brief review of some 17th century writers who claimed that savages merely run over the land but do not truly possess it). This argument never puts in an appearance in Locke's writing (if it did, I have never seen a writer quote it). Unlike other western intellectuals, Locke seems to strenuously avoid drawing such a stark conclusion. The point that constantly reappears in his arguments is that there has to be enough land left for others to enjoy.

Locke does offer the idea that the one thing that introduces something new into the equation is money. It was the invention of money that made it possible for a man to acquire more than he could make use of himself; no waste would be involved since a man could now sell off the excess (§§47-51). Money made possible "a disproportionate and unequal *Possession of the Earth*" (§50), which we have consented to because we have agreed to the use of money. This is the weakest part of Locke's treatise, only because he never deals with the implications of this. Thus, in §45, he acknowledges that natives of other lands have not consented to the use of common money, but he leaves this potential conflict unresolved. In general, he seems to imply, but does not really stress, that money, which makes possible acquiring more land than one can use oneself, also makes possible greed and quarrels over title. But he leaves this unexplored.

Before there was money, it was easier to see that waste (whether excess land or excess fruit or excess anything that goes unused, primarily because there is an abundance of it) was a violation of one of "the common laws of nature," so that in a primitive state, if anyone acquired more than he could use (leaving an excess of produce or game to rot and spoil) then such a person "invaded his neighbour's share" (§37). Do not acquire too much. It is a violation of natural law. This also applied to land (§38). Anything left to waste (and thus left in common) should really go to another who could make

use of it (cf. §46). No one is entitled to take it all. These principles remained strong in Locke. His thoughts on labor or industriousness do not change the basic shape of what he believes, which is that it matters very much to elucidate when private land ownership is just and when the injustice of dispossessing any people of what God gave them tells you that you've gone too far. God wanted people to develop land by their industry but not to deprive anyone of their fair share.

Despite what Locke says about the unnaturalness of letting land go to waste, forget any idea that Locke was, consciously or not, providing a basis for *terra nullius* (empty or vacant land; that is, unowned land), which is the doctrine that these new lands were basically uninhabited or, if inhabited, then by a people who had no title to or possession of the land because they were unproductive with it---which Napier at the very end of his book called a lie, that is, "call[ing] this territory '*uninhabited*,' when it is well known to be *inhabited*! ... was publicly to tell a lie ... depriv[ing] an inoffensive race of people of their property, without giving them the slightest remuneration." Locke probably would have agreed with Napier. He was too clear-headed to participate in such a lie. Locke knew the land was inhabited, just under-inhabited, so that there was plenty of land for all, for native and newcomer, and they could all live peacefully sharing this abundance. Nothing in Locke justifies the greedy takeover of *all* the land by one party. He would have been astounded that anyone could interpret him this way---yet that is exactly what was done to Locke, as I will review a few paragraphs below.

What if conflict arises from a dispute about how to divide up use of the land? Locke addresses this only once in his "Of Property" chapter in §38. He gives the biblical example of Abraham and Lot shepherding their herds over large tracts of pasture. When there was not enough room for both herds, then by *mutual consent* Abraham and Lot had to agree to separate. Locke does not offer any violent solution or the idea of might makes right or personal status makes right or who got there first. Consent is the key point. He did *not* believe the stronger had a *right to impose* a solution. He was firmly against "the Oppression of Power and Narrowness of Party" (§42). There will be no peace in the world if it is maintained only for the benefit of robbers and oppressors--"what a kind of Peace there will be in the World, which consists only in Violence and Rapine; and which is to be maintained only for the Benefit of Robbers and Oppressors" (§228). Another word for mutual consent would be negotiation, something Aborigines were very good at and which Darwin ignored.

Locke's biblical example was not a quaint, archaic analogy. It was relevant in his time and would continue to be so for centuries to come. It is an apt

illustration of Bannister's remark, "Nor is the past a mere worn-out tale" (*Humane* [1830], 42). In parts of South Africa, white farmers would increase their livestock beyond what their own pasturage could hold. They overran their land onto neighbors' pastures. It was one means of gradually dispossessing the natives. Bannister quotes at length from the 1829 paper of an unnamed writer who said that if a farmer in England behaved like that, it would be called "the most glaring injustice" (66). That writer identified the source of the problem as "avarice, that causes the farmer to oppress the Bushman" and commented, "The rights of mankind demand that the Bushman country should remain the property of its original inhabitants" (*ibid.*). He also worried, "We are all aware what the farmers have done without law---what will they not do, when laws sanction their conduct?" (67).

Bannister himself observed that it will be impossible to civilize natives (the Caffres, in this instance) "if our cupidity gives them no breathing time" (*Humane* [1830], 104n). Comments like these remind me of Georg Gerland's insight that savages have not rejected civilization, rather civilization has rejected them (see previous chapter, §7).

It is exceptionally important to note that Locke never offered the arguments of the right of discovery or 'first come, first serve' (among the invading whites) or 'the stronger over the weaker' or superior productivity. In his biblical example, he never proposes that whoever was the first to put that pasture land to good use is the one who has the right to it, or whoever strong-arms the other is the rightful owner, or whoever got more use out of it. There is no place in Locke's writings from which you can pull out the idea that the party who is stronger or more numerous or more civilized or more adventurous has peremptory rights to the land. He would have regarded any of these choices as absurd in the extreme and a violation of his basic belief, as noted above, which he often repeats, that God "gave the World in common to all Mankind" (§32). Aborigines are part of all mankind and they are original possessors. Locke never disregarded Aboriginal claims and never concluded that "it was possible for Europeans to disregard all aboriginal forms of government," as Anthony Pagden and others would contend (Pagden, 44).

Since God gave everything to everyone, mutual consent is the only way to go for Locke, when disputes arise. Pagden also claims, "Although Locke does not say so ... [he implies that] all treaties and contracts made between the settlers, as representatives of the English Crown, and Amerindian chiefs would have been worthless" (*ibid.*). I am glad he acknowledged that Locke does not actually say this, but it is also a completely wrong deduction from Locke's writings. Locke would never have countenanced such an injustice as not honoring a treaty or contract. He would have been horrified that anyone

could think that would be the right thing or a good thing to do. At least Pagden admits that Locke denied we have a right to mistreat Indians (46), but what he misses is that Locke would have regarded European violations of a treaty as a clear case of mistreatment.

Here is Locke in his own words in §14: "The Promises and Bargains for Truck, &c. ... between a Swiss and an *Indian*, in the Woods of *America*, are binding on them ... For Truth and keeping of Faith belongs to Men, as Men, and not as Members of Society." For those last words, read: and not as members of an ethnic group or culture or nation. Truth and keeping of faith, which would include treaties and contracts, are not unique requirements of one civilization or culture; they are not special attributes of European society or a culture that some would designate as superior. These are rules for human beings as human beings. Locke certainly includes Indians. Does anyone ever quote this, one of the most humane sentences in Locke?

Mutual consent assumes a prominent place in the writings of Locke. Perhaps it was in part because of Locke that Captain James Cook was instructed by both the Royal Society and the British government *not to seize land by force* from the natives, when he was sent to explore the South Pacific in 1768. James Douglas, President of the Royal Society, instructed him, "No European Nation has a right to occupy any part of their country, or settle among them without their voluntary consent. Conquest over such people can give no just title" (in Banner, 97). That last sentence is pure Lockean thinking. Those instructions also pointed out that the natives "are the natural, and in the strictest sense of the word, the legal possessors of the several Regions they inhabit." Shedding their blood would be "a crime of the highest nature." Had British colonialism remained steadfast in this and kept to negotiation and treaties as the principle means of relating to the natives rather than rudely taking over their lands, Darwin's world would have been a very different one and *The Origin of Species* would not have been the same book we know today.

The government's instructions to Cook seconded the advice of the Royal Society: "You are also with the consent of the natives to take possession of convenient situations in the country in the name of the king of Great Britain, or, if you find the country uninhabited take possession for His Majesty" (in Banner, 97). This thinking did not last long. Saxe Bannister quoted these same government instructions and laid stress on those words *with the consent of the natives* (*Colonization*, 121). He was so disappointed this clause was not lived up to: "the neglect of it then, and *ever since*, is a still greater dereliction of public duty" (122; his emphasis). He thought it "gross neglect not to punish" anyone who breached this. For Bannister, such injustices were at the root of

the problems between settlers and Aborigines. The theme of injustice almost never appears in Darwin's writings, and when it does, it is only as a bare mention.

In 1787, when Arthur Phillip was appointed the first governor of New South Wales, he was given the exact opposite instructions: "He was *supposed* to seize the land by force. 'Immediately upon your landing,' Phillip was ordered, 'after taking measures for securing yourself and the people who accompany you as much as possible from any attacks or interruptions of the natives. ... proceed to the cultivation of the land.' Cook's voyages had persuaded the British government that there was no need to buy Australia" (Banner, 104; his emphasis). What had changed was that they now believed that the land was mostly uninhabited, that the few natives had no conception of property, and that these natives would not sell anyway because there was nothing they wanted from the British (Banner, 99-103).

Locke was also one of the writers who likely inspired Samuel Wharton in America to defend Native American property rights. "[T]he first European emigrants to America," Wharton says in 1781 in *Plain Facts*, "had no right to establish themselves there, *without the consent of the native proprietors ...*" (Wharton, 11-12; spelling modernized; his emphases). Consent, which is equivalent to negotiation, was the keynote for all humanitarians. Bannister would say, "It is an abuse of power to take possession of a barbarous country without the consent of the natives" (*Humane* [1840], 16). He adds that even such consent is meaningless "if *means* be not provided to prevent its leading to their ruin" (his emphasis). In other words, even if possession of the land is obtained legitimately, it cannot be used in such a way that would destroy the natives.

Self-interest probably played a role for Wharton and other colonists who made this argument of respecting native rights to the land. They wanted the bargains they made with the Indians for land to stand firm. They did not want to see the British government or the United States or individual states and colonies invalidate their claims on the grounds that heathenish natives had no title to the land, or on any grounds for that matter. (A large part of Wharton's book is devoted to his dispute with Virginia over land claims.) But whatever his full motivations may have been, what is striking about Samuel Wharton's *Plain Facts* is how easily his arguments in favor of Aborigines roll off his pen, how many points he brings to bear, and how many authorities he appeals to. Whether he is addressing the general situation of natives in all countries or specifically Indians in North America, Wharton demonstrates how readily a humanitarian defense of Aboriginal right springs to mind (if properly motivated). It wasn't difficult at all.

In the first two dozen pages or so, Wharton demolishes one justification after another that was used to dispossess natives of their land. Neither Popes nor princes have any right to give away what was not theirs to give (5, 12). They don't own the entire earth. Being an unbeliever in Christianity (a heathen or infidel) is no valid reason for losing land (5-9). Civil law preexisted Christianity and under civil law, temporal rights are the same for all human beings (8). The right of discovery entitles one only to uninhabited land, but not to land that was already occupied (10, 13). As for conquest, "it would be hard to conceive how a conquest, where there was no preceding injury or provocation, could create a right" (12-13). Does having a superior civilization give us special rights? No. The "refinements of civilization", no more than religion, confers no authority to take land (7). Only God is "*the most rightful disposer*" (17; his emphasis) of land, and it is clear that he has bestowed territory on each people, so that "... the aborigines of America have an absolute exclusive right to the countries they possess" (16).

Wharton charges through almost every defense made for the so-called right to dispossess natives. He dismisses each one as worthless and absurd. The right of Indians to their land is "*so evident*" (17; his emphasis). Indian nations have always been "free and independent communities" (26) and have always had and "*still have* an absolute, indefeasible title to the exclusive jurisdiction of their persons, and to the *dominion* and *property* of their several countries" (27; his emphases). He also firmly rejects the deceptive practice of signing treaties with natives, offering them our protection (from the French), and then claiming that this makes them our subjects, meaning they have given up their land to us: "The King of *England* never esteemed himself in any other light than as an *ally* ... [which] gave him no title to it [the soil] ... no engagement by one state, to guaranty another state in its possessions, could, by any mode of construction, be made to imply a right over such possessions" (126n). All of this is very much in the spirit of John Locke, and some of the details also match up.

Locke is a good example of how a humanitarian voice was erased from history by later scholars. He has most often been interpreted as laying a foundation for unbridled colonialism. Niall Ferguson says Locke defined private property in a way that turned Indian lands into *terra nullius* and thereby created "a charter for expropriation" (*Civilization*, 111). Lisa Ford explains Locke as "defining indigenous North Americans as creatures of nature ... [who] could neither own property nor exercise sovereignty over people or land ... Property in land came only from improvement. North America, then, was truly vacant land ..." (Ford, 15). For David Armitage, Locke argued that cultivating the land gave a right to its possession. He gets

this particularly from §§39, 45 of the *Second Treatise*. "Locke's argument from divine command to cultivate those '*great Tracts*' of unappropriated land became the classic theoretical expression of the agriculturalist argument for European dominium over American land" (Armitage, 618). I believe all of this is a serious misreading of Locke. Locke's main interest was in limiting property rights, not in establishing and expanding them, as I will thoroughly explain below.

In a previous book, Ferguson actually makes Locke out to be a proponent of genocide in order to gain full control of the land: "If the Indians resisted expropriation, then they could and should (in Locke's words) 'be destroyed as a *Lyon* or a *Tyger*, one of those wild Savage Beasts, with whom Men can have no Society or Security'" (*Empire*, 55). This is an outrageous misquotation of Locke, and I only slightly apologize for using a strong word like 'outrageous'. Ferguson does not give a citation, but the words he quotes come from §11 in Chapter 2, "Of the State of Nature", in the *Second Treatise*. Ferguson has completely changed the meaning of this quotation by hiding its original context. It had nothing to do with Indians or the natives of any particular country.

Locke was talking about all mankind and the dangerous, anti-social murderers who are a threat to ordinary citizens. "And thus it is, that every Man in the state of Nature has a Power to Kill a Murderer." Murderers have to be executed "*to deter* others" and "to secure Men from the Attempts of a Criminal." Murderers are irrational. They have "declared War against all Mankind, and therefore may be destroyed as a *Lion* or a *Tyger*, one of those wild savage Beasts" etc. (these are the correct spellings in the fifth edition which I am using). It is murderers, not natives, who should be destroyed like the wild animals they are. This section has absolutely nothing to do with the natives of newly settled countries. If it had any such application, it would be to colonizers who murder natives. In the previous sections of this chapter, "Of the State of Nature", Locke argues that the victims of a crime also have the right to secure restitution, which again more appropriately applies to native claims against aggressive invaders and not to the invaders as a means of dispossessing the natives of their lands. It would be shameful in the extreme to rename dispossession and call it restitution.

Since Ferguson does not give a citation and since I found it hard to believe that he could misread Locke that badly, it occurred to me that maybe he was following another writer and never checked it himself---though, if I am right, it is significant that Ferguson was ready to believe that Locke could have said such a thing. Sure enough, I found the same misquotation in Pagden (46). He writes that Locke's arguments lead to this, that "since any man who refused to

accept the Europeans' right to appropriate 'vacant' lands was in defiance of the natural law, he might 'be destroyed as a *Lyon* or a *Tyger*, one of those wild Savage Beasts' ...", etc. Pagden does give the correct citation but obviously he was not reading Locke very carefully. It is murderers who may be destroyed, not people who object to European encroachment. As we saw above, the justice of objecting to encroachment was encouraged by Locke, no matter how much trouble it caused. We will also see that Pagden is completely wrong about what Locke thought constitutes natural law for human beings.

Pagden in turn, as he himself tells us, relied heavily on one of James Tully's essays on Locke, "Rediscovering America: the *Two treatises* and aboriginal rights." (There is a reason why I am going over the lineage of this wrongheaded reading of Locke so minutely; hang on, we will get there.) Tully hears the humanitarian voice in Locke and one purpose of his essay is to bring out that voice. We actually arrive at similar conclusions by different routes (see further below). But I cannot agree with some of the byways Tully travels along in his essay. With respect to Locke's §11, Tully knows very well that Locke is talking about punishing violence and murder, yet he incorrectly brings Indians into this: "the very terms Locke uses to describe the offenders who may be 'destroyed' are the terms used to describe, and so dehumanize Amerindians in the books in Locke's library" (Tully, 144; those terms being wild beasts, lions, and tigers; in §16, Locke also uses wolf; but *note very carefully* that by such animal-like 'offenders' Locke always means violent criminals, not natives).

I would not dispute that derogatory terms were often used to describe indigenous peoples and that these terms included predatory beasts. But the absolute fact remains: In §§ 11, 16, and elsewhere, Locke was using these terms for men of violence and murder, not for Indians or any other native peoples. We cannot convict Locke based on the sins of others or on books he possessed. Tully's point seems like a clever one until you realize it has nothing to do with what Locke himself actually wrote. Did Locke use such terms as wild beasts or lions when he wrote about Indians or natives? Answer: No. Did Locke use these terms for anyone? Answer: Yes. And who would that be? Answer: He used these words to describe violent criminals or offenders in general, be they English, French, Indian, or any other nationality.

As mentioned above, Locke uses "wild Beast, or noxious Brute" in §172 to identify violent aggressors as a whole, not just the violent of one particular nation. Such aggressive people have quit reason and renounced the ways of peace, so Locke argues in §172; they have renounced their own kind and joined the world of beasts and, therefore, may be hunted down as such. Locke *never* describes Indians as Indians to be the offenders. He *never* says that

Indians who resist white appropriation of their land or who choose to live in a state of nature are the offenders who must be punished. It is indecent to suggest that this is what Locke had in mind. Locke makes it very clear what he means. His position is that it is committing unwarranted violence that puts a person beyond the pale and not the mere fact of being uncivilized or living in a state of nature or being an Indian or Aborigine of any kind. As Granville Sharp would put it almost eighty years later: "Men are rendered obnoxious to the laws, by their offences, and not by the particular denomination of their rank, order, parentage, colour or country" (*Representation*, 36). Never once does Locke argue that the civilized have the right to hunt after or make war against the uncivilized, or take their land away, simply because they live in a state of nature. Other writers in Locke's time, or before him, may have made such arguments, but not Locke.

Yet again and again, Tully tries to give the impression that Locke was like those other writers and that his concepts of property and political society can be used to justify the dispossession of natives and vindicate the superiority of Europeans (which is how he begins his essay; see Tully, 139, and cf. 162; but, as we will see, he comes to a very different conclusion about what Locke ultimately stands for). That Locke has been so misused there is no denying, and if Tully were only saying something about how Locke was put to bad use, I would not disagree with him. But you have to rip Locke's words out of context to justify this way of reading him, and as far as I can see, Tully never points this out.

(Tully, 166-68, gives some examples of early interpreters of Locke who misinterpreted him [as I see it] in this way, only as Tully sees it, they got him right. Tully, 170, admits there were some early exponents of Locke, like Wharton, who believed Locke was defending Aboriginal property rights. Tully thinks they were wrong, I think they were right. As this book is becoming a tome, I will have to leave this point for the time being.)

Tully cites the *First Treatise*, §130, for Locke's point that Europeans have a right to wage war against the Indians. But the key words there (which Tully, 142, does indeed include in his quotation) are "to seek Reparation upon any Injury received from them." Locke is only saying that the colonial settlers have a right to retaliate for injuries received. He was not saying that the settlers have a right to conduct war against natives in order to gain more land. There is nothing here to even remotely suggest that he would have approved of such a thing. On the contrary, it would have been horrifically unjust as far as Locke was concerned. When Tully strongly implies that Locke would support "war if the native peoples defended their property" (169), he offers no citation to back this up.

From the *Second Treatise*, Tully cites §10 (in error; it is actually §9) to show Locke arguing that England, France, and Holland have a natural right to punish or execute Indians who violate natural law. Like other scholars, Tully seems to be implying that Locke is saying European countries have some sort of authority over Indians. But again, as is so often the case, Locke is only making a limited point here. Moreover, he is actually denying any idea of authority in a large sense. (Also, as I noted with respect to Pagden, we will see that Locke really had a very different sense of natural law.)

Locke has a narrow concern in this section: The right to punish aliens or foreigners. What gives the lawmakers of any country authority over aliens in their midst? That is all he is addressing. His answer is that in general they have no such authority. To an Indian, Locke says, the powers who make laws in another country (like England, France, etc.) are "Men without Authority". The only case where this is not true is for violent crimes. Those named countries have a right to punish an alien or foreigner (i.e., Indians), *only if* the alien commits a crime against their citizens. We have no sovereignty in general over Indians. *One people or nation cannot make laws for another people or nation.* Locke is so clear about this. The laws of any country "reach not a Stranger: They speak not to him, nor, if they did, is he bound to hearken to them." The law of nature allows for *only one exception* to this, and that is *for violent crime*. It is controlling violent crime that, as usual, concerns Locke and he brings in natural law to justify this. But he does not argue that European countries are in some sense superior and, therefore, have authority over natives or their land because of their superiority. That never enters Locke's head. His general argument in fact denies that this could be so.

Also, just as Locke's main concern is to limit, not expand, property rights, there is a parallel here in his concern to limit, not expand, authority. In the previous section (§8), Locke demonstrates his antipathy for "absolute or arbitrary Power". Human beings or the state must not go overboard in punishments which "the passionate Heats, or boundless Extravagancy of his own Will" will prompt men to do. Instead, punishment must be limited to "what is proportionate to his Transgression." I am fairly sure that taking all the land from a people Locke would have considered "boundless Extravagancy," but more on that below.

Tully's main argument concerns §§36-48 in Locke's *Second Treatise*. He believes Locke's point is to justify the superiority of European industriousness as a means of claiming title to land, "thereby eliminating Amerindian non-sedentary agriculture as a type of use and subverting any title that might have been derived from it" (Tully, 156); "eliminating any title they [the Indians] might claim" is another way Tully puts it. Earlier in his book (86 n37), he

cites §§30 and 41-43 as Locke's justification for dispossessing Native Americans.

But if you believe that about Locke, then you have to believe he thought it was right to completely take away their land and leave them to join the superior society as second class citizens or else starve (which would make Locke very Darwinian). It is astounding to me that anyone could think Locke intended that, and yet this is exactly what Tully claims for Locke. In Locke's system, Tully sees European commerce leading to "the situation where all available land is under [European] cultivation" and "the extinguishment and replacement of the earlier system of limited production ..." (Tully, 160). Complete expropriation, in other words. What would be left but starvation or a miserable life of poverty in an alien culture? Did Locke really advocate this? I do not see even one word in Locke's sections that Tully cites which argue that Europeans' greater ability to make things gives them the right to take all the land. Not one word.

Again, Locke's words are taken out of context and being stretched to make grander points than he intended. Again, Locke has much more limited points to make. What everyone keeps forgetting about Locke is that he believed land was superabundant, with more than enough for all. It is *waste land*, or excess land, that Locke claims Europeans have a right to, not the whole shebang. Tully (156) quotes Locke's §34 in which it is said that God gave the world "to the use of the industrious and rational, (and *Labour* was to be *his Title* to it)." But Locke did not say the industrious get every inch of the earth. What Locke does not say is often as important as what he does say. What he says in §36 is that no one man could "subdue, or appropriate all" the land so that no one could "entrench upon the Right of another." There was always more room for another to acquire land. Every man can "have as much [land] as he could make use of ... since there was Land enough in the World to suffice double the Inhabitants" (§36). In the undeveloped parts of the world, Locke does not see land as a limited resource. "Land enough" for others to enjoy is a persistent theme in Locke.

Whenever Locke talks about acquiring anything by one's labor or productivity, he is almost always quick to add, as he does at the end of §27, "at least where there is enough, and as good left in common for others." Something has to be left for others, or it is not legitimate, no matter how productive one claims to be. He repeats this so often, it is mesmerizing. This idea of "enough, and as good" left in common for others to make use of (explained so clearly in §27) applies to fruit that is picked (§28), animals that are hunted (§30), and land that is worked (§33). He is so anxious that no one else be unjustly deprived of what God gave in common to all (and when

Locke says all, he means all, which includes the indigenous; 'all' is not just a euphemism for Europeans). Gaining title by improving land does not prejudice anyone else's right "since there was still enough, and as good left" (§33). He repeats this idea with similar words in §§36, 37. By the time he gets to §45, he argues "there are still *great Tracts of Ground* to be found, which ... *lie waste*, and are more than the People who dwell on it do, or can make use of, and so still lie in common." Gaining title to waste (excess) land, not all the land, is Locke's concern. Too many interpreters have unconscionably broadened his meaning.

It needs to be emphasized that *waste* land for Locke does not mean land lying around unused so much as it means *excess* and thus *common* land. Land is wasted when it is over and above what the original possessors can make use of. Excess implies there is a basic, original property underlying that which becomes excess. It would be contradictory, and maybe hypocritical, to claim that *all the land* is excess or wasted by the natives. In other words, one cannot claim that all native land is common land. How could all the land be in excess? There must be an original part that the people properly claim, own, and use. Admittedly, Locke never clarifies what are the exact proportions of originally owned land and the excess amount in North America or any other part of the world. That is a problem and a deficiency in his writing. But in talking as much as he does about land "enough, and as good" (this is the excess that is still in common and available to all), Locke was acknowledging that there is some original amount that legitimately belongs to Indians and other Aborigines.

Perhaps most significantly, when it comes to war, *Locke vigorously denies that conquerors have the right to take all the land from the losers*, even if it is the most just war you can imagine. He affirms that "any one has liberty to make use of the Waste" (§184) and that would apply to conquerors too, but in these later sections, he objects to conquerors going overboard in taking land. Taking and using the waste land is a *limitation* Locke puts on land-grabbing; it is *not a way to grant unparalleled access, which was never part of his system*. In a justified war, the country that has been wronged and fights back to victory is entitled to damages, but taking all the land exceeds Locke's notion of reasonable damages. Placing limits on the right to private property is more the essence of Locke's thinking than looking for ways to award private property. *His main concern was always to limit aggrandizing possessions.*

"No Damage [due to war] ... can give a Conqueror Power to dispossess the Posterity of the Vanquished ..." (§184). Section 183 forcefully begins: "Let the *Conqueror* have as much Justice on his side, as could be supposed, he *has* no *Right* to seize more than the Vanquished could forfeit." In particular, the

conqueror must spare the suffering of the women and children who did not start the war. The conqueror cannot take everything from them. He must "give way to the pressing and preferable Title of those, who are in danger to perish without it" (end of §183). Natural law and physical needs confer title, not excessive greed to grab land and not even having justice on your side in a war. How could anyone believe that the man who wrote these words somehow espoused genocide? Why would anyone believe that for a second? It does a terrible dishonor to Locke who explained so clearly what he really did believe.

Locke does not end it there. He is so incensed by the injustice of complete expropriation that he reiterates, "... the Conqueror, even in a just War, hath, by his Conquest no *Right of Dominion*" (§185). We should not ever forget that Locke insisted that the vanquished have their rights too: "... whatsoever another gets from me by Force, I still retain the Right of, and he is obliged presently to restore" (§186). In §190, Locke tells us that "Every Man [not merely every European man] is born with a double Right." One is the freedom of his own person. The other is the "*Right before any other Man, to inherit with his Brethren his Father's Goods.*" That very much includes land. One could sum up Locke's point this way: What God grants in basic needs and rights to all peoples, no man can tear asunder, not even in a just war. Therefore, conquerors can never gain title to the whole land (§192), even if the war had been a righteous one on the conqueror's part. It is preventing such greedy acquisition that Locke keeps steadily in mind as one of his main concerns. The reason for Locke's constant repetition of the idea that people have a right to waste or excess land is that he is out to deny the right to take everything. As I said above, waste land for Locke signifies *limits to land ownership*.

He is quite explicit about this, at least concerning how labor gives one the right to property: If one gains ownership by one's labor, is it then true that "any one may *ingross* as much as he will" (§31)? "To which I answer, Not so: The same Law of Nature, that does by this means [by one's own labor] give us Property, does also *bound* that *Property* too" (§31). Note well what he is saying: it is one of the *laws of nature to restrict property rights*. All those scholars who argue that Locke said labor gives one title to land are quoting *only half of what he said*. The other half (which scholars omit) was even more important to him: Nature bounds property rights. This should be emblazoned on placards and put on every scholar's desk. This was always on Locke's mind. Leaving "enough, and as good" for others to use is a way of bounding, or setting limits on, ownership of anything. Further on, he says, "indeed it was a foolish thing, as well as dishonest, to hoard up more than he could make use

of" (§46). Locke never intended the ideas of waste land and productivity or labor to be used to promote grabbing as much as you can.

There is a staggering humanitarianism in Locke that was so unacceptable to the powers that be (in politics and academia) that it could not be allowed to be remembered. The suppression of what he actually thought and wrote continues today.

Although Locke believes that Europeans are more productive with the land than Indians are, he makes no leaps to any idea that this confers dominion and title to *all* that lies before them. However productive someone is, Locke always adds there must still be land "enough, and as good" for others to use, or else the taking of land is illegitimate. He never makes broad assertions about the nature of sovereignty and the right to all the land, even in case of war. His arguments are tightly confined to title over excess land and only excess land. The one argument you will never see Locke make is this: A superior civilization has the right to expropriate all the land from an inferior culture. It is extremely significant that such an argument is absent from Locke. It is not how he thinks. He says rather the opposite. No country gets to extend sovereignty of its laws over a foreign people except in the case of violent crimes. A conquering country may try to impose more as a matter of "the stronger over the weaker" (§184), but that is a violation of natural right: whatever is extorted by force, including submission to a new government, is "without Right ... [and] *bind[s] not at all*" (§186; also cf. §187). It is one of the most incredible intellectual injustices of all time that everyone has forgotten that Locke considered "the stronger over the weaker" to be a violation of natural law or right. Locke's thought is staggering, isn't it?

In §183, Locke calls it a "fundamental Law of Nature" that when there is conflict over title to the land between the victor in a just war and the women and children of the vanquished nation, then title goes to the weaker party (the women and children), the ones who are in danger of perishing, and not to the stronger party. In §186, he explicitly states that "extorting any thing from me by Force" (which is what "the stronger over the weaker" means) is a "Violation of her Rules," that is, the rules of the Law of Nature.

This is what I was referring to earlier when I said that Pagden and Tully have missed what Locke meant by natural law with regard to human beings. For Locke, a constellation of points constitutes natural law: God gave the earth in common to all human beings; humans can take land for their own by putting it to use, as long as there is enough and as good left in common for others to enjoy; in acquiring ownership, people have the right to pass their land down to their descendants and no one can take away this right of inheritance, not even victors in a just war; and most especially, human beings

have an ability and an inclination to negotiate their way to resolutions when conflict arises, which is more natural than imposing a solution. One result of this is that Locke made it clear that he considered "the stronger over the weaker" (which casts aside all attempts at mutual consent) to be exceptionally *unnatural*--by which he means not that such things do not happen, but that when they do, they violate natural right.

This might be Locke's most unnoticed accomplishment. Almost a century and three quarters before *The Origin of Species*, Locke upended Darwin's idea of natural selection as applied to human beings. Though he used a different vocabulary, he understood that the stronger exerting itself over the weaker was a case of artificial selection. If anything was natural (or natural selection, as Darwin would put it), it was the weaker asserting its rights against the stronger party. And when Darwin finally did appear almost two centuries later, whether he intended it this way or not, his work in part served to counter the kind of humanitarian thinking represented by Locke.

In Darwin's century, "the stronger over the weaker" became an integral part of European thinking about natural law. This ready-made ideology influenced Darwin so much that he incorporated it into his scientific thinking. Everyone had forgotten that it had not always been so. It had not always been regarded as an eternal principle. They erased the history that preceded them. They especially forgot that John Locke had said it was not natural or just---that in fact people did not find conquering nearly as natural as negotiating. I think Locke derived most of these points (and perhaps some others I have missed) from his observation of human beings. It was the lived facts of human life that concerned him, not abstract reasoning. Real human beings, even the European kind, know more about peace than about war and are entitled to a life based on peace and negotiations.

As such, Locke surely did not believe that Indians can live on nothing and are entitled to nothing. Tully admits that Locke allowed that Indians "have the right to the means of self-preservation" (170; he cites Locke's §25 in support; cf. §183). But bizarrely, Tully continues that Locke denies "this right takes the form of a natural right to their hunting, gathering, and non-sedentary agricultural lands" (170; he offers no citation here; in §25, Locke only says he will try to answer how anyone can acquire private property, since God gave all land in common to all---which in itself establishes an indigenous natural right to land, no?). With the Jews aside as one major exception for unique historical reasons, how can any people survive if their land is taken away? It is absurd to propose that people have a right to live but not to the land which will enable them to live (that absurdity is precisely what Locke opposes in §§183, 184). I will believe Locke was guilty of such an absurdity and

immorality, only when someone proves it on the basis of solid evidence and not a minute before. Merely asserting that Locke believed this does not count.

The absurdity of such proposals was evident to some people hundreds of years ago. In 1781, Samuel Wharton argued that if God had intended it to be right for Christians to deprive heathens of their land, then "he would have so formed the latter, as to enable them *to subsist without food*" (Wharton, 8; his emphasis). It was obvious to Wharton that when God ("the great universal Parent of mankind") gave life to Native Americans, he also gave them "an indefeasible right to enjoy the countries where his providence had placed them" (6). You cannot have life without the land. Pervading Wharton's criticisms is a sense that the ridiculous can be found in those who claim that one can justly deprive Indians of their land. He quotes others who agree, as in the case of one writer who fumed that when the Pope gave away distant lands to various princes, he was "ridiculously liberal of that, *which no ways belonged to him*" (5). God is "*the most rightful disposer*" of the earth (17; all emphases in original). The absurdity lies in people thinking that they can arrogate to themselves God's right. Dispossession, besides being an "injustice ... so sensibly felt" (17), is an absurd act.

The unresolved dilemma in Locke, indeed the question he never addresses, is how much land do the Indians need for their hunting and small amount of agriculture and how much is more than they need, that is, waste or excess land. Locke recognizes that there is such a thing as greed which can gum up the works. He never discusses this in any detail. Taking more than you can use is greedy, but then the use of money has made it possible to take more and sell it, and this Locke considers legitimate. He does not get into whether money can lead to greedy or unfair acquisition of land, but I think it fair to say that he leans in the direction that this is possible.

What if the original possessors resist the invaders who try to take away their land? Locke strongly indicates in later sections, which I quoted near the beginning of this section, that natives, and their descendants, have a right to protest dispossession. From what I know of Locke, if there is any reasonable dispute over how much legitimately belongs to the natives by natural law and how much is excess, open to others, Locke would want to see it resolved by mutual consent (which means negotiation) and not by force. His general tendency is to be liberal in favor of the original possessors---just as he argues in §183 that if there is not enough to satisfy both the damages suffered by the one who was wronged in a war and what is needed for the maintenance of the children of the vanquished, then preference should go to the children who are in danger of perishing. Locke is so clear that force (which is exerted by the stronger party) never provides just resolutions. (As noted above, Tully may

believe Locke thought war was justified if natives resisted and defended their property, but he supplies no quotes to prove this. In fact, as discussed above, Locke firmly denies that war, even a just war, gives anyone the right to seize land so extensively.)

The comments of Tully, Ferguson and Pagden are more than just misinterpretations of Locke. It is as if scholars threw Locke's words out and substituted words he never used. Locke only says settlers can punish violent crime and scholars make him say that settlers can punish natives as uncivilized people or as resisters to European occupation. Locke says settlers can take excess land and scholars make him say they can take all the land. Locke says winning a just war confers no absolute dominion and scholars treat him as if he said Europeans are entitled to make war against natives who resist the taking of all their land. We think it horrible to deface ancient artifacts, but defacing the words of an author doesn't even cause us to bat an eye. It is incredible that scholars can rewrite Locke so blatantly. Even if it begins with some scholar in the early 18th century, the fact that others are so quick to believe in this rewriting of Locke, when Locke himself gave so many signs that he is of another spirit entirely and would advocate none of the inhumane things attributed to him, is appalling. It has been going on for a very long time.

I am beyond being shocked, I am almost catatonic, to think that anyone could believe Locke thought treaties with Indians were worthless (*à la* Pagden), and that he approved of genocide (*à la* Ferguson) and the right of Europeans to completely dispossess uncivilized nations (*à la* all of them). How could anyone miss the humanitarian voice in Locke that speaks out for all people, for the westerner and the Aborigine alike? Other humanitarians (like Saxe Bannister, Charles Napier, and Georg Gerland) can be erased by ignoring them, on the dubious justification that they are obscure authors, but Locke is too famous for that. His work is readily available and still studied in universities. He cannot be ignored. The only way his humane voice can be erased is to rewrite him. There has been such a drive to suppress that voice (with a partial exception for Tully; see below). Why? Since unconscious forces seem to be at work (one of the points I have been leading up to), I can only make a reasonable guess. This would not necessarily apply to all scholars, but I think it could apply to a large portion.

Many scholars want to make 19th century advocates of colonialism and *terra nullius* look less guilty by making their thinking part of a long tradition that preceded them. The further back you can extend the pedigree of an idea, the more you can spread the blame around for ideas that turned out to be bad. Later generations will always bear less responsibility than the first generations

that kicked off a dangerous sequence of ideas. The 19th century needs that kind of exoneration because it is too close to ours, or as I have argued before, we are really just an extension of that century. Any stains on that time will not reflect well on us, since we have not traveled very far from it.

In order to get 19th century intellectuals and policymakers off the hook for *terra nullius* and dispossession, it is important to extend these ideas as far back as possible, and once a suggestion like this becomes popular, many other scholars will simply repeat it. It is unwarranted historical reasoning, not to say outrageous (which I won't say because I said it above and don't want to use it again). Locke is one of the most revered political theorists in English history, and rightly so. He is just the kind of predecessor who would make the overreach of later colonizers more forgivable. So scholars latch onto him. A bad move because overreach is exactly the kind of thing that Locke was out to undermine and restrain. He did nothing to make it legitimate, he instead tried to prevent it and block it.

Some would make a case that humanitarians like Bannister, Napier, and Gerland are obscure authors now, and we should not read anything malicious into the way their humanitarianism has been forgotten, it's only a by-product of their obscurity. But that argument does not work for Locke. He is anything but obscure. How is it that the deeply humanitarian side of him, inclusive of Aborigines, has been so thoroughly repressed? He reveals the deep fault lines in our attitudes towards humane policies that speak for all people. I think we suppress all these voices, the obscure and the well-known, because if we don't, then we will see how hard it was for these voices to make themselves heard. We want to forget that. Our society does not reward, honor, or encourage the humanitarian. We make it so hard for them to survive. Almost every time a humanitarian voice has appeared in history, it was shunned in its time. It is so much more soothing to pretend the voice was never there. What we are really erasing is how badly humanitarian voices were received. That is what we so desperately need to forget. Slamming historical doors shut is such a good way to put out of our minds how each generation rejected voices calling for justice.

Ferguson's, Pagden's, and Tully's misjudgment (about what Locke said on punishing murderers in §11) aside, it is not that Locke did not believe some of these things, like acquiring the ownership of land by improving it. He did. But too many writers have ripped these ideas out of the larger context of his thought, particularly his belief that land was so abundant that taking a piece would not deprive anyone else of getting their fair share. Acquiring ownership of land by developing it was, for Locke, not an absolute principle in itself that had no context in a wider system of beliefs---which included God giving the

land to all mankind, therefore mutual consent or negotiation would have to be used to work out conflicts, and such an abundance of land as to make all men, not merely some men, happy, and furthermore, property rights always entails a limitation on property rights, which was supremely important to Locke. Scholars have simply disregarded the main thrust of his writings because it does not fit their convenient image of him as a pure advocate of European colonialism and because of his usefulness in making 19th century writers look less guilty.

What scholars see in Locke is a writer who offered answers or fixed ideas about property rights. But seeking answers does not capture what Locke was really doing. His worldview is not about solutions. It is really a question or a problem that forms his vision of the world: Because God gave the earth as a common holding to all human beings, that means God created a world in which it is problematic when someone seeks to privatize a part of it. Locke does not set this problem up so he can offer a facile solution. The problem itself is the reality that Locke holds closest to his heart. Life is problematic because justice is problematic. That is his central vision and not the answers he suggests. He wants to face the injustices and comprehend their enormity, not merely dictate the solution. He does not want anyone to forget the injustice of grasping more than people really need and depriving others of their rights.

Given that the human reality is that people will claim entitlements, what entitles anyone to say that I or we own this land? There are several ways one could attempt to resolve this and Locke is not attached to any of these because the problem is the reality that he never wants to let go of. These ways include: One could argue that Christians get first dibs on anything, or that civilized peoples deserve more than primitive peoples and have rights to land because of their superiority, or that the first one to make the land more productive, and more productive than prior inhabitants, is thereby entitled, or any combination of these. Significantly, *Locke offers none of these as absolute justifications for claiming ownership of land.* He leans towards the last one but only on one condition: Productivity legitimates ownership, according to Locke, only in combination with the fact that the abundance of land ensures that you have not deprived anyone else of land for what they need to live.

The only other principle that comes into play is mutual consent in cases where there is no such abundance. There are no other principles he appeals to. For Locke, superiority or advanced civilization is *most definitely not* a solution to the question of who can own land. If anything, as we saw above, superiority (or status or numbers), especially if it leads to force, gives less right, and that is because God is the one who really owns everything and he

would not appreciate redistribution by might. Only abundance plus some form of productivity plus mutual consent or negotiation (in cases of dispute) justifies anyone saying land belongs to us. Anything else is robbery.

If Locke championed the type of colonialism many writers wish upon him, how do they explain his statement about Indians in the Carolina Constitution that we have "no right to expel or, use them ill"? They cannot. Most just ignore it. (Using them ill would probably include driving them into a corner where they must starve, as Malthus would have put it.) David Armitage, however, does give an explanation. He suggests that Locke meant that the natives' ignorance of Christianity, which is the subject of Locke's sentence, does not give us a right to expel them (Armitage, 609, 618). Religion confers no dominion. Armitage may well be right; he makes a good case. But if he is right, it suggests that Locke might have approved of expelling them for reasons other than religion (perhaps mercantile ones?). If so, it would make Locke out to be quite devious. He disapproves of expelling them for one reason but considers it legitimate if done under other pretences. I find it hard to believe Locke was that double-dealing. If so, it would not be the first time a noble-minded person turned out to deal in double standards. I have to doubt it in Locke's case. (Locke's sense of justice towards Indians is evident in a set of supplementary laws for Carolina, in his handwriting, which contains, as Armitage, 610, points out, "a notable provision against the enslavement of Indians." And recall that Locke equated dispossession with slavery.)

Most writers overlook the main premise of his arguments which was his perception that there was a superabundance of land and, therefore, there was room for all, the Indian hunter and the colonial settler. Ironically, Ferguson offers an early 17th century quote from John Winthrop of Massachusetts making just this point: "if wee leave them [the natives] sufficient [land] for their use wee may lawfully take the rest, there being more than enough for them & us" (in *Empire*, 55; Pagden, 45, also quotes this; so too Tully, 151). It is the same kind of thinking that Locke employed (which only Tully acknowledges). Hence, Locke could be supportive of a colony and stay true to his principles of justice.

Langfield Ward followed the same reasoning. While he affirmed the right of Europeans to colonize and cultivate land in new countries---"vast tracts of land cannot be abandoned to a few hunters" (Ward, 12)---he also stated, "It must be conceded that the tribe should be allowed the continued enjoyment of its original mode of life" which meant that there should be "set apart a tract of land sufficient for this purpose" and in addition "a fair price ... [offered to] the tribe [for] compensation for loss of territory" (ibid.) As to the very last part of this, it has to be lamented that Ward could add that if the natives refused the

offer of purchase, the colonists would be justified if they take up "arms in vindication of their right of occupation." Locke, however, never makes such a suggestion.

(That Ward could say such a thing is indicative of the pressure that social conformity exerts [Agnes Arber's compulsive-intellectual-atmosphere-to-a-humiliating-degree], but it is an isolated remark and does not represent what he really thinks. It is not typical of his thought as a whole. He may have said colonists are justified in taking up arms to occupy the land, if their offer to purchase is refused, but it's clear that he did not really believe it. Ward's usual mode is to stress peace [74, 134] and insist that one duty of colonists is "to respect the property of the natives" [16]. As discussed in the last section of Chapter 10, Ward was certainly an imperfect humanitarian. But because he was essentially humane, his sensitivity always comes to the fore, as when he urges the British nation that we have to remain aware of the natives "as smarting perhaps from a sense of injury" [15]. He emphasizes "measures to discourage contentions" and "a peaceful settlement of all questions in dispute," especially regarding "the purchase and tenure of land" [15-16]. Resorting to arms would never be his first or even second choice. It might be his tenth choice. Ward is really the epitome of "Give peace and negotiation a chance, and then more chances, and then more." I have recently come across one writer who quoted Ward out of context to make him appear to be an ardent colonialist, but that is a severe misinterpretation of him.)

And why was Locke so concerned to emphasize the abundance of land and insist that this meant no one was being deprived of land by anyone staking a claim to a piece of it because there were plenty of other pieces to go around? Because to take from a limited supply without the consent of all concerned, and especially a taking by force or the threat of it, was an injustice and a violation of natural law. It is highlighting that sort of injustice that is the principle theme of Locke's *Second Treatise*. The injustice of dispossession is what motivates him, not abstract ideas about property ownership. I want to be very clear that there is nothing in Locke to justify that he believed it is right to take all the land from a people. That would have been abhorrent to him. Even a just war could not have legitimized it.

Locke and most Europeans believed that a small tribe of hunters could not lay claim to a large expanse of territory (e.g., see Langfield Ward above) because that would mean too much of it remained waste, an excess in common to all mankind, but this reasoning applied to Europeans too. And Locke certainly did not believe that hunters could claim no territory. The game they hunted needed land to wander about in just as sheep need pasture and the freedom to roam about.

We forget that Locke lived in a time when treaties and negotiating were the dominant modes of relating to the Indians and other Aborigines. (Tully, 147-48, is one who does not forget this: "the indigenous nations signed numerous international peace and friendship treaties with European nations.") Natives had laws and customs that had to be respected (which is how the natives understood it, as Tully, 147, points out). Stuart Banner reminds us that in the 1680s, in North America, the British "government announced its intention to invalidate all land titles based on 'pretended Purchases from Indians,' on the theory that 'from the Indians noe title can be Derived.' The result was an uproar, led by some of the most prominent people in New England ... The imperial government had to back down" (Banner, 131). A century later, Samuel Wharton was still enraged about this sort of thing. The colonists who had bought land from the Indians did not want to see a concept of *terra nullius* (the term was not actually coined until much later in the 19th century) come to their territory, making all the land Crown land. But there is no uproar today when this concept is imported into Locke against his will.

By the time the 19th century rolled around, things were changing steadily and irrevocably. Colonialism would largely come to be based on force or the threat of it (like a robber holding a dagger to a man's throat, as Locke said). The British were not unknown to tear up treaties, as Governor Harry Smith was fond of doing in South Africa (see Peires, 6; also Bank, 378).

How utterly repugnant this sort of thing was to Locke. As I commented earlier, when Darwin jotted down the thought that man is not an intruder, in his Notebook (E 65) in 1838, he was reflecting a change to a time in which coercion, through violent and non-violent methods, had become the dominant trend, and negotiations with an independent people had become a thing of the past. Interestingly, there is another little hint about this in Darwin's *Diary* (284; Jan. 25, 1835). Most of South America was under Spanish control, but some areas were still controlled by Indians. Darwin notes that the island of Chiloe was inhabited by poor Indians and makes a suggestion for Spain's imperial authorities: "I really think a boats crew with the Spanish flag might take the island of Chiloe." Absent is any sense of negotiating. Just take it.

Even if there were treaties (which was not the case in Australia), Europeans did not feel obliged to honor them (exposing this is the whole point of Helen Hunt's 1881 book *A Century of Dishonor*; also see Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*). We take by any means necessary. Saxe Bannister pointed out in 1822 that "an inclination to dispossess them of their lands by any means has been very prevalent amongst most of the white settlers in all Indian countries" (*Remarks*, 28.) Negotiation or any sort of reciprocity was no longer one of those means. Natives would even mostly lose jurisdictional

control of trying their own criminals. This changed situation is what enabled Darwin to write "man is not an *intruder*." He is an innocent animal transported by floating ice and taking his laws and customs with him into the new territory. To rephrase what I said earlier, it would not occur to Darwin that perhaps it should be "humans become negotiators precisely because they are intruders." He was completely ignorant of how much negotiating savage tribes did with each other and with white invaders when they first arrived. For Europeans, negotiation with the Other was pushed back into history, and a forgotten history at that. Rudely intruding (as in the Lewis Carroll poem) was the new world order. Darwin did not initiate it or even inspire it. But he went along with it, and, what's worse, tried to give it scientific underpinning.

There is an irony in this. In Darwin's world, negotiation is unnecessary and completely beside the point. Man is not an intruder who needs to negotiate; he is a conqueror who has a natural right to invade and take over. Locke did not support this kind of thinking. The irony is that Locke is still falsely accused of having promoted this, while Darwin who did advocate this view has been let off the hook. The human virtues Darwin praised in his work---"patriotism, fidelity, obedience, courage, and sympathy" (*Descent*, 157)---were singled out for their usefulness in war, enabling a tribe to become "victorious over most other tribes" (*ibid.*). Darwin never included negotiation and diplomacy in his list of virtues. Yet he is honored today as if he had been the most gentle and moral of scientific philosophers.

Historically and in reality, negotiation had been important in the history of Britain. If the British at first brought with them a spirit of negotiation and compromise to the countries they colonized, it might have been in part because they knew it in their own history. Before they went far overseas to explore, they had sailed the North Sea, as did all the peoples bordering on that sea, and all of them learned a lot by trading and interacting with each other. The myth about Britain's origins is that the Anglo-Saxons invaded Britain and drove out the native Britons. Michael Pye doubts it happened that way in *The Edge of the World*: "... the evidence suggests a far longer, gentler and more friendly process" (13). There were many moments of contact over centuries. The sea provided the means of "connection, not the barrier" (36; cf. 38). "It was easy for Scandinavians to be in York, Frisians in Ipswich, Saxons in London, and the fact is so unremarkable that it is hardly recorded" (39).

'Connections', or sometimes 'connected', appears about 36 times in Pye's book. On the very first page, we get "the web of connections" (shades of Erasmus Darwin). 'Trade' appears as or more often and add a half dozen occurrences for 'exchanges'. Not that connections always have to be peaceable. War, Pye reminds us, can be a way of connecting and trade did not

always mean peace (47). But connections are often made through peaceful relations. Human beings don't always take by force. "Human beings paid" money for what they wanted (77). And they traded and bartered and negotiated. One had to bargain over many things: the use and ownership of land, the value of goods, the costs and benefits of being an ally in peacetime and war, the trade-offs in politics, and information leading to any and all of the above. 'Negotiate' comes up only five times in Pye's book (the first one not until 150, and the others on 236-79), but it is implied everywhere. The North Sea brought "a constant flow of foreigners and foreign ideas that citizens needed some constant way to sort life out" (154).

The British took their negotiating skills and, more important, their belief that peaceful negotiations come first, with them to new worlds over the vast oceans. So it was in Australia, as Lisa Ford tells us (I will return to her book in just a few pages). So it was in Africa, as George Boulukos tells us: "seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century European travelers to West Africa looked at Africans first as potential trading partners, and therefore assessed the black people they encountered in terms of civility, religion, and willingness to trade" (Boulukos, 45; also, see 46-51). It was only as the British and other Europeans began to realize that they could enslave and dispossess indigenous peoples, *and get away with it*, that they came to have racist ideas about the deficient humanity of the Other.

The people who created England knew negotiation in their bones, they knew it in their historical memory and in their daily practice. They knew it at home and not very far abroad, just across the North Sea, among strange peoples who were fairly near at hand. They did not have to travel very far to find strangeness. They knew that human beings really were intruders and had to learn the arts of negotiating, trading, and compromising. But those bent on power invented the myth that civilization advanced by conquering and imposition. Darwin bought this myth and applied it to his sense of evolution for nature and human beings. He assumed more than he proved about the ebb and flow of human societies. Locke resisted this myth and tried to build the older, actually lived system of humans negotiating (which he called reaching mutual consent) into his political philosophy of rights in opposition to bald power.

We call Locke a philosopher because he was stating general principles. But Locke was not offering or inventing a philosophy out of his own head. He was attempting to describe and sum up the lived experiences of people. He was more the scientist than the philosopher (though there was only the one word in his day), except that he was not presenting the facts to make his case. Another irony here is that Darwin the scientist was more the philosopher than the

scientist when he insisted that man is not an intruder. He was contributing to myth-making. The funny thing in this case is that in our western culture, the myth won out over Locke's more truthful science, and we called this winning myth science so that nobody would challenge it or even notice what had happened. This "science" was another sort of euphemism. Our intellectual tradition is so clever at disguising historical facts and falsifying the record. And if that doesn't make you suck in your breath, I don't know what would.

If Locke has left us a legacy, it is a concern about the injustice of rude intrusion---the taking by force of what belongs to another. All of Locke's strongest words about the right to destroy offenders (e.g., §16) apply as much, if not more, to Europeans as to indigenes. The path of force and violence is what makes one an offender, not ethnicity or culture or social class or any other grouping. Presumptuous power is so distasteful to Locke that not only would he never consider notions of superiority and inferiority as giving anyone a right to exert power over another group, but claims to superiority would give one less right. He wanted us to remember that the more human and more civilized thing to do was to negotiate with the Other, not conquer him. That is Locke's strongest and forgotten legacy (and the only thing missing from his writing are the facts to back up that this was the living experience of people in history, but I will bet that he could have supplied such historical facts, if he had had a mind to).

Read some of what he has to say in §16 in the light of the later development of colonialism and you will see a perfect application to Europeans as the ones who have been unjust and in violation of natural law and decency. He begins by describing a state of war as "not a passionate and hasty, but a sedate settled Design, upon another Man's Life." That already sounds more like European designs on the natives than the other way around. Locke continues by declaring that it is:

reasonable and just I should have a Right to destroy that which threatens me with Destruction ... the Safety of the Innocent is to be preferred: And one may destroy a Man who makes War upon him ... for the same Reason, that he may kill a *Wolf* or a *Lion*; because such Men ... have no other Rule, but that of Force and Violence, and so may be treated as Beasts of Prey, those dangerous and noxious Creatures that will be sure to destroy him, whenever he falls into their Power.

A European colonizer was such a noxious Creature, a beast of prey. Locke was not writing about the right to destroy native peoples (which unfortunately is how Tully, 144-45, reads him). It is pure nonsense to read Locke this way.

This and so many other passages in Locke sound more like a perfect description of European violence against natives---the injustice of settler and government violence, which was only beginning to brew in Locke's time---than an indictment of the indigenous. I am not saying that Locke was so prescient as to have in mind future British imperialism. But I am saying that later colonialism's violence is *exactly the kind of thing* Locke had in mind.

It is absolutely remarkable that anyone could think Locke was aiming these words at Indians or Aborigines who resist invasion by European colonizers. (But Pagden, 46, asserts that Locke meant that a wild, savage beast is "any man who refused to accept the Europeans' right to appropriate 'vacant' lands" and Tully, 144, thinks Locke used the idea of bestial offenders to characterize the Indians!! Would that my computer had more exclamation marks in it.) There is nothing in Locke's words about offenders or murderers or violent people or men who resort to force that bears any resemblance to native resistance to invasion. Locke clearly has in mind the kind of aggressors that would be epitomized by later colonizers. In his day, there was too much negotiation, purchasing, and treaty-making with the natives going on (and even occasional, significant legal decisions in favor of the natives; see Tully, 171-74), for Locke to think that the British were being especially aggressive.

Maybe he was thinking of the Spanish empire which had a notorious reputation for cruelty and force. Maybe there were a few incidents committed by the English that made him see the danger. Maybe both. I don't know what inspired Locke's condemnation of violent dispossession. I only know it could not have been native resistance, which by no stretch of the imagination could be called an injustice; and it was injustice that was always Locke's primary concern.

Quite serendipitously, just a couple of days after writing the last few paragraphs and the ones above about a just war not giving a conqueror the right to all the land, I came across an example from 1622 of the kind of overreaction that Locke would condemn. Maybe he knew about it. Saxe Bannister in his 1838 book *British Colonization and Coloured Tribes* included the lengthy conclusion of a 1622 report from English colonists in Virginia laying out their planned response to a recent massacre by Indians (49-54). In their second point, they say in part:

hitherto [we] have had possession of no more ground than their waste ... [but we] may now, by right of war and law of nations, invade the country and destroy them who sought to destroy us; whereby we shall enjoy their cultivated places ... and possessing the fruits of others' labours. Now their cleared grounds in all their

villages ... in the fruitfulest places of the land, shall be inhabited by us. [50]

Note their having initially limited themselves to waste land, thus illustrating this was a doctrine long in use before Locke announced it. Also note that they do *not* argue that by virtue of having a superior civilization, they are entitled to take all of the Indians' land. They claim a right only because they were attacked first and Bannister makes it clear that he considers this an overreaction.

It is this boastful response that they may now take everything which is exactly the kind of thing that Locke held to be a violation of natural law, if only by virtue of the fact that they were depriving Indian children of their inheritance. Those who are "in danger to perish", Locke implored (in §183), have greater right to title of land than the conqueror, however justified he was at first in making war. Overreacting after a just war is the kind of violence that Helen Hunt would call "exterminating punishment" (Hunt, 40). It was as repulsive to Locke as to later humanitarians.

In their fourth point, the Virginian colonists explain that a civilizing mission is difficult because it is long and slow, whereas war is so much easier ("the way of conquering them is much more easy than of civilizing them by fair means," 51), and they proceed to list all the ways they will now use to destroy the Indians. That included causing famine, burning all their corn and their boats and canoes, breaking their fishing tackle, and hunting them with bloodhounds and using "mastiffs to tear them" (51)---exterminating punishment. Bannister characterizes the report as the product of "extreme perversion of mind" (54). He particularly points out that while Spain's cruel practices were always abhorred by the British before, this report now embraces Spain as an example to follow. Bannister also quotes from a writer of that time who observed that after the initial counterattack by the colonists in which many Indians were slaughtered and the rest were driven away, the Governor held out an olive branch to the survivors "promising the Indians peace and pardon" if they returned, which they did, and then "the English massacred them" (55). This was not the kind of colonialism that Locke envisioned as right and just.

The greed manifested in this report is palpable. Bear in mind that the civilizing process, which these colonists rejected, means plenty of back and forth negotiating; civilizing is not a one-way street. Conquering by force, which Locke rejected, is so much easier and quicker. Greed is part and parcel of the urge to conquer. If the greed is large enough, then no matter whether it is carried out through violent means or something less immediately lethal,

greed really is just another form of forceful conquest. It is hard to imagine that any people would willingly acquiesce in another people's excessive demands. Indeed, Locke could not imagine it and that is why he makes mutual consent the foundation of his ideas about limits to property rights, the right to inherit your father's possessions, and the injustice of dispossession.

But let us indulge in some hypothetical thinking. *If* there is a staunch and ruthless colonial voice in John Locke (which is debatable, to say the least), there is also a strong anti-colonial voice. To give the first voice its due, let us say that perhaps Locke meant to exclude indigenous people from his principles of justice and the right to regain land which they had been forcibly deprived of. Assuming that to be the case, this exclusion was based on erroneous notions that Aborigines have no government, no laws, no sense of property and ownership or inheritance, no productivity, no right to use land as they saw fit, no meaningful sovereignty, etc. When it is discovered that all these ideas were wrong, then *immediately* all of Locke's criticisms of unjust dispossession would come into play.

Stuart Banner (113-15) tells us just how quickly the British realized their mistakes about Aboriginal society in Australia. Also, one of the major points of Lisa Ford's book is that, despite the ideas that the natives had no notions of territory, property, and jurisdiction, and despite the lack of treaties, early settlements in Australia were characterized by a practical recognition that the natives were a sovereign people enjoying self-government. "Though no treaties were signed between Aborigines and the colonial state, diplomacy, gift-giving, and negotiation formed the substance of their nonviolent interactions well into the nineteenth century" (Ford, 44; cf. 30-31). One result of this recognition of the independence of Aboriginal culture was that, on a regular basis, Aborigines were regarded as exempt from British criminal jurisdiction. In a similar way, in America, in his 1781 book, Samuel Wharton considered "frequent purchases, numerous treaties, alliances and other public transactions" as all being facts that confirm the natives had title to their own lands (Wharton, 28). (Also see Canny, 154-57, on 17th century English writers who reported that American Indians engaged in agriculture and had ideas about land possession and forms of government.)

The reason Locke's ideas of justice come into play is that the words and concepts which Locke fashioned did not have a built-in limitation that automatically excluded Aborigines. Locke's words have universal application to all peoples. There is a strong basis for anti-colonialism in Locke, there is a healthy humanitarianism in his writings, and *even if* it was *temporarily* suppressed for indigenes (which I deny), it is still there and applicable to native populations, once the false premises about their culture are removed.

The worst you could say about Locke is that there are two opposed strains in him. There should be a vigorous debate about these two voices in Locke. As far as I can tell, there is none. Academics suppress debate far more than they encourage it.

James Tully is a notable exception. Applying Locke's ideas of justice is the one point where Tully and I agree, for he comes to a similar conclusion. He argues that if Locke is wrong about civilized notions of property and its application to indigenous people (and I have argued above that his meaning on this has been much distorted), "then," says Tully, "it follows from the central theory of government of the *Two treatises* itself that they have the right to defend themselves and their property, with force if necessary, against these injustices ..." (Tully, 175). Amen to that.

George Robinson was not the only one who remembered Locke. In New Zealand, another aspect of his ideas was particularly apt. Whatever may be the dispute over the applicability of Locke to natives (and I have argued above that he stood firmly on their side and against the overreaching of a colonizing power), there is universal agreement that Locke supported the rights of citizens against the arbitrary power of state governments (to seize land, for example). The Maoris had been given "all the Rights and Privileges of British Subjects" in Article III of the Treaty of Waitangi (in the English translation of the Maori text, it is "the same rights as the people of England;" see Orange, 258, 262). In theory, Locke's reasoning would give a Maori chief like Wiremu Kingi the right as a subject to rebel when the government sent troops to expel his tribe for resisting white occupation of their land. "Octavius Hadfield [a missionary] offered exactly this defense of Kingi's resistance, but he was not taken seriously. When Lockean political theory supported Wiremu Kingi and 'rebellion' in New Zealand in 1860, it was ignored" (Stenhouse, 401).

Overambitious colonizers had turned Locke into a supporter by anachronistically reframing him as an advocate of *terra nullius*. In doing so, they rewrote history---that is, the people whose voices can be found in history---to serve their needs. It was breathtakingly arrogant. They took what they needed from Locke out of context to justify a wild colonialism and ignored the rest. There is a lesson in this about how arrogance never ends. It was arrogant in the first place to take that which was not yours to take---"the princes of Europe arrogantly assumed the dominion and property of America" (Wharton, 17; this being said in 1781; neither Pope nor crown could grant title to the soil of America because it was not theirs to grant; see 5, 12)---and as if this arrogance were not enough, this had to be followed up by an arrogant rewriting of people like Locke to justify it in retrospect.

Scholars have been repeating this error ever since. Again and again, I am

reminded of what Agnes Arber said about how the general intellectual atmosphere imposes itself on our investigations to a humiliating degree. It says a hell of a lot about western academic culture that only the colonial voice in Locke has been paid attention to, while the deep humanitarianism in him has been silenced. They left it to be remembered by only a handful of like-minded humanitarians, such as George Robinson, who in turn would be erased from history.

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Humanitarian thinking was in play from the very beginning, even before colonization got well under way, as the writings of Locke illustrate. And even as the colonizing progressed, people like Samuel Wharton would not let anyone forget the humanitarian point of view. It did not stand a chance against the larger forces of greed. In a journal entry for November 23, 1829, George Robinson took note of the injustices committed against the Aborigines, including depriving them of their food sources, and commented on the major obstacle to improving things, "... the overwhelming love of money deluges all other considerations" (P, F, 88). In 1838, Saxe Bannister spoke of "greedy and unprincipled colonizations" and "the ruling passion of the age was to get gold at any price" (*Colonization*, 15, 19). Wharton said it was "avarice, ambition, or religious pride" that led the princes and people of Europe "to cross the Atlantic, and usurp the possessions of unoffending nations ..." (Wharton, 5). Napier said it was a matter of national wealth. No matter that there were many public complaints about greed and the resulting cruelties, Darwin showed no signs of taking the side of the humanitarians.

The worldviews of Locke and Darwin could not be further apart. Where Darwin sees power or force in the fight for domination as a positive good, Locke has nothing but loathing for such power. Walter Bagehot, whom Darwin admired, had identified the ability to kill others before they can kill us as a mark of superiority. Locke thinks it makes us worse, more bestial. Some might object that comparing Darwin's and Locke's worldviews is unfair and misleading. Darwin was a biologist, Locke a political philosopher. I would agree with that objection if Darwin had confined his observations to flora and fauna. But when he brings human beings, as individuals and as social groups, into his purview, that objection fails. A better disclaimer for Locke might be that he was mainly concerned with abuse of power within a society, not between different countries. There is some merit to that, but his repeated references to war, the conqueror, the conquered or subdued, lands of the vanquished, native rights, and more lead one to see wider implications of his thoughts. Not to mention that at one point he draws a comparison between

"foreign Usurpation" and "domestic Conquest," and adds, "an Usurper can never have Right on his side" (§197); also not to mention his brief remark in "The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina" that we cannot ill use the natives or expel them.

Unfortunately, in any philosophical or legal reasoning, there are always loopholes. Locke potentially left future power mongers a big out, depending on how carefully people wanted to read him. (I don't think the loophole is there, but when people have a need to misinterpret someone, they will find what they need.) For Locke, things like an 'unjust war' and 'unjustly invades' (§176; quoted above) were possibilities, but then so were just wars and invasions (e.g., a lawful conqueror, §178; a just and lawful war, §172; just war, §§180, 193). As we saw, Locke insisted that even just wars do not entitle conquerors to take all the land. Not everyone paid careful attention to this. Instead, they could argue that since Locke did not explain carefully enough what he meant by just and unjust wars, this left a huge opening for later imperialists to claim that theirs was a just cause. Because they were more civilized and more productive, or so they believed, they argued they had a right to the lands of the supposedly less civilized and less productive, and besides, they were only bringing the natives a better way of life. As far as they were concerned, colonial wars were just wars. This was not Locke's argument. He did not see it this way. But abstract terminology is always open to interpretation.

In the second chapter (§5), I quoted Darwin's observation in his *Diary* (and in the published versions) on the colonizers in Argentina: "Everyone here is fully convinced that this is the most just war, because it is against barbarians" (*Voyage*, 85; cf. *Diary*, 180, 190). Darwin says nothing to dispute this. In Van Diemen's Land, Darling wrote to the Colonial Secretary to explain that the perpetrators of cruelties against the natives believed their violence was necessary and justifiable because it was against ignorant blacks (P, W, 999; quoted previously in Ch. 3, §3).

This was reminiscent of the reasoning of a medieval Pope. Thomas Aquinas had argued that pagans had natural rights. But Pope Innocent IV proclaimed that the Pope gets to decide what natural law is. In his opinion, pagan beliefs were a violation of natural law and their opposition to Christian missionary efforts was irrational. This would justify invasion of their countries. (See Robert Williams, Jr., *Savage Anxieties*, 154-57.) The perception of indigenous peoples as lacking a recognizable form of government, and therefore living in violation of natural law (as Europeans interpreted it), was also used as justification of the right to invade and colonize them (*ibid.*, 183, 186, 192). Darling gathered all this up into: the common opinion is that the *ignorance of blacks* makes our violence against them *justifiable*.

It is as if colonists wanted to cover themselves from every angle. This is a just war because the superior may conquer the inferior, but in case it isn't a

just war and we're not all that superior, we should eliminate them all anyway so that there won't be any descendants to claim what is rightfully theirs. Extermination is either just or it's necessary to prevent repercussions in the future or it's nature. All roads of analysis and justification lead to genocide as the outcome. And all of it violated the spirit and the letter of Locke's writings.

There were so many arguments floating around to justify European ambition for world power because everyone was nervous that no one avenue would clinch it. The more justifications, the merrier. They would reach for the Bible if they had to. "Be fruitful and multiply," God said to Adam (Gen 1:28) and repeated it to Noah (Gen 9:1), as if to say, according to European interpretation, "Go out and improve the whole world, make it more fruitful"--- for Europeans, it went without saying. Although this type of argument too has been attributed to Locke (improvement justifies ownership of land), he opposed it as he opposed every attempt to make dispossession of others seem legitimate.

The idea of improving the world had been there for a long time. In 1652, in the first prefatory epistle (to Lord Cromwell) in *The English Improver Improved*, Walter Blith advised farmers "draw forth the Earth to yield her utmost fruitfulness" (pdf 15; his spellings throughout). Then later in Chapter I, he says "it's no less than the maintenance of our Lives, Estates, this Common-wealth, and world [thinking in terms of the world was never far from their minds], and the Improvement, or Advancement of the fruits and profits of the Earth by ingenuity, is little lesse than an addition of a new world" (pdf 75; cf. pdf 129). How easily he moves from improving Estates to the Commonwealth to the world. On the same page (75), he calls Solomon "the second Husbandman [i.e., after God] or Improver of the world." God in creating the world was the "first Husbandman, the paterne [pattern] of all Husbandry ... And having given man such a Paterne both for precept and president [precedent] for his encouragement, he makes him Lord of all untill the Fall ... [and after the fall of man] *Adam* is sent forth to till the Earth, and improve it" (pdf 74-75). Go and improve the whole Earth.

In that first epistle, Blith wonders if iron, coal, silver, etc. can be found in other parts of the world (pdf 21). In the second epistle (the one addressed to the Industrious Reader), he seems to be urging his country to be more imperialistic than it currently is: "... for though a new world [America] has been of late discovered, yet there is not an occupation or trade of finding them, nor are our English people very active in searching after them; Study Improvements ... it is the Midwife that facilitates the birth [of Plenty]" (pdf 35). In Blith's view, the Bible commanded Christians, and especially the British, to go out, conquer, and improve to our own advantage all the new

worlds we can find; and we should improve our ability to find these new worlds. As explained in Chapter 6 (at the end of §2), Blith was eager to find selection and breeding operating in nature so that imperialistic man's similar efforts could be represented as only an imitation of God or Nature. Little did he realize that exterminating people would come to be seen as a kind of selection and even improvement. Darwin brought to fruition an intellectual tendency in the west that had started long before him.

Some scholars would rope Locke into the same view, basing their argument on the *First Treatise* in §33 (from Chapter IV): "*Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the Earth* [Gen 9:1], which contains in it the Improvement too of Arts and Sciences, and the Conveniences of Life." But as scholars so often do with Locke, they have ripped these words out of context. What Locke was doing in the first few chapters of the *First Treatise* was to turn the imperialist argument upside down. He was disputing a certain author's argument that Genesis 1:28 (Be fruitful and multiply) gave Adam monarchial or absolute power over others. Locke's interpretation is very different. He insists that God was giving dominion and blessings to all mankind, not to one man (or by implication to one nation). This is Locke's consistent message.

In §24 of the *First Treatise*, Locke makes two points (these are the only quotations from Locke where I will intrude my own emphases): "1. That by this Grant, *Gen* I.28. God gave no immediate Power to *Adam* over Men, over his Children, [my emphasis:] *over those of his own Species*; and so he was not made Ruler, or *Monarch*, by this Charter." Note Locke's point: it is a misreading of the Bible to argue that God was giving anyone authority over the whole human species. And "2. That by this Grant God gave him not *private Dominion* over the inferior Creatures [i.e., animals], but [my emphasis:] *Right in common with all Mankind*; so neither was he *Monarch*, upon the account of the Property here given him." Does this sound like a man out to build up the imperialist project? And for good measure here are a few other remarks from the *First Treatise*:

§29: What God gave Adam was "not a private Dominion, but a Dominion in common with the rest of Mankind." (Cf. §§39, 43.)

§30: "God in this Donation gave the World to Mankind in common, and not to *Adam* in particular," and he goes on to explain this means "the Species of Man." (To the whole species and hence, not to one nation or one religion or one group in particular.)

§30: "intellectual Nature ... belong'd to the whole Species."

§40: Locke expounds Genesis 1:28: "'Tis nothing but the giving to Man the whole Species of Man, as the chief Inhabitant, who is the Image of his Maker, the Dominion over the other Creatures."

§40: "... it is a Confirmation of the Original Community of all things amongst the Sons of Men."

Does any of this sound like a man bent on establishing the rule of one nation over others? It rather sounds like a man who opposes incipient imperialism. "Be fruitful and multiply" was for Locke not a prescription for the imperial aspirations of one country, but an instruction or blessing in favor of all mankind. Remember that. Locke was not cut from the same cloth as those who strive to rule over others or those who look for clever ways to justify domination.

Think about this too. Walter Blith's book *The English Improver* was published in 1649 (and the third edition as *The English Improver Improved* in 1652). That is forty years before Locke's *Two Treatises*. I think we can say that probably by the time Locke wrote, using the Bible to justify the activity of improving, and hence the entire European, imperialistic project, was well-established. Yet Locke challenged his culture's misuse of the Bible and declared in effect that the Bible spoke of God giving blessings and rights to *all mankind*, the whole Species. That was a very brave thing to do. By remaking Locke into a supporter of some sort of divine right to colonize and to expropriate all that indigenous people possessed, scholars have submerged the courage of this rather unique man. We have lost the memory of an incredibly intrepid man and replaced it with a myth of another craven imperialist, and we used Locke for this purpose just so we could make imperialism look more respectable. My suggestion: Demolish the myth and restore the man to his proper place in our memories.

Summing up some of Locke's points throughout both *Treatises* is instructive. There are at least four components to his thinking that clearly support an anti-imperialist agenda: equating foreign usurpation and domestic conquest (which implies that he was thinking not only about the danger of absolute power within a nation, but about such power between nations); even a just war cannot give one nation absolute power over another, particularly with regard to taking over the land; the early chapters of the *First Treatise* which stress that God gave the world to all mankind in common; and last but not least, denying that the stronger over the weaker constitutes a law of nature. How can all of this be deemed consistent with imperialism? The memory of what England's greatest political philosopher/scientist stood for must have proved too painful because generations of scholars have seen fit to

erase or rewrite what he said.

While later humanitarians were not buying the exception of a just war as imperialists conceived it and found the idealistic reasoning in Locke (and other writers) more appealing, this was too often true only in theory. In the reality of colonialism, even humanitarians bought the appeal to improvement and the reasoning that 'what was done was done' and the best anyone could do was not to consider how we can restore a good portion of what we have taken from the natives, but to ask how we can continue to do what we do and try to avoid total destruction of these conquered peoples. This was the reasoning in the 1837 Select Committee *Report*: "Whatever may have been the injustice of this encroachment, there is no reason to suppose that either justice or humanity would now be consulted by receding from it" (*Report*, 83). These humanitarians did not help matters much by agreeing that what has been started has indeed been started, so there's no going back now. Even justice has to take second place to imperial improvement. All we can do, they lamented, is regret the excesses of colonialism.

Atonement for Robinson and others, it seems, had come to mean preventing extermination and possibly also, as Lyndall Ryan points out (*Tasmanian Aborigines*, 203, 215), to offer the survivors the benefits of British, Christian civilization (this was the thinking of the Select Committee). Given what civilization had already done for them, this was a doubtful benefit. It is also not clear to me whether preventing complete extermination was a humanitarian concern or merely a means of putting a band-aid on their own conscience, so that they could walk away from this with a feeling that they had tried to do some good. When preventing extermination rather than offering restoration and compensation becomes the goal, it represents a downfall, a pathetic imitation of humanitarianism.

Atonement for Robinson probably also included a promise of entering a Christian heaven, an even bigger benefit than British civilization, when they died. This, he said in a eulogy for the chief Manalargenna who died on December 6, 1836, was better than returning to your own country:

He will like it [heaven], yes he will like it much, he would not like to go back to his own country. He will have no desire to go there. If you could say to him will you come back to your own country again he would say No ... No. I like this place. I like it better than my own country. I like it much. I am happy here. He would say when I was in my own country you fought with me, you talk'd no good ... When I was in my own country I was sick, I was hungry, I was cold, I was frightened, I was miserable. But

now I am happy very happy indeed this is a good place a very good place. [in Reynolds, *Fate*, 155-56]

The beautiful simplicity of this language can make us forget that these are not the words of Manalargenna, but of Robinson. He knew his friend well and this probably comes close to the way the chief would have said it. But did Manalargenna actually feel this way? Here is Patrice Lumumba over a hundred years later on the more auspicious and earthly occasion of the independence of the Congo from Belgium:

We were insulted, we had to suffer beatings, morning, noon, and evening because we were niggers. Who is going to forget that a black person would be addressed *tu*, not, of course, because that is how one addresses a friend but rather because the respectful *vous* was reserved to Whites only? [Fabian, *Memory*, 76; his translation]

(This famous speech can easily be found online and I believe there is also a video of it with English subtitles.) Lumumba also said in this speech, "We have seen our lands seized in the name of allegedly legal laws, which in fact recognized only that might is right. We have seen that the law was not the same for a white and for a Black---accommodating for the first, cruel and inhuman for the other."

On the face of it, Lumumba's words and Robinson's on behalf of Manalargenna seem to be coming from different universes. The tone of the latter is certainly more wistful and sentimental, but underneath, they are very close. Robinson remembers "you fought with me, you talk'd no good ... I was sick, I was hungry, I was cold, I was frightened, I was miserable." If he imagines his friend in a happier place, it is because he knew very well how much white people had made this earth a miserable place for Manalargenna and his people. Robinson would have understood Lumumba's speech.

Yet the intrinsic beauty of Robinson's language (by way of inspiration from Manalargenna himself) seems in part to be aimed at suppressing the guilt Robinson felt that promises of a return to their county, or at least annual visits in the summer, were not kept. Did Robinson remember something else Locke said? "And all the *Grants and Promises of Men in Power*, are but Mockery and Collusion" (*Second Treatise*, §194)? In context, what Locke was referring to was a situation where power is too absolute, "Power enough", as he put it, or one-sided, as I would say. That is why the word that serves as the main anchor in Locke's thought is 'consent', i.e., negotiation. It is only by negotiating that men in power can be held accountable. Locke was very big

on the idea that no deals (like the taking of land) are valid unless *free consent* has been given. One thing all the writers I have consulted agree on is this: The Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land did not consent to permanent exile; they gave no one the right or power to take everything from them. In that context, all the promises of Robinson and Arthur were but mockery and collusion.

There is evidence that promises that exile would only be temporary were made in a verbal, *de facto* treaty with the Tasmanians in return for their peaceable surrender and that Robinson expressed regrets on other occasions that he could not remain faithful to this promise (Reynolds, *Fate*, 151-55). Boyce (*Van Diemen's Land*, 288, 298) believes Robinson used promises deceitfully in order to keep the Aborigines in a peaceful mood. The removal to Flinders Island was supposed to have been for a limited time. After "the free Aborigines Inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land now living upon Flinders Island," as they called themselves, sent a petition to Queen Victoria in 1846, complaining of their bad treatment and reminding the Queen that they had an agreement with Mr. Robinson and Colonel Arthur (see Reynolds, *Fate*, 7-9, for the full petition), James Stephen, under-secretary of state for the colonies, admitted that "the establishment [at Wybalenna] had been created not so much with a view to any benefit to [the Aborigines] as from a regard to the interests of the Colonists" (Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 250).

At the time, however, just about everyone thought that removing the Tasmanians from their native land was the best solution. Arthur would write to Murray that even if the Aborigines do pine away in captivity "it is better that they should meet with their death in that way, whilst every act of kindness [!!!] is manifested towards them, than that they should fall a sacrifice to the inevitable consequences [i.e., murdered and exterminated by the settlers] of their continued acts of outrage upon the white inhabitants" (Bischoff, 259). That sending them into exile was considered the best policy very much included Darwin, whom I quoted on this in the second chapter: "All the aborigines have been removed ... so that Van Diemen's Land enjoys the great advantage of being free from a native population. This most cruel step seems to have been quite unavoidable, as the only means of stopping ... [violent acts] committed by the blacks; but which sooner or later must have ended in their utter destruction" (*Narrative*, 533). The way Darwin tells it their exile was as much for their benefit as for the Europeans'. He does not seem to have been too concerned with how the land came to be native free. Since everyone thought this was the right thing to do, are we judging them in hindsight by criticizing this policy of removal?

It may have been rare but it was possible in that time to doubt the wisdom of this path. Chief Justice John Pedder in Van Diemen's Land compared their

confinement on a smaller island to "hopeless imprisonment, within bounds so narrow as necessarily to deprive them of those habits and customs which are the charms of their savage life ... that unbounded liberty of which they had hitherto been in the enjoyment" (in Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 183). He feared they would "pine away." (Arthur's comment above to Murray was in fact a response to Pedder's opposition to the plan of removal.) Bonwick said Pedder called the removal "an unchristian attempt to destroy the whole race," as they would soon die if taken away from their ancient haunts (*Last*, 240). After noting Pedder's opposition to this action, John West observed in his 1852 history, "In denying to the aboriginal remnant an asylum within the country of their forefathers, we inflicted the last penalty which can fall on a race, whose lives the victors condescend to spare" (2.67). And do not forget everything Charles Napier said in 1835 about how "we rob the aborigines of Australia ... We deprive them of a range of territory ... without which territory they starve! This is not JUST" (Napier, 102). That was just as true for Tasmania.

Darwin's 'native free' is yet another euphemism. It stands for greed. We want the whole thing with nothing left over for the natives. And greed is about so much more than mere survival. Nature is about survival. She is about getting just enough to last longer than the other organism. Greed is about an indulgence in so much more than you will ever need just to get by. How the scientists and intellectuals of that time loved a good euphemism. Colonialism needed euphemisms. Darwin knew that as well as anyone.

Bonwick remembered a Mr. Gregson, "a barrister of no mean talent and oratorical power," who at a public meeting in September 1830 objected to making war against the natives as they "ought not to be forced from the territory bequeathed to them by their fathers, and now usurped by the British crown" (*Last*, 137). His opponents wondered why Gregson would continue to hold his estate, apparently "granted [to him] by public robbers of a nation." If that was how he felt, they "urged him to leave a land desecrated by such violation of the rights of man and honour of civilization." One can imagine the chilling effect their criticism would have had on anyone who agreed with Gregson. I suppose, though I cannot really be sure, that what Mr. Gregson meant was that they should end their *continuing* warfare against the natives and leave them a portion of the land that had originally been theirs. The colonists should curb their greed. No matter what he meant, the response of his fellow colonists was that people with humanitarian feelings for the natives should leave the country. If you don't like what we're doing, close your eyes and go away.

I have provided perhaps more information than Darwin was aware of, but he certainly read about atrocities and abuses in Bischoff and apparently was not moved in the way that he was moved by injustices towards slaves. His commitment to colonialism was unwavering. And he read a lot more. He had read von Humboldt who described a case of abduction of Indian children and even recommended legislation to prevent this kind of thing, and Kotzebue who spoke of how Indians in California were kept as virtual prisoners and longed for their homes. Even if Darwin never read John Pedder's comments about natives pining away in homesickness, he had read Kotzebue making much the same point. He would come to read Bonwick relating many like cruelties and even worse, and Bonwick's report of Pedder's disapproval of expatriation. And he read Gerland who identified European bloodthirstiness as the chief cause of extinction. This is more than enough to establish that Darwin knew quite a bit about what was happening.

In fact, everyone knew what was going on. We are not talking about hard-to-get, esoteric knowledge. In Lecture XVIII of his series on colonization, which I have referred to several times, Herman Merivale said that "the wretched details of the ferocity and treachery which have marked the conduct of civilized men" can be found "in the accounts of travellers and missionaries, in the reports of our own legislature, in the language of philanthropic orators and writers" (2.150). (Speaking of missionaries, I should note that the British Church Missionary Society in its 1830-31 annual report wrote of the unbelievable extent to which "the ancient proprietors have been deprived forcibly and without compensation" [in Boyce, *Van Diemen's Land*, 262].) Merivale continued, "The general features of the subject are by this time [1841] sufficiently known ..." (2.151). It was common knowledge. Everyone had the ability to know.

The best humanitarians of the time did not oppose colonialism itself, as I have said, only the way it was being carried out. They assumed that western civilization was a good thing and that the natives could benefit from it. They had no illusions that savage cultures would have to disappear, but not through murder, torture, heartrending destruction of families. As I noted in Chapter 6 (§§4, 5), Merivale used the expression the "Euthanasia of savage communities" (2.181). Nineteenth century humanitarians wanted to save lives, not cultures---to save them for the best of European civilization. (There were some very few exceptions to this. In the last chapter of his book, Gerland said there were some things of value in native cultures, but he still thought they could benefit from western civilization.) They also assumed that "the

encroaching tide of European population" as Merivale called it (2.176) was irresistible. Native cultures would have to give way. It was individuals devoid of any connection to their culture who might be saved. It was an idealized conception of individuals who would hopefully be enticed by an idealized conception of Europe. It was a kind of utopian dream. Merivale and many others dreamed of an amalgamation of races within European civilization. Culturally, it was assumed there could be only one race.

Darwin was in line with the idea that European culture was superior and would remain dominant. He remained committed to the colonial enterprise, but whereas others denounced *the way* colonialism was being carried out, he would not. In the end, it seems that it was all fine with him. He bought the myth that the natives (as well as the whites) must be protected from violence by certain measures which will effectively restrict their rights in their own homeland. Whatever we do now is for their own benefit as much as it is for ours. The real fear that natives may no longer be intimidated by claims of white superiority was suppressed. Through it all, this notion of superiority was upheld.

The one thing that is hard to tell from all this documented evidence is how much responsibility lay with the larger white community which did not engage in violence. In Australia, especially in Queensland, many humanitarians argued that the community was complicit in these crimes because it tolerated this violence and did not protest enough (Reynolds, *Whispering*, 92, 99-100, 109, 110-11, 112, 124-25). Sir Arthur Gordon, Governor of Fiji and New Zealand, wrote to Prime Minister Gladstone in April 1883 that he had heard "men of culture and refinement" talk quite openly "not only of the *wholesale* butchery ... but of the *individual* murder of natives, exactly as they would talk of a day's sport, or having to kill some troublesome animal" (Reynolds, 125; his emphasis). This is evidence that the actual perpetrators could boast of murders and knew they could get away with it. One such, signing his letter to the *Queenslander* as Never Never, said that there is not room enough for black and white and suggested that blacks may be right in killing the whites who invaded their country, but he also believed that it is right for the stronger race to wipe out the weaker, and while some may actively do the dirty work, "... every white man, woman, and child who sits at home at ease in our towns and townships is a murderer ..." (115). In a remarkably frank letter, he admits our policy towards blacks may be bad, "but it is the only game we played all over the world" (116). The weak are a useless race, "And being a useless race, what does it matter what they suffer ..." (118).

Does the silence of Darwin and other prominent figures make them guilty?

It is a tough standard to live up to. We are all complicit in that sense. No one ever does enough. Part of the reason for that is that social opposition makes cowards of us all. Gideon Scott Lang, who lived in Australia for 24 years and who published a pamphlet in 1865 complaining about the wanton violence which had become customary in Australia, felt the strain of striving against the tide and wrote on his copy of the pamphlet "a simple expression of opinion from home, from *The Times* for example, would have done much good" (Reynolds, *Whispering*, 98). George Robinson had intended to do much better by the Tasmanians. He wanted to resettle them in South Australia on a better piece of land. But he never got permission to do that. Bannister in his 1822 piece on American Indians quoted an 18th century writer who was distressed over how little encouragement he received for his favorable plans concerning Indians (*Remarks*, 32). Bannister took particular note of "the failure of 'encouragement'" (his emphasis).

Bannister would also observe that "every species of neglect and persecution is heaped on the men" who complain of injustices and atrocities (*Colonization*, 259). James Backhouse said that in Australia, "at Swan River persons have been subjected to great contumely, in consequence of pleading the cause of the blacks, and exposing the atrocities committed upon them" (*Extracts*, March, 1838, last letter in Fifth Part, 55). Of another advocate of the interests of the Aborigines, Backhouse commented, "in defending their cause he subjected himself to the great displeasure of many of the settlers" (Sixth Part, 8). It was a tough atmosphere to work in.

One promise to the Tasmanians that was partly kept was continued ability to go hunting, though not in their homeland (Boyce, "Fantasy", 49-50). The report of the Aborigines Committee appointed by Arthur mentions that one of the inducements offered by Robinson was that the natives would be lodged in a place where they would have "no restraint imposed on their amusements and sports of the chase" (Bischoff, 251). They did continue to hunt on Flinders Island (Reynolds, *Fate*, 182-83), often without official permission, but they were never allowed to return to their homeland to hunt. More might have been done. Humanitarians such as Robinson were given only very limited help. How much more good would have been accomplished by an expression of support from the leading intellects of the day? Bannister recognized that Aborigines needed public sympathy and support which "can only be excited by men of letters" (*Colonization*, 225). Had they backed up the humanitarians instead of remaining silent, people like Robinson could have come closer to achieving their goals and fulfilling the promises they made to the Aborigines. Robinson lived in a culture that did not want him to accomplish even half of what he set out to do. That has to be taken into account when he is criticized

for not doing enough.

One of the realizations I gained from Andrew Bank's essay "Losing Faith in the Civilizing Mission", concerning the Cape in South Africa, was that humanitarians had two choices: *They could be pressed to adopt more racist views or they could be driven to live in ostracism and despair* (see especially, 367-75). *That would long continue to be the dilemma facing white people in western civilization.* In Chapter 3 (§9), I gave African explorer Joseph Thomson as an example of one who started out as an anti-racist and came to adopt racist views.

Bank gives examples of both those who resisted racism and those who gave in to it. A newspaper editor John Fairbairn moved from sympathy towards the natives to concern for the colonists, when petitions threatened to close his paper down. Eventually, he decided that Africans and Europeans were not equal, but "at opposite ends of the human spectrum," as Bank puts it (370). Fairbairn had felt quite differently earlier in his career. At the same time, "unrepentant humanitarian liberals like James Read [were left] ostracized and despairing" (373). Read was an egalitarian evangelical who keenly felt his outcast status.

Of course, human reality being what it is, people will find middle positions because the two extreme positions, as outlined by Bank, are found unbearable. Thus, many more will give lip service to humane ideals while they support the reactionary forces, or they will make minimal efforts at humanitarianism to salve their conscience while they cater to the mainstream and make sure it never feels insecure about losing its dominant position. Arthur and Robinson are examples of people who took a middle ground approach, with Robinson being the one who tried to do more for the natives.

There is evidence that both Robinson and Lieutenant-Governor Arthur felt guilty that they had not done more for the Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land (see Reynolds, *Fate*, Chapter 5). "Weep in silence", the title of Plomley's second collection of primary sources, comes from Robinson's journal in the entry for Christmas day, 1835. Between themselves the two officials agreed that the Aborigines "were not to want for anything," as Robinson recorded Arthur's instructions in his journal entry for May 12, 1836 (P, W, 353; also see Reynolds, *Fate*, 174-75). But this was in regard to the material well-being of the Aborigines after more fundamental promises had not been kept. Arthur originally had wanted to settle them on a piece of the main island, their original home. In the first letter in Bischoff's Appendix (dated January 1828), Arthur explains that what he is inclined to do is "to settle the Aborigines in some remote quarter of the island, which should strictly be reserved for them ..." (188). He adds that "it is but justice to make the attempt." Why justice?

Because "I cannot divest myself of the consideration that all aggression originated with the white inhabitants ..."

Some people believed it was in accord with international law. E. de Vattel's *The Law of Nations* was a leading book on the subject at that time. As Reynolds explains Vattel's point, "The indigenous people should not be completely dispossessed;" they had to be left with sufficient land (*Fate*, 125). And John Locke, as previously discussed, upheld the rights of natives to their land and property, so that even their descendants could continue to lay claim to what had been unjustly taken from them. Says Reynolds, "The principles were clear enough. Arthur's problem was to apply them on the ground" (126). He was never able to do that. He was getting too much pressure from the settlers who had no humane intentions towards the natives.

This is not a matter of applying international law in hindsight. At least some people at the time thought about this. On June 2, 1826, the *Colonial Times* "published a detailed article citing 'Vattel, Grotius and other writers on international law' in support of the claim that 'the conquerors [of land] become subject to the territorial laws of the conquered'" (Boyce, *Van Diemen's Land*, 191). Bonwick discussed varying opinions on this in Chapter XII, "Native Rights", of his 1870 book; for example, "Grotius, the learned jurist, denies the right of one people to seize the uncultivated lands of another" (325), but Bonwick seems to recognize that many opinions went the other way.

The pressure on Arthur is obvious even in that January 1828 letter where he stated his preference for keeping the Aborigines on a piece of land in their own country. He wants to attempt justice, he says, "notwithstanding the clamour and urgent appeals which are now made to me for the adoption of harsh measures ..." In an earlier letter in September 1825, Arthur wrote to an official in the Colonial Office, "it is utterly impossible to do one's duty and give satisfaction to the settlers and merchants ... [they] instantly declare their determination to call a public meeting and report home" (in Boyce, "Fantasy", 35). One of the things they were demanding was more land. "Over a million acres were granted in a frenzy of land handouts to free settlers between 1824 and 1831, yet no concern was expressed about the obvious implications of this for the Indigenous people" (Boyce, *Van Diemen's Land*, 261). "By the conclusion of this process, almost all the native grasslands of the island ... were in private ownership" (Boyce, "Fantasy", 54). As Boyce points out, these limited grassland plains were "the key to profit and power for the large land-owners, and the key to survival itself for most Aborigines" (55). The Aborigines were being dispossessed and squeezed to death at the same time that the Governor was calling for humane treatment. It is not surprising if the settlers did not take the call to humanity too seriously, besides the fact that

most of them did not feel humanely inclined towards the natives.

This was not unique to Tasmania. It was more or less the same in all the countries colonized by Europe. Greed ruled. In New Zealand, despite Governor George Grey's humanitarian concerns for the natives and his knowledge of what prejudice was doing to the Aborigines (see Ch.2, §2, and Ch. 3, §3), "Through Grey's agency, they [the Maori] lost six million acres of the disputed North Island and all South Island's thirty million acres" (Peires, 50), and when he was governor in South Africa, Grey also carried out "unprovoked invasion and land theft on an unprecedented scale" against the Xhosa (324).

Please recall that Malthus, who is remembered in history as a harsh theorist of economics and politics, described the extermination of natives as "driving [them] into a corner where they must starve" (*Essay*, 1826 6th edition, 1.7). He said that the right to do this "will be questioned in a moral view" and that it is "a thought that could not be admitted for a moment." Napier (102) made the same points about ten years later. The Select Committee in its 1837 *Report* also recognized that there is more than one way of killing a people and dispossession is one of them: "From very large tracts we have, it appears, succeeded in eradicating them; and though from some parts their ejection has not been so apparently violent as from others, it has been equally complete, through our taking possession of their hunting-grounds, whereby we have despoiled them of the means of existence" (*Report*, 6). In the journal entry for November 23, 1829, referred to above, Robinson wrote, "What can be more unjust, what so inhumanly selfish, as to aim at a monopoly of their only means of subsistence [kangaroos] ... Are not these animals the exclusive property of the aborigines?" (P, F, 88).

Perhaps most shocking of all, as Boyce reminds us (*Van Diemen's Land*, 313), is the fact that Arthur was still considering the welfare of the settlers above all even when the few natives who had been removed to Flinders Island were dying at a high rate and perilously close to extinction. Robinson's record of this can be found in Plomley's collection of his journals. In his journal entry for December 18, 1838, he reported what Arthur said to him when he brought up again the possibility that these remaining natives might be moved back to their home:

he could not consent to a portion of the aborigines being brought to VDL ... as for the entire being brought to the main [island] he was sure the [white] inhabitants would raise such a hue and cry against it that could not be withstood. He had frequently spoken to respectable settlers, and he might say humane, and they would

not hear of it. He said if the natives were brought, property would immediately fall in value very considerably and from the ingratitude of a large proportion of the inhabitants I could wish they had the pleasure. [P, W, 608]

(Those last words, "from the ingratitude ...", seem to be Robinson's acerbic comment on what he wished for the settlers.) This is typical of Arthur's whole career. Humane intentions grandly announced but no muscle applied to carry them out. Just like Secretary Murray as I observed earlier: Loudly sympathizing with the natives, like the Walrus, and then, also like the Walrus, making sure those of the largest size would be sorted out and consumed. Settler complaints simply could not be withstood. They were the real muscle, "the encroaching tide" that Merivale and others said could not be resisted. (I pointed out in the second chapter, §§2, 6, other examples of people, like Thomas Jefferson, who described white invasion as a tide or current.)

John West captured one aspect of this well in his 1852 history: "... the success of humane suggestions depended on the doubtful concurrence of ignorant cotters and wandering shepherds" (2.8). I believe it depended on a lot more than that. It also needed the concurrence of many leading thinkers and intellectuals of the day. As noted above, Bannister said public support "can only be excited by men of letters" (*Colonization*, 225)---and by the concurrence of the government itself which should not have been squeezing the Aborigines out of their place in the world, but should have been finding a way to keep room for the natives and promoting a sharing of the land. The anti-humanitarian forces, which cut through every person involved in this, were more consistent in their demands for more and more land; they were much stronger than the few outspoken voices in opposition.

So strong were the anti-humanitarian forces that even the humanitarians had to concede their victories and the on-going tide of colonialism. No one wanted to go backwards and give stolen land back. To repeat a quote I offered just a few pages back from the Select Committee *Report* in 1837, "Whatever may have been the injustice of this encroachment, there is no reason to suppose that either justice or humanity would now be consulted by receding from it" (*Report*, 83). Humanity demanded that we keep going forward, but with the responsibility, added the *Report*, of making sure that natives would get the protection of British law and the benefits of Christian missionary activity bringing them into Christian civilization. Even a great humanitarian like Bannister was forced to the conclusion that colonial expansion could not be stopped, it could only be regulated. He made this point in almost all his books (see previously, Ch. 3, §3).

The humanitarian voices in the government were inconsistent and weak in what it was demanding from the settlers because it accepted the basic premise of colonialism. It accepted the encroachment. Everyone knew what was going on. Thus Bannister: "an inclination to dispossess them of their lands by any means has been very prevalent amongst most of the white settlers in all Indian countries" (*Remarks*, 28). If left to their own devices, colonists would become "ungoverned and frequently marauding adventurers" which is why Bannister recommended regulation with justice instead of outright banning of further colonization (*Humane* [1840], 35). To this mix of inhumane premises and some concern for justice, add the great silence from the majority. Every silent voice put another nail in the coffin of humanitarian ideals.

As for Darwin, he admiringly quoted his grandfather for expressing exactly this high standard that silence contributes to the crime. In his biographical sketch of Erasmus Darwin, Charles Darwin quoted some lines from *Loves of the Plants* (Canto III) on slavery which end with these words (lines 457-58): "... hear this truth sublime,/ He, who allows oppression, shares the crime" (quoted in "Preliminary", 47; Erasmus Darwin had the last line in all caps, but Charles puts it in lower case). He described his grandfather as a liberal, even a radical, and knew he did not follow in his footsteps. But it is interesting that he appreciated someone who advanced this ideal.

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One question that has been raised by historians is whether all these atrocities amounted to genocide. There has been considerable controversy about this in the last decades of the 20th and first decades of the 21st century, especially in Australia (see Chapter 4 in Bain Attwood's *Telling the Truth about Aboriginal History*). The phrase 'a conscious policy of genocide', comparable to the Holocaust, has come up. Many historians deny there was such a conscious plan on the part of the government and/or the settlers in European colonial history.

The government can *possibly* be absolved of intentional genocide. I say that with great reservations because two other possibilities have to be borne in mind: 1) it had such intentions, but kept them hidden, even from itself (there is such a thing as lying to oneself), and 2) it carried out policies which it knew were having disastrous results and did nothing to reverse course, which makes the question of explicit intent somewhat moot.

The government orders Bonwick collected are instructive. Although Arthur did issue an order in 1826 authorizing settlers to take forceful action against the Aborigines, to pursue them, and to join themselves to the military if necessary and "treat them [the Aborigines] as open enemies" (see Bonwick,

Last, 73-75, for the full text), and even though I do not believe this order was ever rescinded (in fact, an order of Sept. 9, 1830 called for settlers to volunteer and even required convicts to report for use in 'regular roving parties'; Bonwick, 133-36; and at 141, Arthur adds that magistrates were instructed to "exercise discretion about entrusting some [convicts] with fire-arms"), subsequent orders from the Governor emphasized humane treatment of the natives (80, 90, 120). Almost all the orders (not only Arthur's) have a curious mixture of exhorting humane treatment and calling for action against the natives. Divining one overriding intention in all this may be beside the point.

The word 'forbearance' often comes up in government orders which Bonwick cited (53, 54, 73, 80), which includes the 1826 proclamation (the citations on 53 and 54 are from an 1819 order from Governor Sorell, Arthur's predecessor). One could question how much was done to achieve this. Arthur's step of arming some of the convicts ("the very best conducted prisoners") to deal with the Aborigines belies any emphasis on "the utmost tenderness and humanity" towards them, as the September 9 order puts it (135-36), though he believed that the objection that there was a "danger ... from putting arms into the hands of prisoners ... proved totally groundless" (Boyce, in Manne, 39).

To repeat something I offered in Chapter 10, §3: In a paper submitted as part of his March 1837 testimony before the House Select Committee, Saxe Bannister recommended: "Transportation of convicts to be stopped immediately ... All experience proves that the evils of convict transportation exceed the amount of its advantages to any class of people. But the evils it inflicts upon the native families and tribes are incomparably greater than any others, and utterly uncompensated by any advantages to such natives" (*Report*, "Minutes", 20, #10).

For the government, the primary goal was always to get rid of the natives, as in this humane plea from an order of February 25, 1830: "... the Government has invariably pressed upon the community generally, as well as upon the parties employed, more particularly, that every degree of humanity should be exercised toward the aboriginal natives, which is consistent with the overruling necessity of expelling them from the settled districts" (Bonwick, 120). It was not humanity that was considered "the overruling necessity." Humanitarianism always came second. In a Notice issued August 20, 1830, the Government stated that its object in a previous order was "to expel them [hostile natives] with every degree of humanity that was practicable, when all efforts for their conciliation had proved abortive" (Bonwick, 188). Expelling them comes first. When does patience for practicable humaneness run out?

There is this sense that violent measures were never that far out of reach as the next order demonstrates. On August 27 of the same year, the Governor requests that measures to protect the settlers "should be tempered with humanity, and that no measure of conciliation should be spared; but it was not intended to relax the most strenuous exertions to repel and to drive from the settled country those Natives who ... perpetrate murders, and ... plunder and destroy the property of the inhabitants" (132). The natives had to be strenuously expelled because the great necessity here was to parcel out the land to the invaders.

At best, there is an inconsistency in these orders and at worst, there is a hidden intention here. Any settlers who concluded that they were being given permission to get rid of the natives, but to be careful, or even quiet, as to how they go about it, could not be said to have been wildly wrong in their conclusion. This was government giving permission to settlers to do much harm, but hedging how this was presented.

Conquest necessarily entails protecting the lives of the individuals who constitute the conquerors. It is always clear that any humanitarianism towards the enemy will be tacked on as secondary. One has to ask why is it that whenever humane considerations are brought up, there is this constant reminder that expelling the natives and protecting white lives comes first. Was there any danger that humanity and tenderness towards the natives would go too far? Did the authorities fear that too many people might actually hearken to these words and there would be a diminution of white domination? It seems that government felt the need to repeatedly reassure the white settlers that humanitarianism would never be taken too far. Some people at the time realized that calls for humane treatment would be in vain. In Bonwick's account, Mr. Carr, a manager for the Van Diemen's Land Company, commented in 1832 (or 1830?) on one such order: "The Proclamation as usual will enjoin the sparing the defenceless, and that the people are not to be killed, but taken alive; and the way in which it will be acted upon will be by *killing nine for one taken*" (Bonwick, *Last*, 187; his emphasis). (If this Carr is Edward Curr, chief agent for the company, it should be noted that he led reprisals against the Aborigines and believed that violence with a tribe would end only when it was exterminated; see Boyce, *Van Diemen's Land*, 203-04; Bonwick's quote would then indicate that Carr or Curr was using sarcasm to defend the idea that they all really approved of violence, so we don't have to take humanitarian calls too seriously.)

One could say that the government gave enough lip service to humanitarian ideals to absolve itself of the charge of intentional genocide, and I am still not sure this actually absolves them. That would be not true for the

settlers who were more openly genocidal in intent---that is, if we can take certain articles in colonial newspapers as sometimes speaking for them and if we look at other private sources testifying to the same. Above, I quoted the *Colonial Times* that if the natives cannot be totally removed (which could be called a form of ethnic cleansing), then "they will be hunted down like wild beasts, and destroyed!" (Dec. 1, 1826). Bonwick gives an even more obvious example of genocide in colonial thinking from New Zealand, September 10, 1868 in the *Wellington Independent*:

What are we to do with these bloodthirsty rebels? These men must be shown no mercy. They should be treated as wild beasts, hunted down, and slain. Modern history teaches us that irreclaimable savages, who rendered colonization impossible ... have been, in the interests of society, exterminated. It does not matter what means are employed, so long as the work is done effectually. Head-money, blood-money, killing by contract---any of these means may be adopted. [*Last*, 77]

That is about as explicit a call for genocide as one can get. Bonwick even adds that such has been the policy in many European conflicts, including how the English have treated "the wild Irish".

A very similar comment was recorded in 1839 by George Robinson when he was Chief Protector of Aborigines in Australia. He ran into a party of settlers and conversed with them without revealing his identity: "they openly asserted they would not hesitate to *get rid* of the blacks provided they could do it without detection ... it was the most cruel that could be -- they wished them to be burnt -- hunted -- drowned -- speared -- by any means they wished them got rid of" (in Reynolds, *Indelible*, 94; emphasis in original). (Note how often "by any means" comes up.) Several years earlier, in October 1830, Robinson wrote to his wife from Van Diemen's Land, "Nothing is heard of at Launceston but extirpating the original inhabitants. Cowardly beings! I question the bravery of those persons engaged in the crusade against the natives ... against that people whose land we have usurped and upon whom we have heaped every kind of misery. God deliver them" (P, F, 435).

There is also evidence from more letters, diaries, and other records of the time that people were very aware that extermination was the goal for many. I previously quoted (Ch. 10, §3) a young man in Australia writing to his mother in 1844, asking her opinion of the argument two of his friends made that "it is morally right for a Christian Nation to extirpate savages from their native soil in order that it may be peopled with a more intelligent and civilized race of human beings" (in Reynolds, *Whispering*, 13-14). Then there is the following

from Rosalie Hare's account of her visit to the Van Diemen's Land Company early in 1828. After recounting the robberies, arson, and mischief committed by the natives, she continues, "But we are not to suppose the Europeans in their turn take no revenge. We have to lament that our own countrymen consider the massacre of these people an honour... there were several accounts of considerable numbers of natives having been shot by them [the Company's men], they wishing to extirpate them entirely if possible" (Boyce, "Fantasy", 26; also in Boyce, *Van Diemen's Land*, 203).

In 1830, G.T.W.B. Boyes, a government official in Van Diemen's Land, wrote in his diary, "Our papers were filled weekly with the atrocities of the Blacks and it has become apparent that unless means were devised for making them prisoners ... in some well adapted part of this country, or, otherwise exterminating the race, that the country must be abandoned ..." (ibid., "Fantasy", 56-57). He seems to be saying that they would rather take the Aborigines prisoners, otherwise they would have to exterminate them, but he is revealing that extermination was never far from their minds. This was always a possibility, and one very close to hand, for the white conquerors. They would have no hesitation pursuing it, if they found it necessary. Many settlers were bent on this anyway. My impression is that if one culled all the sources, one would find an abundance of evidence that many settlers intended genocide and many more acquiesced in this. (Reynolds provides many more examples of how much talk there was of extermination; see *Indelible*, 52-56, for evidence from Van Diemen's Land; and 92-97 for mainland Australia.)

Of all the information I have come across, one of the most startling pieces is that in South Africa, in the wars against the Xhosa in the early 1850s, "Settler volunteers marched about with the word 'Extermination' written on their hats" (Peires, 25). In March 1851, Governor Harry Smith "had issued furious orders to the settlers to 'rise *en masse* ... to destroy and exterminate these most barbarous and treacherous savages'" and also wrote to an old friend, "Extermination is now the only word and principle to guide us" (12). This is an example of both settlers and government calling for genocide.

(Jews in the 19th and early 20th centuries faced a similar problem. Catholic writers and officials would sometimes suggest that exterminating all the Jews was one solution to their Jewish problem, but would usually add that as Christians, they could not do that; see Kertzer, 144, 257 for two examples. Why did they even think of it, if it was so unchristian? That they could hold up extermination as a possible solution is what shocks us now and all the more so, when we realize that the very thought of extermination was not at all shocking to them. It easily came to mind. European imperialist thinking about Aborigines helped make this state of consciousness seem normal. The official

position of the Church was against violence, but it often encouraged negative depictions of Jews, did little to discourage any ensuing violence, and in fact blamed Jews themselves for the violence perpetrated on them; see Kertzer, 147-48, 175, 212, 250, 271-75, 324 n23. Almost every page in Kertzer's book is testimony to these points. In the colonies, Aborigines too were blamed for the troubles that beset them; the violence of Aborigines, which never reached the levels of white violence and which was usually provoked, was used as a justification for their extermination.)

In addition to the colonial newspapers sometimes explicitly calling for complete extermination, the government orders repeatedly calling for humane treatment demonstrates that violence was reaching inhumane levels. While the governments, in Britain and in the colonies, never officially went along with excessive violence, they were certainly conscious of what settlers wanted. One of Secretary George Murray's replies to Governor Arthur, quoted above, shows that he was aware settlers might find extermination a desirable end, though he rejects it as inhumane. The question is how much was done to stop it. Very little, it seems.

Were all those statements about the inhumanity of extermination self-serving, intended to make the government look good in the eyes of humanitarians, present and future, or were they supposed to have real teeth to them? If a government is aware that actions such as massacres and removal or dispossession are having a certain effect (i.e., tending to lead to total destruction) and nothing or little is done to change these actions, and if they are further aware that taking away the land of the natives is depriving them of their means of living, does this not amount to genocide? Recall John Pedder's complaint that removal would result in these people pining away and Major Thomas Ryan warning that the conditions at Wybalenna will lead to the consequence that "the race of Tasmania, like the last of the Mohicans will pine away and be extinct in a quarter of a century" (in Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 228).

When nothing is done, just as nothing was done to make the Aborigines legal witnesses in courts which might have led to some convictions of murder (and reduced the need for violent retaliation by Aborigines) and nothing was done to make sure that the natives would continue to be able to share hunting rights with the white settlers, perhaps it is not a conscious policy of genocide on the part of the government, but some term, such as negligent genocide, is surely appropriate. Grossly negligent might even be more accurate. It is not the way the Nazis attempted genocide, but that is not the only kind. In Australia today, many Aborigines feel that 'genocide' and 'holocaust' are appropriate terms for their historical experience (Attwood, 105). I find it hard

to see how any rational person could disagree with that. (Please recall that Bonwick mentioned that "Mr. Protector Robinson always maintained that the legal disqualification to give evidence was not only the cause of many outrages, but accelerated the destruction of Blacks by the Whites" [Last, 328]. It was obvious to some people at the time that depriving the Aborigines of the right to give legal testimony could be a contributing factor towards genocide.)

I know full well that all of us, myself very much included, have a difficult time agreeing that negligent genocide of Aborigines is a rational viewpoint. We have to force ourselves to admit there is sense in this point of view. Because, if we are honest, isn't there still a feeling that all this was inevitable and, in the long run, all to the good? It was a part of the progress of the world, and by the world, we mean western civilization. The advancement of the west with all its wonderful technology was somehow necessary and absolutely a blessing, even if some evil had to be committed along the way. Like the construction workers who are killed when dangerous work is being done to build bridges, skyscrapers, tunnels. It's dangerous work, and it's part of the price of progress. Somebody has to die---so let it be the working class or the Aborigines---and in the case of cultural conflict, sometimes in large numbers.

Somewhere in my memory, I can dredge up a recollection that Thomas Jefferson or one of the founders of the United States said to the American Indians: Why wouldn't you want to leave the forest and join us in our cities and live in brick houses and fine clothing? Isn't our way of life much better than yours? Why would you want to live half naked in the woods, when you could have the material comforts of our way of life? We represent advancement and a better world. Isn't that a fact?

Maybe he didn't say all that, but that captures the essence that I remember. And don't we all agree with it? We need a lot of things, like precious metals, to give us all this progress, so we have to invade other countries from time to time. It's a *law* of life. We are not intruders. Life demands it. Genocide or near-genocide is just an unfortunate side-effect in creating a better world. It sounds terrible when stated so bluntly, but really, who doesn't believe that this is true?

No one wants to see genocide or massacres or other forms of violence intentionally carried out, but as long as it is accidental, we're okay with it, as long as we keep moving ahead into a technologically exquisite future, we're okay, just as long as it is natural and inevitable, it's all fine, and we will exercise our humane feelings and mourn the melancholy fate of primitive peoples, but we're basically okay with it. (As to that word 'melancholy', it appeared again in an 1959 essay by John La Nauze who called the Australian Aboriginal "a melancholy anthropological footnote" to history; quoted in

Attwood, 16.)

And if these thoughts make anyone uncomfortable, then suppressing this history of murder and outrage will become part of what we mean by progress. It is progress to erase the terrible deeds that were in part, and it was only in part, responsible for getting us where we are today. There is a lot more to progress than committing some form of genocide, but there it is, it happened, and because it happened, it has to disappear as part of our historical consciousness. We will play around with words like 'genocide' and 'murder', redefine them, reevaluate them, to make the past disappear. Or we will use euphemisms. Euphemisms are a lovely part of progress. So polished.

It reminds me of a scene in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. A cloning machine has malfunctioned and is producing millions of copies of one pretty girl, when only six were needed for an escort service. No one can figure out how to reverse this without committing murder of all the excess clones. "This problem taxed the minds of the cloning engineers, then of the priests, then of the letters page of the Sidereal Record Straightener, and finally of the lawyers who experimented vainly with ways of redefining murder, re-evaluating it and in the end even respelling it in the hope that no one would notice" (Adams, 214). Today, we still hope that no one will notice that Darwin and other mainstream scientists promoted ideas of evolutionary progress and considered extermination of indigenous peoples to be part of that progress. As Darwin said in his 1862 letter to Kingsley, "how much the Human race, viewed as a unit, will have risen in rank" when the lower races are all gone (CCD 10.72). We don't even want to notice that we still believe it. But that's progress.

~ 8 ~

I would have been content to let matters rest there. I think it is pretty obvious that some form of genocide took place under colonialism. I still think it is obvious. But about a week after I wrote the last few pages, I discovered three very critical responses to a Guenter Lewy article. The responses were by Tony Barta, Norbert Finzsch, and David Stannard in the *Journal of Genocide Research* (Mar. 2008), and then I read Lewy's article itself in the previous issue (Dec. 2007), "Can There Be Genocide without the Intent to Commit Genocide?" Lewy is concerned to limit the use of the word genocide to cases where specific intent to do so can be established. For him, this is primarily a legal question based on international legal standards, though at the very end of his article, he also says this gives us historical truth. It is that last remark that I find disturbing and inaccurate.

Early on in his article, Lewy categorically states that the international legal

definition's emphasis on intentionality "also means that there can be no such thing as 'negligent genocide'" (Lewy, "Can There Be Genocide", 662). That seems to me painfully wrong. Intention, like most human qualities, is a complicated thing. As Barta points out, human beings are very good at disguising their intentions, not only for others but from themselves as well (Barta, "Responses", 112). There are often undeclared assumptions in their actions (ibid.). There is also "a less deliberate and calculating kind of intention" (113). There are degrees of intention. Sometimes a person or group of persons can take actions which may fall below the level of specific intent, but still indicate a level of knowingness which at least amounts to a level of gross negligence or perverse indifference to resulting harm.

I would hope that the evidence presented in this book, which is not even a full treatment of colonialism, demonstrates how much people at the time talked, and talked *constantly*, about the extermination of natives. Not only did a plethora of humanists complain about what was being done to Aborigines around the world, but many of the perpetrators had no problem admitting that extermination was their goal *or* an acceptable consequence of their actions. Darwin did it too, as we have seen. What else does all this contemporary conversation about total destruction of a people mean if not that genocide was a policy, official or unofficial?

Lewy has been accused of wanting to limit the definition of genocide so that it applies only to the Holocaust. I think that is a little unfair as he seems to acknowledge other genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia. But Lewy makes it clear that he does not consider European colonialism genocidal. This is a little bizarre and I am basing this on his own standards and descriptions. Near the end of his article, he discusses what happened to the American Indian which he does not think was genocide, yet he is not so ignorant as to deny the brutalities they suffered and here in part is his description of what was done to Indians: "... volunteer militias and vigilante groups at times displayed a flagrantly exterminatory mentality and murdered large numbers of Indians" (670). What else is an "exterminatory mentality" but genocide? On the next page, he gives an example of the massacre of one Indian village which he acknowledges could be considered an act of genocide. He thinks however that this can be kept small and does not implicate the national government (670). Yet when many such acts occur and over long periods of time with little effort to put a stop to it, why should not the circle of blame be widened?

This exterminatory mentality towards American Indians was more widespread than Lewy would perhaps like to admit to himself. In 1881, Helen Hunt wrote in *A Century of Dishonor*, "The word 'extermination' is as ready on the frontiersman's tongue to-day as it was a hundred years ago" (308). She

also pointed out, "early in our history was the ingenious plan evolved of first maddening the Indians into war, and then falling upon them with exterminating punishment" (40). Note the use of the word 'plan'. Is this not evidence of intentional genocide? (That is, if further investigation bears out Hunt's insight. She names Arthur St. Clair, governor of the territory northwest of the Ohio River, as being the first official to concoct this strategy.) This certainly sounds like genocide. And she quotes from the report of one agent to the Indians (in 1853?) who characterized "the cruel necessity of our present policy---to wit, extinction" in terms I think we could call genocidal and who called the "system of removals ... the legalized murder of a whole nation. It is expensive, vicious, and inhuman, and producing these consequences, and these alone" (78). It is the *whole nation* which the agent says is being murdered. Does not this contemporary identification of a *policy* of extinction and a *system* of removals leading to murder indicate intent? All I want to establish here is that the idea of, though not the term, genocide was on the minds of observers and investigators of that time. It is not a judgment made from the hindsight of a hundred years later.

Some even explicitly identified intention as being present. In the previous chapter (§7), I mentioned that Georg Gerland thought some of the extermination was intentional: "the intention ... to exterminate them" (*der Absicht ... sie auszurotten*; Gerland, 116) and "intentionally slaughters and exterminates" (*absichtlich mordet und ausrottet*; 117). His testimony is important for two reasons. One is that this is a contemporary observation. It is not made from the vantage point of a century later. And two, he does not offer this as a big accusation. These statements are dropped matter-of-factly, as if he expected his readers would consider them common, uncontroversial knowledge. Gerland did not think he was saying anything unusual. It was part of the landscape of his world.

Disguised intentions were probably more common and here is an example that I think illustrates what Barta meant by this. It comes from a letter of James Backhouse. He and his fellow Quaker missionary George Walker traveled through Tasmania, Australia, and South Africa. In Australia, Backhouse recounts that they met a medical man who "stated his opinion to be, that the blacks were a people who deserved no consideration; but whom it would be best to destroy whenever they were troublesome! To this sentiment we replied, that neither Christianity, justice, nor even common sense admitted such an idea ... that persons who voluntarily settled in a country which the British government had usurped, ought, with that government, to labour for the civilization of the native inhabitants, and to bear patiently the inconveniences resulting from their customs, until these could be changed"

(*Extracts*, Fifth Part, 29; Dec. 31, 1837). That "whenever they were troublesome" in reality turned into "always troublesome"---their very existence was trouble---because they stood in the way of western progress. The qualification "whenever" barely cloaked a desire to exterminate the whole population. Backhouse "fear[ed] many entertain the same sentiments with this individual" and said they heard "something similar" from another person just the day before. Recall too that Secretary George Murray could refer to possible actions which had as their "secret object the extinction of the native race" (Bischoff, 233). That too is just another way of saying disguised intention. It was a recognized category.

Admittedly, it is not always easy to prove intention, hence the impulse behind disguising them to increase the level of difficulty of proof. But the Nazi case of leaving behind detailed documentary evidence is not the only way intention can be measured. Nazism sets up a false standard of what can be used to properly infer intention, even if it is not always with complete certainty.

Lewy states that "one cannot punish a social system, violent and unjust as it may be" ("Can There Be Genocide", 665). That is simply not historical truth. Actually, I might even agree that punishment may indeed be out of the question, but only if I can also point out that one can at least indict a social system, especially when many of its official representatives and unofficial spokespeople have left behind plenty of evidence of their desire to get rid of an unwanted, backward (in their judgment) indigenous culture. Enough people expressed their intentions to eradicate entire groups and plenty of others approved or went silently along with it. Much of this quibbling about genocide on Lewy's part is uncannily reminiscent of Douglas Adams's satirical depiction in *Hitchhiker's* of "the lawyers who experimented vainly with ways of redefining murder, re-evaluating it and in the end even respelling it in the hope that no one would notice" (Adams, 214)---that is, no one would notice that murder in fact was being committed.

Is it really necessary to go over the evidence already presented of how much awareness there was of exterminating the natives and the causes of it, as understood at the time by so many European writers? Repeating some selected bits, along with some new ones, might help. I brought this up again a few pages back but it's worth quoting for the third or fourth time Malthus's remark that "driving [them] into a corner where they must starve" is extermination (*Essay*, 6th edition, 1.7). This was in 1826. Malthus was a very well-read and important writer for politicians. Probably most government officials were familiar with his work. Here he is reminding everyone, as did other writers (like Charles Napier), that dispossession of the natives deprives

them of their food sources and will lead to annihilation. Did colonists or the government intend for them to starve? Not really relevant. They did intend to dispossess them and they knew or believed that extermination was the inevitable consequence. As Napier said, "when we oblige them to concentrate their population, they must perish ..." (102; perish or become civilized, but as Napier pointed out, they cannot change their mode of life quickly enough to avoid that "numbers must die" by starvation). Malthus added that this was an immoral and unthinkable action. He was laying down a big hint: Stop starving them to death. So too Napier.

The 1837 *Report* of the House Select Committee on Aborigines drove home the same point in the first few pages. First, they included the dispossession of natives in a list with the problem of a dwindling population: "Too often, their territory has been usurped; their property seized; their numbers diminished; their character debased; the spread of civilization impeded" (Report, 5). Then they note that while the amount of violence used to eradicate natives has varied quite a bit, "their ejection ... has been equally complete, through our taking possession of their hunting-grounds, whereby we have despoiled them of the means of existence" (6). In Newfoundland, they relate, we took their hunting and fishing grounds, "while we took no trouble to indemnify them, so that doubtless many of them perished by famine," and they conclude their account of what happened in this colony with "it may therefore be stated that we have exterminated the natives" (ibid.). Hence, my arguments are not anachronistic. They were made at the time.

Backhouse provides more evidence of the same. In a letter to Major General Richard Bourke, Governor of New South Wales, on the matter of white colonists dispossessing the natives of their land and destroying the means of their subsistence, kangaroos and emus, as well as "introduc[ing] profligate habits among the blacks," Backhouse wrote that the consequence is that the whites "are rapidly wasting their race, some tribes of which have already become extinct, and others are on the verge of extermination" (*Extracts*, Fifth Part, 50; pages misnumbered, so that there are two page 50; April 25, 1837). He concluded by appealing to the Governor to do justice, or else "the unmitigated guilt before God, of their extermination, be fixed irremediably upon the British nation and its Australian descendants."

Dispossession also had other consequences. It led to depression which in turn led to certain death. Kotzebue spelled this out in 1821. The converted Indians were not doing too well in their new way of life and "die very soon in their new faith, as they cannot accustom themselves to the different mode of life" (1.283). He also explained that Christian missionaries "destroy whole nations" (1.353)---so we are talking about total destruction, and depression

seems to have been part of that process. (Barta notes that genocide was a part of a "larger historical process" in "Responses", 115; dispossession, as I am sure he would agree, was obviously a key component in that process). It's true that Kotzebue also says "the Christians and heathens reciprocally try to exterminate each other" (1.280), but that has to be read in the context of what was happening. The heathens were not traveling overseas to destroy Europeans. Their destruction was aimed at repelling the invader. They were patriotically defending their homeland, as Darling, Bonwick, and so many others recognized in the Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land. The really unjust extermination that was taking place was strictly being carried out by only one party, the invaders.

The insight that dispossession led to depressed spirits which helped to bring about the death of so many natives was offered by many observers. As we saw, Darwin made a point of it (*Descent*, 214-20). He repeatedly cited 'changed conditions', i.e., dispossession, as a primary cause of extinction of natives, though he brings up 'depression of spirits' only once, preferring to cite a mysterious lessened fertility more often. Others honestly gave depression a more prominent place than did Darwin. Dispossession and depression were so inextricably bound together in the 19th century European mind that in deliberately causing one, they knew they were not innocently bringing about the other.

Bonwick comes very close to saying that depression causes disease, expressing the relationship by noting that it predisposes people to illness. He quotes a missionary who said that civilization "has thrown them [the Blacks] back into a sort of despair." Bonwick continues:

They are oppressed by our weight, and sink under the burden. This leads them to drink, as affording them a relief from their sense of abasement. This renders families unfruitful. *This lowers the nervous tone, predisposing to disease, and arresting the progress of recovery.* [*Last*, 342; emphasis added]

With this kind of knowledge, one cannot say that they unknowingly brought Aborigines misery and death.

Here is Bonwick relating in his own words what the captain of a ship who transported one of the last tribes of Van Diemen's Land to the Bass Straits told him: "it was pitiable to witness their distress. Their moaning was sad indeed. They appeared to feel themselves forsaken and helpless, and abandoned themselves to despair" (*Last*, 230). The immediate cause of their distress was seasickness, but the captain seems to have realized that losing their home greatly exacerbated their condition. Bonwick then recounts that he himself

had seen the Aborigine children who were separated from their parents and placed in the Orphan School near Hobart Town (to civilize them). "Most of them struck me as being sickly and depressed, and I wondered not at the terrible mortality that had thinned their numbers" (231). This connection between despondency and death carrying off so many natives had become almost a truism for those who paid attention to the consequences of colonialism.

Further on, Bonwick writes, "No means existed for the arrest of the terrible *home sickness* which was carrying off so many of the Natives" (245; his emphasis). John West in his 1852 three volume history of Tasmania also considered homesickness a major cause of death (2.74, text and note where he references a doctor who said that "a desire to return to their own country" produces a stomach disease). After mentioning that they were often "deeply melancholy" gazing at their homeland in the distance, West states, "They suffered much from mental irritation: when taken with disease, they often refused sustenance, and died in delirium" (2.74).

Bonwick too rolls up depression, disease, and death into one ball of wax. He tells us that on surveying the sterility of their new home, the natives were "uttering melancholy moans, and, with arms hanging beside them, trembling with convulsive feeling ... With their health suffering from chills, rheumatism and consumption diminished their numbers, and thus added force to their forebodings that they were taken there *to die*" (*Last*, 247; his emphasis). Nearer the end of his book, Bonwick quotes another writer, Mr. Brace, who referred to Europeans as a "grasping race" and noted "the effect on the spirits or temperament which the contrast of a different and more fortunate people causes" (390). Bonwick follows this with his own comment: "The iron entered into the souls of these sensitive men [the Tasmanians]. They sank under the burden of the thought." This comment is followed by more thoughts on heart sickness and home sickness.

Recall from the discussion in Chapter 6 (§5), a related point from Gerland who maintained that in both the case of culture shock and disease, it was not these factors alone that decimated native populations but these factors combined with the hostility, arrogance, and hatred of the invaders that produced devastating consequences. Disease and hostility are more deadly than disease alone, as are cultural upheaval and hostility. So too depression and disease.

If they did not always understand depression as causing disease, they certainly believed the two together were a more lethal combination than disease alone. What they saw was that deep despair exacerbated illness, making it more deadly. In their view, dispossession, which was indeed

intentional, caused death in two ways: It deprived Aborigines of their food sources and it knocked the spiritual wind out of them, leaving them defenseless under the onslaught of disease. Whether depression and death were understood as cause and effect or just bound together in an intricate web of factors, they knew that dispossession and exile were increasing despair and the mortality rate. Bonwick provided this remark from an unnamed source: "*Progress is a taking word, and civilization, like a cardinal's red hat, covers a multitude of sins and crimes. It is a tinkling cymbal, which drowns the noise of all other discordant things*" (342).

I stress this because so many investigators, including Lewy, who wish to defend European colonialism against the charge of genocide, always bring up that most native deaths were the result of diseases which were *unintentionally* brought to these countries. They want to separate disease from acts of genocide. It was unfortunate that so many got sick but this hardly makes for a case of genocide. Nobody wanted this to happen. Lewy argues that even if many colonists welcomed the large number of native deaths due to disease because it "made the land of the natives available to them", "this does not change the basic fact that the Europeans did not come to the New World in order to infect the Indians with deadly diseases" (669).

Ah, but there lies the rub. This is a classic case of taking a fact out of context of other facts it is connected to. What they did want, and wanted most definitely, was to take away all the land of the indigenous people and to destroy a so-called inferior culture. Even a humanitarian like Herman Merivale thought that the "Euthanasia of savage communities" was doable and inevitable. This caused great desperation to native peoples and this in turn weakened their resistance to disease. (Merivale even quotes Sir Richard Bourke, writing to Lord Glenelg in 1837 concerning New Zealand natives who could see that their own population was decreasing while the English were increasing and this "produced among them a very general unhappiness and indifference to life;" in Merivale, 2.204.) They knew they were weakening the natives' resistance to disease and they went right on doing it. Even if modern science were to establish one day that there is no relationship between depression and susceptibility to disease, it would not affect my argument in the slightest. The point is that in the 19th century they *did believe* in such a relationship, so as far as they were concerned the despair brought about by dispossession was indeed facilitating the work of disease. They knew or believed this and still kept going and used disease to extend their goal of *complete* displacement and takeover, or as we might put it, genocide. Recognition and persistence, as Roger Smith has called it (whom I will quote below).

We should be perfectly clear about what dispossession meant: Europeans wanted *everything*. The European did not say to the Aborigines that we want a nice piece of coastal property or a forest or a vast amount of agricultural or grazing land. The European attitude was: We want the whole damn thing. The entire continent. How many acres you got? A million? A billion? Ten billion? We want it all and we are willing to kill for it. This was disheartening to Aborigines, to say the least. It was almost unimaginable, it was greed on a scale beyond what we usually mean by scales. And it was quite literally sickening. (Even George Robinson, who was trying to save the Aborigines from overt violence, expected and received land from the government for his noble efforts. What land did he get? Land that originally belonged to the natives.)

Maybe one could say disease was at times useful to hide European intentions, although they really did not try to do that much hiding. If they did sometimes cover up, then, as Tony Barta has reminded us, human beings are very good at disguising their intentions, but that does not mean they are not there. Disease offered a convenient excuse or misdirection (and still does) to divert attention from the real intentions. If some scholars then use the factor of disease to aid the concealment, it is our job to reverse the tendency to darkness and shed a little light on events.

Also, as another quick reminder: Even if diseases were unintentionally brought to these new countries, the same cannot be said of the failure to provide medical help. Saxe Bannister had pointed out that the whole question of medical aid to the natives had been much neglected and required further examination (*Colonization*, 262). He considered it a serious defect in the *Report* of the House Select Committee that it did go into the question of medical aid to the natives (259) and he railed against the failure to take "ordinary precautions" against the spread of disease (260-61). Merivale had called for "time [to] be given him [the native] to become fortified against the virulence of epidemic diseases" (2.208). That patience was never forthcoming.

Lewy and others are a little too cavalier in claiming that the deaths that followed disease were entirely unintentional. They are overlooking the entire context of other facts, such as the failure to provide medical help and to take precautions ("some steps [which] might easily be taken to check these notorious evils," as Bannister put it in *Colonization*, 260-61), the intention to dispossess natives of everything which was causing depression which in turn increased the lethal effect of disease, and the number of years and decades disease was allowed to work its devastation. The introduction of disease in, say, the first five years of invasion might be unintentional, but continuing to

import lethal disease over many decades is no longer unknowing.

Disease was not intentionally used to further the cause of colonization? It did not look that way to a contemporary observer like Bannister. Commenting on the situation of Aborigines in New South Wales, Bannister wrote, "instead of medical aid being imparted to them, our imported diseases were spread abroad without any precautions, as if it was our purpose to depopulate their country for our own advantage" (*Humane* [1840], viii). That 'as if' seems to identify a hidden intention. Such a failure (both to provide medical aid and to take precautions) in the first few years could be called unintended. But when this is repeated over many decades, to call it unintentional is deceptive and downright ludicrous.

It is not that Lewy does not recognize that some genocide took place in the 19th century. He does. He just wants to limit it to isolated acts of massacre where a specific intent to wipe out a whole village is in evidence. But when there was knowledge that one's actions such as dispossession and bringing disease were leading to widespread deaths, Lewy cannot eliminate genocide as a plausible conclusion to apply to circumstances that go beyond this or that massacre. When the New Zealand Company states in a report that if the only consideration were the welfare of the savages, then we should just leave them alone (Heartfield, 130; quoted in Ch. 3, §8), one cannot argue that benevolence was the intention of the colonizers and that any harm was just an unfortunate, unintended result. They knew their colonizing was not beneficial to the Aboriginal population. They said so again and again. When a New Zealand newspaper, quoted by Bonwick (see above), calls for killing all the natives by any and all means, one cannot argue that the "exterminatory mentality", as Lewy calls it, was limited to a few vigilantes.

Examples of such blistering honesty can probably be found in every British and European colony. When the openly and frequently acknowledged extermination is often ornamented with melancholy reflections over the fate of the natives, one cannot fall back on the claim that the melancholy shows they did not intend genocide. The melancholy may be sincere, but it can just as easily be a sign that the intended genocide has been effectively covered up. It is a tinkling cymbal in the words of Bonwick's unnamed source. It is absurd and offensive to take self-serving statements at face value. Melancholy might indicate guilt in that it serves as relief from guilt. But it does it in a way that still leaves much suppressed.

If anyone is wondering whether amidst all this moaning about the evils of civilization---Bonwick observes that so much of what we call civilization is of a *pseudo* character, creating a vicious circle, as one writer he quotes put it, so that we end up traveling in historical circles with no real advance (*Last*, 343)--

-did anyone actually suggest any solutions, the answer is yes. Bonwick like others pointed out that it would have been a wiser policy to allow natives to continue with their own culture and to honor their ways as much as we possibly could instead of indulging our contempt for them (343-44). If we had to displace their culture with ours, we should have done so much more gradually, which oddly enough is exactly what natural selection would have suggested in the first place. We took, Bonwick notes, thousands of years to get where we are, yet we expected natives of other countries to get there overnight (344). Europeans emphasized the benevolence of civilization when in reality it was nothing but a selfish desire to benefit our own economy (361). The solution would have been to go slower and share more. Napier stressed that we should approach the natives always peacefully, always "by a very gradual intercourse," and by considering what is of interest and "extremely profitable and pleasant to *them*" (Napier, 103, and 105-07; his emphasis). Gerland noted how disastrous for the natives was the pressure to change quickly. I am not sure if he specifically suggested that Europe should bring in its civilization more gradually, but it is certainly implied in his analysis.

Nor should we forget Saxe Bannister's recognition that the natives needed more breathing-time and Merivale's plea "if time can be given him to become fortified against the virulence of epidemic diseases" (see Ch. 6, §5, for both). Bannister was well-known to officials in the Colonial Office (one of whom accused him of suffering from mental aberration) and Merivale would later work in that Office, so I doubt that the suggestion of giving natives more time was unknown to officials. Whatever the innocence of the original circumstances that produced disease, ignoring the advice of all these contemporaries was intentional. Colonists and imperial policymakers deliberately turned their backs on the possibility of reducing the harm from disease (whether by taking measures to hinder it, or providing more medical aid, or proceeding more slowly to allow natives time to adapt to western diseases, or slacking off from the intense greed to take everything the natives had, thus giving them real hope that not all was lost).

The defenders of imperialism always portray the rush to conquer and to civilize as exuberant, well-meaning, and naive, and therefore, unintentionally causing harm. Harm was never the main point, they say. But the rush to "civilize"---to dominate and to expropriate---while it is presented as an innocent force, was *intentionally rushed* and they did know that the speed of their conquests had consequences which were not merely unintended. There are degrees of intention as I said a few pages back. Imperialism plowing ahead at top-speed is one such degree.

Yet I will allow that maybe it wasn't always intentional genocide. Some of

it was just thoughtless and reckless. That is why we should also have recourse to the same categories we use for homicide---depraved indifference, negligent homicide, criminal negligence, grossly negligent, reckless or wanton disregard, reckless endangerment, wanton recklessness, callous disregard, etc. (Finzsch also brings up some of these in his response to Lewy, in Barta, "Responses", 120-21.) At the very least, there can be such things as grossly negligent genocide and genocide by depraved indifference. Some form of genocide did occur and the exact wording or description may not matter too much. The real point is to be honest about what the evidence says the colonizers were doing and wanted. There was too much explicit talk of extermination to say it was entirely unintended. (Recall the example of settlers in South Africa writing the word 'extermination' on their hats.) Those humanitarians who called for public shame over this were right.

I hope it is clear that this is not about making judgments in hindsight. The contemporaries of Darwin and Darwin himself knew what dispossession was doing, and they knew how careless they were with the lives of Aborigines. While James Bonwick had a high regard for George Robinson for risking his life to bring in the natives to save them from destruction at the hands of white settlers, he had a much lower opinion of the way he handled the natives in exile. Too much emphasis on acquiring the superficial elements of the Christian religion, not enough attention to their health and physical well-being and countering the effects of displacement. Bonwick favorably quoted an unnamed writer in 1838 who said that the care of the natives at Flinders Island "gratifies superficial examination," but that "it must be a place of extensive *ennui* to them: as moral agents now, they are lower than when they were savages, and they die, I fear, the faster for this kindness" (*Last*, 256). Bonwick noted with irony that Robinson thought his mission was mostly successful except for the high mortality rate (255). "Alas! it is the story of the Frenchman's horse, that died just when he had acquired the power of living without eating" (*ibid.*).

Bonwick's comment is more apt than we realize. Consider again Darwin's "Wherever the European has trod, death seems to pursue the aboriginal" (*Narrative*, 520; *Voyage*, 375). The young Darwin presented this resulting widespread death as a great mystery, though the older Darwin tried to look at some of the causes, however inadequately. For most humanitarian Europeans, it was no mystery at all. Dispossession was the primary cause of death (just as the Walrus and the Carpenter dispossess the oysters of their beach and their lives in Lewis Carroll's poem). Defending the fatal consequences of this as somehow innocent by claiming that colonial settlers and officials did not intend for them to die is like arguing that if these people cannot survive

without food and the comforts of their homeland, it is not our fault; if they cannot adapt to a new way of life, it is not our fault (this last being not so much an invalid argument as a hypocritical one). And do recall that in 1781, in *Plain Facts*, Samuel Wharton pointed out the absurdity of this argument: if God had intended it to be right for Christians to deprive heathens of their land, then "he would have so formed the latter, as to enable them *to subsist without food*" (Wharton, 8; his emphasis).

Assuming Bonwick was correct in assessing Robinson's failure (and he probably was; recall the military officer Thomas Ryan, quoted in Lyndall Ryan's book, who thought conditions at Flinders Island were so bad that it was obvious this was extermination), what would you call this? It is not intentional genocide as Robinson was clearly concerned to save them at least from violent extermination, but some degree of negligence or indifference or recklessness seems a sound judgment of what happened. A sound judgment, I say, and not a judgment in hindsight. A voice from the past, Bonwick's voice again, thought so too: "such indifference and recklessness among the civilized," he said (*Last*, 380) in commenting on the disappearance of tribe after tribe after tribe and nation after nation.

There is a comparison to be made between emancipation of slaves and the treatment of natives under colonialism. The true test of humanitarianism is what was done *after* slaves were freed and *after* natives were "subdued." As many overlooked the racism facing former slaves, so people like Robinson overlooked what was owed the natives who were brought in. The failure to seek justice *after* colonialism and emancipation were established is the real measure of the failure of humanitarianism at the time---though the deeper failure here belongs to the larger society which would not let the humanitarians achieve their goals.

I don't want to give the impression that everyone at the time understood that the primary cause of the troubles of the Aborigines and their impending demise, as everyone thought, was the unholy trinity of dispossession, greed, and depression (which facilitated the work of disease), brought about through a combination of negligence, indifference, and intention. Only a handful saw this clearly and often only with intermittent clarity. Most continued to debate the causes and they are still debated. The usual causes that are discussed include: the outright violence of Europeans, the vices of civilization (primarily intoxicating liquors and prostitution), disease as an impersonal force, the infertility of the women, and the inferiority of native culture. But it just so happens that depression is connected to all of these as either cause or effect.

Then there was the Big Cause cited by so many commentators of the time:

Providence, or the will of God. The secular version of this is that Nature has decreed that you will degenerate from a higher state of civilization which you once occupied to a lower and you will continue to degenerate until you have disappeared altogether. How depressing is that? When a people come to believe---or, just as bad, to hear that others believed---that God or Nature wants to erase you and your culture from the face of the earth, that is a hard blow to endure. Providence, God, or Nature were misdirections or euphemisms that so many were only too happy to use. These were concepts used to cover up the reality of a depression that was being caused by invading Europeans. (The more general problem, as Fabian, *Out of*, 186, points out, is that European explorers did not stop to think "that their own presence and gaze invaded the lives of Africans." Europeans assumed too easily that they were making objective observations of native life, even as their invasion was changing these people. Their gaze of pessimism had a deteriorating impact on native life.)

While some understood the devastating significance of depression, for many others it was the elephant in the room that they did not want to talk about. As large a factor as depression was in the lives of natives (they were faced with white people who wanted *everything* and would unhesitatingly kill for it), it was often hidden from the Europeans by talking around it, and even this talk (about Providence) could be bleak and depressing, which was precisely the effect they were going for. To put it another way: Europeans did very little to inspire hope in Aborigines. All their talk, even their euphemisms, was phenomenally depressing. I don't think this was an accident. (Bannister, *Humane* [1840], viii, connected a belief in the dispensation of Providence to complacency over the disappearance of native people; such complacency would also reinforce despair.)

Russell McGregor believes that the doomed race theory became more popular with Europeans as their pessimism in Aboriginal abilities increased, when efforts to improve their lot failed (McGregor, 13, 18). Some of his evidence for this is not very convincing. One writer, Barron Field, in 1825 mentioned that they had made "for more than thirty years ... the most persevering attempts" to settle them into the civilized European arts of life (quoted at 11). Really? More than thirty years? That is a persevering effort? It sounds more like a minimal effort to be abandoned as soon as it suited the colonizers. Their pessimism was not deeply earned. It came cheap, too easy, too facile, too ready to fit in with their consuming greed. Like a man who steals hundreds of thousands of dollars from someone, then makes an effort to pay back five dollars every other week, and after six months, gives up and claims he tried to do the right thing. Bonwick was more to the point when he

noted the absurdity of trying to quickly bring Aborigines to a point that had taken Europe thousands of years to reach (*Last*, 344).

More truthful still was that 1622 report from a Virginia colony, quoted at length by Saxe Bannister and which I referred to earlier (near the end of §4 in this chapter). The colonists stated in effect that accomplishing anything by peaceful means takes too long, while war is so much easier: "Because the way of conquering them is much more easy than of civilizing them by fair means ... a conquest may be of many and at once; but civility is in particular and slow, the effect of long time and great industry" (Bannister, *Colonization*, 51). Their conclusion was to attack ("victory may be gained by many ways: by force, by surprise, by famine ... [etc.]") and get it over with. Almost from the very beginning of colonialism, there was an awareness that a genuine civilizing process takes a long time, but violence achieves results more quickly---this also gives the lie to any notion that disease was entirely devoid of bad intentions; disease was just another tool like famine. The settlers from the earliest days knew what they wanted and were bent on getting it quickly.

It is noteworthy that efforts to civilize Aborigines did not include teaching them that there would be equal justice for white and black, so that Aborigines would not have to resort to violence to rectify wrongs. Civilization did not include allowing them to serve as witnesses in court. This so-called pessimism over the abilities of natives to adopt civilized ways was cheap in the extreme. McGregor acknowledges not this point about equal justice, but the more general point that criticisms were made at the time that the methods used to teach civilization were inadequate. Pessimism about Aboriginal capabilities was not justified, some argued, because the problem was not in the inferiority of natives, but in "defects in the methods employed" (McGregor, 12). Colonialists bulldozed their way from pessimism to a belief in total extermination as an inevitability. McGregor points out that their doomed race theory was not backed up by demographic data (16-17, 49-50).

A better explanation for the pessimism is pure greed. Our greed requires that all of you get out of the way. Our greed demands that we have no hope for your future because you cannot be a part of our future which is all-consuming.

As we saw at the end of Chapter 6, many 19th century writers, including Darwin, often said that mere contact between Aborigines and western civilization proved to be fatal to them (see McGregor, 50, 54, for some more examples; e.g., Ling Roth wrote, "The white man's civilisation proved scarcely less fatal than the white man's musket," 50). But it was not an abstract contact without content. There is no great mystery here. These same writers would admit that some of the contact was in the form of European

violence, but in their view, even when this overt violence was curbed, the inferior race was still doomed. Contact with a superior civilization did it. What they ignored was the sheer large-scale greed and acquisitiveness in this contact. It was not inferiority that brought about a decimated population. It was the greed that would not quit which spelled doom. Remember that both Montagu Hawtrey and Alfred Wallace pointed out that unrestrained competition would kill the natives. That is just another word for greed. Whether the greed is conscious and intentional or simply indifferent to the fate of others, it leads to genocide.

It is important to recognize that people were well aware of the problem of greed and other causes of the destruction of natives, and yet nothing was done to abate it. Napier in 1835 frequently brought up how *national wealth* (which he usually italicized) was being used to justify so many of our unjust practices at home and abroad. "... the false and stupid expression, '*national wealth*,' is nothing more than the accumulation of great fortunes ... great heaps of money in a few hands ... and the poorer and more miserable England must be" (33). As Napier was an important enough person to be offered the position of Governor in Southern Australia, some officials in the Colonial Office must have read his book. Hawtrey's remarks on competition were part of an official report to the New Zealand Association (later the New Zealand Company); at least some responsible officials were aware of his opinion. This might account for the New Zealand Company's acknowledgment that "if the advantage of the natives alone were consulted, it would be better perhaps that they should remain forever the savages they are" (quoted in Heartfield, 130).

Do not lose sight of the fact that some people like Napier blamed the *system* being carried out in the colonies, which "will end in war, and, consequently, in the extermination of a fine race of men" (Napier, 147); or, as he also put it, the incidents he recounted were not a matter of "isolated facts ... solitary crimes ... [but] specimens of a *practice!*" (95; his emphasis). (As did naval officer J.L. Stokes who felt compelled to confess that his countrymen "have sternly and systematically trampled on the fallen" in Tasmania; 2.464.) Napier does not clearly delineate what he means by this system, but he at least means (deducing this from the pages preceding 147) a collection of practices, including firing at unarmed natives, driving them from their haunts (i.e., dispossessing them), the assumption of superiority or might makes right, unjust executions, and failing to punish nefarious acts committed by soldiers and colonists. There is so much evidence that some of the causes of numerous, systematic fatalities of the natives were understood by prominent people in the colonial system---for all the good it did, because the overwhelming response was "Let it ride."

Roger Smith sees in colonialism a "pattern of pressure, recognition, and persistence" (in Wallimann, 23). The natives may have been pressured towards extinction by a variety of factors, and some like disease may have been unintended, but "With the recognition of the consequences of one's acts, however, the issue is changed: to persist is to intend the death of a people" (ibid.). I know that Henry Reynolds would not agree with this broader understanding of intention, but Reynolds himself quotes many writers of the time who expressed an awareness of how the Europeans were pushing the natives in Australia towards extinction (Ch. 9 of *Indelible*). "No-one doubted that colonisation itself was to blame, even if some of the causal links were wrapped in mystery," says Reynolds (144). No one had any doubts about it and, at the same time, they saw no reason to stop. Whether we call that intention or depraved indifference may just be splitting hairs.

That they kept up the pressure which would lead to extinction can be seen in one terribly illuminating example. Darwin and many observers of the time believed that the infertility of the women was a leading cause of the impending extinction of native tribes and that changed conditions of life, as Darwin frequently calls it in that section on the extinction of the races of man in Chapter 7 of *The Descent of Man*, was the chief cause of the infertility: "the most potent of all the causes [of population decrease] seems to be lessened fertility" (216) and "changed habits of life is a much more probable cause [of their small fertility]" (217). "Lessened fertility from changed conditions ... is still more interesting than their liability to ill-health and death; for even a slight degree of infertility, combined with those other causes ... would sooner or later lead to extinction" (218). Darwin also gives "the analogy of lower animals" (219) as another example of the reproductive system being affected by changed conditions of life (as in captivity).

'Changed conditions of life' is a euphemism for dispossession, as previously discussed. It can also be called stress. Recently, I saw a news report about a medical study which suggests that stress may have a negative impact on human fertility. Darwin and his fellow scientists did not need this modern report. They had more than an inkling that a radical change in normal life conditions (or, stress) could, and likely did, prevent births. Yet they made no recommendations to ease off these changes for natives, or ease into them, just as they made no recommendation for greater medical aid to the natives (and Darwin was so very sure that superior civilized people would rush to save a drowning person). They did not even think of or consider such a thing. They knew (or deeply believed) that their system of colonization was having a dispiriting effect on native peoples which was preventing the birth of children, as well as increasing their susceptibility to disease, and these Europeans went

right on messing with the reproductive capacities of the natives.

Just to bring in a later perspective, the UN Genocide Convention includes "Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group" as one element of genocide. Whether intention should be crucial to the definition is still up for debate. But I do believe we can say this: It was a hard-hearted attitude that continued to put stress on a people---dispossession without let-up---knowing full well that their family life would irrevocably suffer for it.

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Trying to define genocide precisely and limit its use are not necessarily helpful things to do. In a sense, what Lewy has done is redefine genocide so that certain cases of it vanish. I say redefine because, as Barta and Finzsch also point out, it was Raphaël Lemkin who coined the term genocide, and I do not believe he intended it to be limited to instances of explicit intention. While the inventor of a term may not get the last word, he should get the first word. Lemkin introduced the term in his 1944 book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. He made it clear that he did not want to limit genocide to "the immediate destruction of a nation" and to "mass killings of all members of a nation." "It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of *different actions* aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves" (emphasis added). If that does not sound enough like colonialism, he gets even closer to a description of the European adventure when he writes, "Genocide has two phases: one, destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group; the other, the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor" (all these quotes are from *Axis*, 79). We could substitute 'colonialism' for 'genocide' and that description would read just as true.

The fact that Lemkin did not specifically say anything about intention could be interpreted in two opposite ways. It could mean that he thought it was so obvious that intention was a part of this new term that it did not require any discussion. Or it could mean that it never occurred to him that intention was crucial to an understanding of genocide. Arguments can be made for both propositions. In the same quote above where he mentions *different actions*, he uses the words *plan* and *aiming at*. He calls genocide "a system designed to destroy nations according to a previously prepared plan" (*Axis*, 81) and refers to "measures *calculated* to decrease the birthrate of the national groups" (86; emphasis added). Language like this certainly suggests intent, but that is all it is, suggestive, not definite. Colonialism also involved planning which was aimed at establishing the civilization of the conqueror and getting rid of the national culture of the conquered. Any large scale

operation will always involve some planning and by implication some degree of intent. Lemkin is comfortable describing genocide in part as "a system of colonization" (83).

In fact, much in Lemkin's description of Nazi genocide could serve just as well for European colonialism. In Poland, "the purpose of the occupant was to shift the economic resources from the Polish national group to the German national group. Thus the Polish national group had to be impoverished and the German enriched. This was achieved primarily by confiscation of Polish property ..." (85). Make it *Australian* or *Tasmanian* instead of Polish and *British* instead of German, and that is a perfectly accurate statement of what happened in these and other British colonies. Equally relevant to colonial genocide is what Lemkin gleaned from Nazism---what he called "the whole problem of nations subjected to virtual imprisonment" (90) and "the fate of nations in prison" with its "inhumane and intolerable conditions" (94). That does not mean Nazism and colonialism produced exactly the same kinds of prisons. The conditions of prisons can vary quite a bit, some having more breathing room and flexibility than others. Lemkin recognized this too when he noted that *plans of genocide vary in "degree of intensity in each occupied country"* (81; emphasis added). It is so clear that when Lemkin explained this new concept of genocide---"to denote an old practice in its modern development" (79)---he intended it to have a much wider application than the Nazi kind.

What Lemkin was saying is that it is an age-old practice for one nation to take over another, making its members virtual prisoners, impoverishing them by confiscating economic resources for its own use, destroying the culture of the subjects, replacing it with its own, all leading to the elimination (gradual or quick) of the conquered through these practices and policies and more, including massacres, orchestrated to consistently have the effect of ultimate extermination, so that there is no mistake about who is dominant and who is history. The means may vary, the intensity may vary, but the humiliation, subjugation, and destruction unmistakably aim at totality. There is nothing in Lemkin's analysis that precludes the aim being carried out by a combination of conscious and unconscious strategies. (Recall from the third chapter that the Rev. Montagu Hawtrey pointed out in 1837 that the destruction of natives by European competition could happen without open cruelty and in such a way that "neither [party] ... might be conscious of the process.")

For a legal expert like Raphaël Lemkin, one would have expected intention to have been explicitly included in the definition of genocide, if he had thought that intention was all that important, other than the intention that is present whenever there is any sort of planning. But when Lemkin gets around

to discussing the definition of genocide, intention does not rear its head. He says the definition

should consist of two essential parts: in the first should be included every action infringing upon the life, liberty, health, corporal integrity, economic existence, and the honor of the inhabitants when committed because they belong to a national, religious, or racial group; and in the second, every policy aiming at the destruction or the aggrandizement of one of such groups to the prejudice or detriment of another. [*Axis*, 93]

Despite the presence of the word *aiming*, the focus here is on actions and their results, not intention. This was also true in his previous attempt to deal with this subject in a paper he submitted to an international legal conference in 1933. As he recounts in *Axis*, there he spoke of the crimes of *barbarity* and *vandalism*, which consist of "oppressive and destruction actions" and "malicious destruction" (*Axis*, 91); he did not include intention to kill everyone as part of it. *Barbarity* or *barbarism*, be it noted, was often used to describe colonialism.

It has been recognized that Lemkin's insights into genocide were broader than what international legal standards would do with it. In his introduction to Lemkin's *Axis*, William Schabas points out that the Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal said (in 1998 or 2001?), "The notion of genocide, as fashioned by Raphael Lemkin in 1944, covered all forms of destruction of a group as a distinct social entity." Schabas comments, "It accepted the fact that the international definition set out in the 1948 Convention was narrower than Lemkin's proposal" (xv). What legal institutions did with it is one thing. That should not be used to hamstring Lemkin's usage and invention of the term, which may be more useful in the study of history.

It was in his chapter on Tasmania, for his uncompleted book on the history of genocide, that Lemkin became even clearer that he did not envision intention as part of the definition. He blamed the genocide of the Tasmanians largely on "the cruelty and lack of understanding of human beings ... who in the end strove to protect them [the natives] and make them conform to the standard of an alien civilization, and killed them with misguided kindness" ("Tasmania", 179). The intentions may have been partly good (misguided kindness), but that does not change what their policies and actions (and selfishness, as he also says here) were leading to. His most consistent emphasis was always on *actions* that have the result of creating the dominance of one party to the destruction of the other. Lemkin recognized

that genocide could occur in different ways; it is, he said, "a composite of different acts of persecution and destruction" (*Axis*, 92) and varies in its "modalities, and degree of intensity in each occupied country" (81). But Lewy, like the lawyers in Douglas Adams's *Hitchhiker*, is seeking to change that so that no one will notice how often colonialism pressured Aboriginals into a desperate last gasp.

I don't really care if the word *genocide* becomes the established conclusion. I care more about acknowledging the evidence that leads to the (what I think is the right) conclusion. If someone admits that callous disregard for the welfare of Aborigines and excessive greed were primary causes of their near extermination, but adds that he still doesn't like using genocide to sum this up, then I say I rest my case. The labels we put on things sometimes comes down to a political thing. The evidence is far more important and, in this case, admitting that callous disregard and shameless greediness were ever-present factors in colonialism, and that they caused massive depopulation, is really the essential thing.

One reason so many scholars look for definitions and categories is because they want something like a mathematical formula that will churn out an answer for each case so that the formula will decide if something was or was not genocide, and then we can turn our brains off. We won't have to face the agony of each case, the formula will answer it for us. But there is nothing wrong with approaching each claimed genocide freshly and on its own merits. There is nothing wrong with a lack of finality. Do the thinking all over again each time we are faced with a catastrophe. Genocide is a serious enough subject. We owe it our best efforts to *not come up with a final answer* and let every voice have its say and tell its story, and we will have to listen to each one for the first time and not have it screened in advance by our definitions. That definitions are so often used by academics to screen out reality is one of the most awful things about scholarship gone wrong. We need to listen.

It matters. To listen afresh matters. It matters not how cold the case. The 19th century was not that long ago anyway. It is a century we have never left. We are just an extension of that century, of its values, hopes, and dreams. Lies about that time translate too easily into lies about our own. It matters that the descendants of the victims get to tell their truth for the record. It matters that we get the record substantially right. If life is precious, it matters.

Staying faithful to the evidence, all of it, is not an easy task, not for anyone. A case in point is Henry Reynolds. Reynolds was one of the first Australian scholars to correct the way Australian history was taught. He paid attention to the reality of colonialism and brought to light the violence and injustices committed against Aborigines. He has made it his business to tell

the truth about what happened, in book after book, some of which I have quoted from. Then in 2001, he published *An Indelible Stain?: The Question of Genocide in Australia's History*. He challenges the liberal use of 'genocide' as applied to this history. In mainland Australia, he does believe there were genocidal moments (Ch. 8). But in Tasmania, he does not think this is at all appropriate to describe what happened, or rather, his conclusion is that there is not enough evidence to decide whether genocide took place in Tasmania (Chaps. 4 and 5).

Reynolds is not someone who is capable of fooling himself into thinking that the violence was less violent than it really was. He knows that there were plenty of killings in Tasmania and that the population was decimated. He is just not willing to call it genocide. "As always," he acknowledges, "it depends on what is meant by genocide" (78). The *intention* to eliminate an entire people or tribe and participation by the *state* are crucial elements for him (e.g., 119). Disputes based on differing definitions are not very interesting. I am much more interested in the evidence one assembles and one ignores to make a case for or against genocide. As long as there is substantial agreement on the evidence, I have no problem with someone who wants to use different terminology. If there is any serious disagreement, it will be over the evidence. Reynolds is critical of the many writers who have too easily proclaimed that what happened in Tasmania was genocide. He considers that they have made this judgment without close attention to the facts (I agree with him on this). "Indeed, ignorance appears to encourage sweeping and definitive pronouncements" (50). With that in mind, let's see what Reynolds admits into the record for Tasmania and what he omits.

Among his admissions are these:

There was much talk of exterminating the natives. He gives many examples of this genocidal talk (52-56), some of which overlap with the ones I have given above. (He also does the same for mainland Australia, 92-97.) Even more, he realizes that this had become a perfectly acceptable way to talk about Aborigines: "What is certainly true is that prominent settlers felt no compunction about publicly expressing their genocidal desires and intentions and apparently had no concern about courting public disapproval or social ostracism by advocating extermination. They clearly felt no need to guard their tongue or modify their language" (71-72; cf. 94). This is certainly a powerful admission that one essential element of genocide was present. Reynolds has always been strong on recognizing the reality of what the evidence tells us. I would add that this constant talk of extermination almost ensures that less than every effort will be made to stop the killings. There will

be a considerable dragging of feet to reverse the murderous process.

John Stokes described this general, public mood in 1846: The great body of colonists "looked only to the necessity of protecting their property and their lives; and did not take into account the massacres [of natives], the cruelties of every description, which *had been at one time encouraged, or at least not condemned by the general voice*. The casuistry of the human heart, in most instances, concealed the true state of the case ..." and when the colonists "set about the hunting down and capture of the aborigines ... Government, with the best intentions, lent them every assistance in its power" (Stokes, 2.465; emphasis added). This last anticipates the next point.

The government had a role in this. As Reynolds says, "... the government itself played a major role in the most significant developments relating to the demographic disaster ... In the first period, many Aborigines must have been killed by British troops, official paramilitary roving parties or armed settlers encouraged by the government to defend themselves" (71). This puts another element in place. Further on, I will list the many ways government bore responsibility for what happened. The government created *a network of actions* that led inevitably in one direction.

European colonialism itself was another major factor in the disappearance of indigenous tribes. The imperial government would have liked to have blamed the problem on the settlers behaving in bad, violent ways, but, says Reynolds, "The tragic events in Tasmania in the 1820s had their genesis in the colonising venture itself" (72-73). "It is clear that Arthur was determined to defeat the Aborigines and secure the permanent expropriation of their land ..." (78). What he says in that last ellipsis I will discuss below.

This might seem too obvious to mention, but the death rate was very high and the reduction in the Aborigine population was drastic enough to qualify as genocidal in effect. 'Genocidal in effect' is an expression Reynolds uses (174). He knows the number of deaths were high enough in Tasmania to count as genocide (71, 84-85). Even if we ignore the first two decades of the 19th century, the indigenous population fell from roughly 1500 in 1824 to about 350 in 1831, and then on Flinders Island, they dropped from 220 in 1833 to 46 in 1847. What happened up to their relocation to Flinders, let alone what happened after, could be considered genocide in effect. Their numbers were drastically low by the time they got to the settlement at Wybalenna.

Rather than acknowledge that this is a strong pattern of evidence for genocide (and we will see the pattern grow when we get to the facts Reynolds

does not mention in his discussion of Tasmania in *Indelible*, though he does bring up some of them elsewhere in his writings), what Reynolds does is pick off each piece and argue that this does not amount to genocide (see immediately below). To be more precise, technically he reaches the conclusion that it is not possible to definitively answer the question of whether genocide occurred. He tries to leave it open. For example: "Whether Governor Arthur strayed over the unmarked border between warfare and genocide cannot be answered with any certainty" (78). But the overall tone and effect of Reynolds's arguments is to discount the idea that genocide can be applied to the events in Tasmania.

So how does Reynolds knock down each piece? He argues that the widespread talk of extermination does not count because it was not spoken or endorsed by government officials (he points out that the one official he does quote who favored extermination emphasized that he was speaking as a private individual and not in his capacity as the colony's solicitor-general; see 55-56). The colonizing and dispossession does not count because it amounts to a situation wherein "The imperial government sanctioned war but not genocide ..." (73). As for the government role, Reynolds repeatedly emphasizes that the government did not intend or order extermination and, in fact, frequently called for humane treatment and minimizing the bloodshed as much as possible, both in public proclamations and private communiqués to officers in the field. The full quote of the partial one I offered above under *European colonialism* is as follows: "It is clear that Arthur was determined to defeat the Aborigines and secure the permanent expropriation of their land, but there is little evidence to suggest that he wanted to reach beyond that objective and destroy the Tasmanian race in whole or in part" (78). But what does "permanent expropriation" lead to? What does it mean to say, in effect, "We want to take all your land and food sources, but we really do not intend for you to starve"? The absurdity of this, as noted above, was evident to Samuel Wharton in 1781. And it was just as obvious to John Locke in 1690.

It is possible to pick off the pieces of evidence one by one for any theory in any field. No theory can withstand that sort of isolation of every bit of data. I could undermine every legitimate scientific theory---the theory of evolution, of relativity, of planetary motions, all of them and more---by this method. There is no single piece of evidence in any inquiry that, when examined all by itself, cannot be explained in multiple ways. From one point of view, dispossession looks like war, from another genocide. A government proclamation of humanity could mean innocence or it could be a self-serving statement covering up an intention to do harm. Talk of extermination could be just blowing off steam or it could lead directly to lethal actions. The question

in any field of study is: What is the best explanation for the *pattern* of evidence we find?

Look at the evidence Reynolds omits from his discussion of Tasmania in *Indelible Stain?*, some of which is quite odd because he is well aware of this evidence:

- 1) the guilt that Arthur and Robinson felt for their participation in the ultimate destruction of the Tasmanians, which is not proof positive of genocide, but it does show that, despite other statements to the contrary, they knew they had not done enough; this omission is especially odd because in *Fate of a Free People*, throughout Chapter 5, and also 174-78, Reynolds pays close attention to their guilty feelings; yet this is completely absent from *Indelible* when he considers the case of genocide in Tasmania;
- 2) the kidnapping or forced removal of children is a feature of genocide which Reynolds acknowledges in *Indelible* in his discussion of events in mainland Australia, and it is found in the UN Genocide Convention, as he notes, but he never brings it up for Tasmania;
- 3) massacres can be one important means of achieving genocide, which Reynolds takes up for mainland Australia, and even Lewy, as we saw, admitted that a massacre can constitute genocide; yet Reynolds is silent about the massacres in those two chapters in *Indelible* which are devoted to Tasmania; he does briefly bring up massacres in Tasmania in *Fate*, 76-77, 79, 88, but he dismisses this by arguing that the numbers killed cannot be determined with any accuracy and that too many well-meaning writers have exaggerated the death toll from such violence; above, I noted that Lyndall Ryan pointed out that the Aborigines Committee took a lot of testimony about the massacres in Tasmania, though they did not include this in their final report; James Boyce believes that numerous massacres were the main reason for the decline in the Aborigine population from "1824 [when] most Aboriginal groups had a full demographic -- including the elderly and young children" to "early 1830 [when] there were no such groups surviving outside the west coast," only "small bands of warriors almost exclusively comprising fit and agile adults" remained (*Van Diemen's Land*, 197); also, in the above quote from John Stokes, a contemporary of the events in question, massacres are mentioned; and Bonwick related several.
- 4) the government did not do all it could to save Tasmanians (see

- below), which Reynolds avoids in favor of stressing the government's professed good intentions towards the natives;
- 5) the lack of prosecutions of white people for murder of natives is something Robinson considered as one of the causes of the destruction of the Aborigines of Tasmania (discussed previously), but Reynolds does not mention it, not even once;
 - 6) also left out is *dolus specialis*, that special animosity or malice for the Other, which is another important element of genocide, as Reynolds admits in *Indelible* (18); it comes up when he explores the nature of the massacres in mainland Australia (91, 122, 129); he just never thinks about its application to Tasmania.

The fact pattern grows larger.

Reynolds believes government involvement is crucial in making a case for genocide, and I would say the government almost always plays some role. Even in cases where the onus most probably falls on the settlers, as is likely the case for Tasmania and many other colonies, the government can still be seen to be making an important contribution in the following ways: 1) by failing to punish murderers of natives; 2) by generally failing to include natives in the legal system (as witnesses, jury members, or complainants) so that they cannot pursue justice in the courts; 3) by ignoring those well-intentioned white people who complained about injustices towards the natives and who were often told to mind their own business; 4) in certain cases, by agreeing to and then failing to honor treaties; 5) by setting a bad example of appropriating land without compensation, negotiation, or contract; by disrespecting their land and their homes, the government dehumanized the Aborigines; 6) by making repeated pleas in proclamations for humane treatment of natives; this caused more harm than good as they were not backed up by enforcement; hence, these pleas sent a message from the government that mere lip service to humanitarian ideals was all that was required (recall from earlier in this chapter Bonwick's quotation of a Mr. Carr [probably Edward Curr] stating that there will be the usual prohibitions against killing natives, which will produce the result that more natives will be killed than captured at a ratio of about nine to one); 7) by occasionally authorizing citizens to act as police or paramilitary parties; and 8) by giving recognition to orphan schools for abducted children, thus endorsing this practice.

As Napier so eloquently expressed it in 1835: "I do not think many evils exist, that cannot be traced *wholly*, and *home in all their bearings*, to some act of injustice in the government!" (Napier, 101; his emphases; cf. 44 where he

says that practicing good government will do more to prevent crime than any punishment). If I were to modify Napier's thought, it would only be to make it men of power that evils can be traced to, whether they are in or out of government. Napier adds that he is well aware that for this opinion and others he has given, his words will be treated with "ineffable contempt ... by men of science, and political economists." Saxe Bannister too blamed government more than the settlers: "the fault in the whole matter lies with the administration, not with the colonists" (*Colonization*; 246; cf. 245, where he blames the government for being an accomplice to ignorance and for failure to punish crimes against the natives; also, cf. 269-70).

The whole matter of controlling the legal system, which is a government responsibility, so that Aborigines are excluded from its benefits but are allowed to richly reap its punishments, is more important than most of us realize. Few truly comprehend how much additional pressure this puts on a people, who are severely discriminated against, to survive. Sebastian Haffner gives us a big insight into this in his memoir of living under the Nazis. (The memoir, describing events until 1933, was written in 1939 and sat in a drawer for sixty years. This is not a post-war hindsight.) He was well aware of how bad it was for Jews, losing their rights and jobs, so that just surviving became more and more difficult. Germans in general were affected too, which gave Haffner a basis for being able to feel sympathy. In one remarkable passage, he uses the word 'disappeared' over and over to describe what was happening in his daily world---the disappearance of harmless people, books, journals, newspapers, politicians, artists, political parties (Haffner, 194-96).

As for Jews, it was all headed in one direction. "No one would be really surprised if tomorrow all the Jews were to be arrested or ordered to commit suicide as a punishment for some trumped-up charge ... The streets would look the same as always" (171-72). In other words, ordering Jews to commit suicide would only have been the logical outcome of a process already begun. Such an order never came, but the point is that the events and atmosphere that led to the expectation of such an order of death constituted a genocide in progress. Even before arriving at the inevitable end, the law is complicit in extermination because it is complicit in the events leading up to it.

Reynolds's constant referencing of government statements of humane concerns and their proclaimed efforts to help the Aborigines is a little too naive. What he misses is that almost all the proclamations for humane treatment were qualified---calling for humanity *when practicable* and as long as it did not interfere with the primary goal of eliminating the threat posed by natives to the settlers (reviewed earlier in this chapter in §7; recall, e.g., the government statement "every degree of humanity ... consistent with the

overruling necessity of expelling them from the settled districts"). He also never considers that intentions could be hidden. Lewis Carroll characterized the civilizing mission ("To talk of many things" like shoes and ships and sealing wax, and cabbages and kings) as "play[ing] them such a trick" in "The Walrus and the Carpenter". If Carroll could see the trick in pretending to have good intentions, I doubt he was alone. Napier also talked quite a bit about how civilized people conceal their cruelties (Napier, 177-81.) Reynolds hardly ever asks whether a statement of good intentions could have been self-serving or meant to salve their consciences or intended to make them look good for posterity. How serious were these so-called good intentions? Did they make every effort as they claimed?

Reynolds takes most of these orders for humanitarian treatment and prohibiting excessive violence at face value. He often portrays government officials as helpless in the face of settler racism and violence (e.g., in his discussion of the many memos written by James Stephen, under-secretary in the Colonial Office, concerning mainland Australia; *Indelible*, 88-91). In his attributing most of the deaths on Flinders Island to disease, he believes, "The high death rate was due to factors largely beyond the control or understanding of the European staff" (84). He thinks of everything he can to exonerate government officials of blame. It is obvious that he *wants* very much to believe Governor Arthur when he claimed that "every act of kindness [was] manifested towards them" (quoted on 80). That kindness did not include returning them to their homeland or finding a better piece of land than Flinders Island or giving them the legal ability to pursue redress in the courts for crimes against them or offering the best medical treatment they could or slowing up colonization so that the natives could be gradually inured to disease.

I have a lot of sympathy for this argument of Reynolds. I too often feel that at least some of the efforts made by the government were indeed sincere, that it was overpowered by greedy settlers who would not stop until they got everything they wanted, and that sometimes they were genuinely distressed over native deaths (as Reynolds puts it, 84), which could be a sign that they never intended genocide. And yet when I think of the things the government *failed to do* (like giving the Aborigines some basic legal rights, including the ability to testify in court, pursuing criminal cases against especially violent colonists, and giving Aborigines space in their homeland), I have to wonder whether making every effort to help the natives is really an accurate description of government policy. (I earlier quoted from Robinson's journal where he noted that Governor Arthur was worried about falling white property values if the few remaining natives went back to the main island.) I

have to wonder whether the behavior of officials was not closer to that of the Walrus who deeply sympathized even as he sorted out those of the largest size and consumed them. (The Oysters in Carroll's poem do double-duty, I believe, as representing both Aborigines and the land with its natural resources.)

Compare government activities in the colonies to government actions when it really felt threatened by workers' strikes and demonstrations in England, in both urban and agricultural areas, or by a possible rebellion of blacks in Jamaica in 1865. In these situations, the government did not feel helpless, but took decisive action, the kind of action it never took against colonists whose inhumanity was getting out of control. In the summer of 1830, British farm laborers organized marches, threatened to destroy threshing machines and did so, set fire to barns and storehouses. It was called the Swing Rebellion. What was the government reaction? "Because local communities could not be trusted to return guilty verdicts, almost 2,000 people were tried by a Special Commission. The death sentence was ordered for 252, of whom 19 were executed; those whose sentences were commuted were among 481 rioters transported to Australia" (Holt, 40). That is what I would call making every effort to quell behavior the government did not like. This "brutal repression of its own 'stack-burning peasantry'" was carried out by an administration that "promoted parliamentary reform, new poor laws, education, and slavery abolition" (41).

(As to that last comment by Holt, noting that a liberal, reform Parliament carried out this repression, I must add that such ironies or even hypocrisies were not lost on some observers of the time. Charles Napier concluded his 1835 *Colonization* by pointing out with some bitterness that this great reform parliament, "our first reformed parliament", this "rigidly righteous" parliament as it was sometimes called, also "passed an act to seize, by force, a territory in Australia, as large as France and Spain; and calls this territory '*uninhabited*,' when it is well known to be *inhabited*! So that one of the last acts of this parliament was publicly to tell a lie; and to deprive an inoffensive race of people of their property, without giving them the slightest remuneration---so much for parliamentary TRUTH and JUSTICE!" [Napier, 213; his emphases].)

Swift and decisive is also how one could characterize Governor Eyre's response to the Morant Bay Rebellion which I discussed in Chapter 4. Though the final tally of government violence was "439 dead, hundreds flogged, and 1,000 houses burned" (Holt, 302) and though Eyre was severely criticized for this by a Royal Commission, the same Commission also exonerated him and praised Eyre for "the skill, promptitude, and vigour" with which he brought the insurrection to a "speedy termination" (Simmel, 70). Despite private

attempts to bring Eyre and other officers to trial, the threat that people felt from this revolt far outweighed any considerations of justice.

Why the quick, effective government action in these cases of the Swing and Morant Bay Rebellions? The answer is not hard to find. There was a threat or perceived threat to the wealth, property, and power of the upper classes. The actions of colonial settlers against Aborigines were no such threat. Even the potential extermination of Aborigines, however badly anyone felt about it, did not constitute a menace to the government or to society. Life would go on. The only threat anyone raised was Secretary George Murray's famous remark in 1830 that extermination would create "an indelible stain upon the character of the British government" (Bischoff, 23; quoted in full previously), and similar remarks by other officials and writers of the time.

Is the life of a nation really threatened in any way by a stain on its honor? Does anyone take that seriously? Is it a threat to wealth, property, power? A stain can be washed away or disguised or covered by a patch. It does not constitute any danger to a society, so it could be allowed to happen. No one was going to expend a lot of energy to reverse course just because of a stain to the country's honor. It is ridiculous to suggest that this consideration of character would supply a serious motivation to government officials to take action against white settlers who would resist all attempts to correct their behavior. These settlers believed that the land was theirs, given to them by God, and that the natives were the intruders. They would fight like hell to maintain this view, and the government did not believe it had anything to gain (except honor) by making the extraordinary effort it would take to combat that. However badly anyone may have felt about what was happening to the natives, the extermination of Aborigines was not a threat to wealth, property, or power. In a sense, the settlers were mainly responsible because they did the dirty work, but the government certainly did not have clean hands. Reynolds knows all this better than anyone. So why does he downplay the possibility that genocide occurred?

It is a peculiar argument he makes, given what he acknowledges and given some of the major facts he leaves out. It is an argument that comes down to this: Grant that colonization could not stop or draw back, grant that competition must never cease, grant that dispossession had to go on until the whole was gobbled up, grant that there would be no sharing of land, grant that Aborigines could not be given legal rights to sue or testify or file criminal complaints, grant that the stronger has the right to extirpate the weaker, grant that white lives must be protected first, and grant (let's not forget this) that white property values cannot be allowed to fall, then, yes, granting all this, the government did all it could to prevent genocide. Logic can lead us to some

wonderful results, n'est-ce pas?

So why does Reynolds shrink from applying the term genocide to Tasmania? His basic reason seems to be that he does not like the passive victimization this implies. It is "an entirely patronising view of the Aborigines as helpless but pathetic victims of the colonists' murderous impulses ..." and denies to them the capacity to be "effective adversaries of professional British soldiers who gave as good as they got" (*Indelible*, 77). This was also a major point in *Fate of a Free People* (77, 189) where he objected to the depiction of "Tasmanians as the ultimate victims" and ignoring "the adaptability and resourcefulness of the community, the continuing zest for life, the political passion which found expression in the 1846 petition [to Queen Victoria]" (189). For Reynolds, a war of equals is a view preferable to that of genocide.

Reynolds is right to insist on seeing how independent and spirited these people remained, how they fought every inch of the way and very effectively as guerilla fighters, and, even when everyone thought they were done for, the remaining group on Flinders Island sent that petition to the Queen, requesting that the government should live up to its side of the bargain in their negotiated settlement with Governor Arthur. Genocide makes them the ultimate victims and for Reynolds that is anathema. I accept Reynolds's point as a proper rebuke to my own tendency to emphasize victimhood and tragedy. All I can do is raise this question: Why cannot both be true?

During World War II, Jews fought as partisans against the Nazis; the Jewish military organization, the Irgun, was formed; a Jewish military unit fought with the Allies; and there was the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. These things should never be forgotten. But it is also true that six million Jews were murdered. That cannot be suppressed. Victimization is not the full truth, but neither is heroic resistance. If we tell history with either lie in it, we will just keep repeating and reliving past injustices in endless circles.

Reynolds may have other reasons as well. But I would have to guess at those. I could not say for sure what they may be. For example, he may feel that since the descendants of white colonists have adverse reactions to the word *genocide*, reconciliation would be easier to achieve if we dropped that term. If that is one of his reasons, he may have a point, but I am not a diplomat and have no skill at playing those games. What I cannot get out of my head is a scene from an HBO series called *The Wire*, created by David Simon. A police official in full dress uniform is at the podium explaining to a community group that the police won't be able to do much about the violence and drugs in their neighborhood. He can give them a lot of statistics to prove what a good job the police are doing, and they will continue to arrest people, but the police will not be able to do much about the fact that new criminals

will take the place of the ones arrested and the members of the community will still have to go in and out of their front doors in fear of the boys selling drugs on the corner. A very angry man in the audience stands up to ask, "So what's the answer?" The police official replies, "I'm not sure, but whatever it is, it can't be a lie."

Don't we all believe something like this? A lie won't cut it. Solutions based on lies won't be effective and will fall apart. It has to be the truth. That's the only thing that can help us. And we don't have to know in advance what it is. That's how strong our faith in the truth is. Whatever it is, the truth will act like a powerful medicinal balm once it is discovered. This is a powerful statement of faith. We want this to be true. In South Africa, they called it the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for a reason. The truth has to come first. Without it, there is no reconciliation. Max Pribilla, a German Jesuit, wrote in 1935 (remember the year, 1935! And in Germany!): "There are moments when, without any tangible utility, something has to be said for no other reason but that it is true. If it is not said, the moral order of the world suffers a blow that is harder to overcome than its violation by brute force" (quoted in Lewy, *Catholic Church*, 175). That is what I believe about history. The truth about what happened, yesterday or a couple of thousand years ago, must be told. Not to do so makes things so much worse, like when the cover-up of a crime creates more problems than the crime itself.

James Boyce makes a compelling argument for Tasmania similar to the one I made above about Jews during World War II (*Van Diemen's Land*, 196-202). The British did a very effective job at eliminating the Aborigines as full community groups with a complete age-range from the youngest to the oldest ("the physically vulnerable members of the community would have had little chance of survival," as Boyce, 202, says). The Aborigines could not protect the entire family unit with children and the aged. Massacres decimated the communities. But when the Tasmanians were reduced to bands of warriors made up of able-bodied adults, they did a great job as guerilla fighters whom the British could not so readily defeat. As Boyce sums it up, "... killing Aborigines in the first phase of the conflict was far easier than has been claimed. The roving parties' later failure is evidence of the difficulty of finding small groups of guerilla fighters, but no measure of the British capacity to kill larger clan groups" (201). Both heroism and victimization seem to have been true in the history of Aborigines in Van Diemen's Land.

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The ultimate goal is not to pin the label of genocide on western colonialism. If all we get out of the study of this history is that colonialists carried out a thing

called genocide, we will have learned nothing. The real goal is always to present the details accurately and to understand them. The sin is to bury evidence out of sight and out of mind. What disturbs me about those who would too quickly deny the reality of genocide and its various modes (from intentional to depravedly indifferent to negligent) is that their denial is based on being dishonest about the evidence. Recognizing grossly negligent genocide also means we will have to pay attention when new, current circumstances are slowly sliding in that direction.

Also, I don't want to lose sight of the reality that there can be a mixture of negligence and some intentionality. I find it hard to see how all intentionality can be denied in colonial mass destruction. One person can unintentionally kill another, but how can thousands of people be killed through the actions of many participants and how can this pattern of large-scale death continue over many decades, and yet somehow it was completely unintentional? What are we supposed to imagine? That two peoples wrestled each other for the land and it was an accident that one side was almost completely wiped out? (Genocide, as we use the word, does not have to mean actual total elimination. Jews were not completely eradicated by the Nazis, but we still call it genocide.) And if the consciously acknowledged goal of complete dispossession is successful, doesn't that mean the indigenous people won't have any food? If you make complete dispossession your goal, then isn't your goal also genocide?

There are cultural practices and attitudes that are so ingrained that people don't think about them. They don't consciously express these attitudes, but they certainly carry them out. Settlers controlled the entire legal system for their own advantage and to the detriment of the Aborigines. That's a fact. But they rarely expressed an intention to do so. "Frontiersmen and women did not often talk about sovereignty or jurisdiction, but they controlled both through institutions of local government" (Ford, 108). What are we supposed to conclude from the lack of explicit intention in New South Wales and Georgia (the subjects of Lisa Ford's book)? That settlers did not control the legal system? That control was an unintended consequence of actions that were otherwise completely innocent? Such conclusions would be nonsense. There is a disguised intention here at a bare minimum.

These colonists did not talk about taking control, they just did it. Certain things are like that. People just do it, they don't have to talk about it or openly plan it. Genocide sometimes fits into this mode. When it comes to killing, if a dominant group has not devised special means of killing people (as the Nazis did), then we would be unlikely to find documented evidence of declared intentions. There is no reason to talk about it. You just do it--by

dispossession, by squeezing the natives into unlivable conditions (with the destruction and/or monopolization of food and water sources), by shootings arranged to look like justifiable homicide, by provoking them and then retaliating with exterminating punishment (as Helen Hunt, 40, put it, which I quoted in the second chapter, §5), by legally rendering them as non-entities---none of this calls for explicit declarations. These things are just done because, as everyone at the time knows without conversation about it, they will lead to the desirable end of having a country that is native-free. The process is made to appear as *natural* as possible and that very naturalness is itself evidence of a deep, unspoken intention.

Tony Barta uses the expression "muddled consciousness" (in Walliman, 239). That is a good description of some aspects of colonial genocide. If that is the viewpoint of a modern scholar, do not forget that in 1835, Charles Napier addressed how much concealment was a characteristic of civilized cruelty and atrocities (Napier, 177-81). The civilized man is not much different than the savage, only his violence is "more concealed", "more secret" (177). We make "use of *reason* ... to reconcile crime to our conscience ... [and] the use of *speech* ... to conceal our thoughts!" (ibid.; Napier's emphases). We have polished our horrible habits, as Napier said earlier---"their manners are rude; ours are polished" (125). His contemporary and fellow military officer J. Lort Stokes pointed out that we cannot use the idea of "some all-powerful law" depopulating these countries to escape "moral responsibility on the part of the whites" (Stokes, 2.463). Using science and reason and law precisely for the purpose of disguising one's goals creates the muddled consciousness that Barta speaks of.

Darwin was at times less muddled. He could honestly declare in his *Beagle Diary* (181) that if you want all the land and the cattle and corn this land will produce, then you have to butcher all the Indians. Is there evidence of intent in his statement? Wasn't he speaking for many colonizers? One could debate how much of this was due to government policy, but many colonial settlers, observers, and intellectuals of the day knew what they wanted. Whether these are conclusive arguments for the question of intent, they should put those who claim there was no intentional genocide on the defensive.

The remark about butchering all the Indians was Darwin at his most openly brutal, his most savage. It is true that he eliminated this in the published edition of his diary, but he made the same point in the published version when he said that, with the removal of the original inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land, the country enjoyed "the great advantage of being free from a native population" (*Narrative*, 533). It is the same cruel idea of getting rid of everyone, only now more polished and presentable for a civilized audience.

He performs the same move in his later work, going from *Origin*, with its frank use of violent, savage metaphors to describe the struggle for existence, to *Descent* with its polished euphemisms. Has intention been removed from *Descent* or is it just more hidden? Or does it represent a muddled consciousness?

In sum, I think it is fair to say that the evidence supports that genocide occurred in Tasmania and in certain moments (genocidal moments, as Reynolds says) in mainland Australia. This genocide occurred either by intention or by acting with depraved indifference. Perhaps it was a combination of some of this happening intentionally and some of it through gross negligence. *What the evidence definitely does not support* is that no one ever intended anything bad and that extermination of the natives was *merely a by-product* of actions which did not plan or foresee that the natives would suffer. I cannot accept 'mere by-product' as an explanation of the facts we have. It is so far-fetched and nonsensical it stretches credulity to the breaking point.

But this conclusion does not say enough and really misses the point. Is genocide a judgment made by others or is it an experience that a people suffered through?

If establishing the validity of the charge of genocide has any value at all, it is to instill terrible honesty about the details, about what actually occurred, about the Aboriginal voices crying for justice and remembering what they lived through, about all those colonial voices that called for (in one way or another) euthanasia, annihilation, killing by any means, and honesty about the degrees of secrecy and openness with which some of these acts were carried out, about ripping children away from their parents, about ruthless greed for land, and more. For much of this knowledge we are indebted to Henry Reynolds. If the truth of genocide means anything, it means remembering who did what, and to whom, and for what reasons, knowing what they did and what the consequences were. It means remembering experiences inflicted and endured. Is genocide a judgment rendered by outsiders or an experience lived by a people? If it is the latter, then listen carefully, remember.

In September, 1878, I was inside my house at Cossack [in Australia], when I heard a native woman calling out to me to save her boy from a man who was kidnapping him. I went out, and saw the woman struggling with a white man for her boy. I did not interfere, as it was useless, knowing that the man's brother was a M.P., whom I had seen sign away numbers of kidnapped natives. The man tore the boy from his mother, and took him to a store

close by and got him assigned. The next day the boy was put on board a cutter in spite of the screams and struggles of his poor mother. I drew the attention of a constable to the case, and he said he could not interfere. I have seen hundreds of children brought into Cossack who have been torn away from their mothers, and yet it is said that where the British flag flies slavery cannot exist. [from John Gribble's diary, in Reynolds, *Whispering*, 164-65]

This example comes from a missionary, John Gribble, a sympathetic outsider, but listen to the voice of the mother, listen to her cries, her despair that no one could or would help. I should add that on another occasion when three settlers took off on a kidnapping expedition, Gribble said, "I reported the circumstance to the authorities, and was told to mind my own business" (166).

In these cases (children and adults were abducted into forced labor as pearl divers), you can see the collusion of private individuals and government, and the way a humanitarian who complains is rebuffed, or restrains his own efforts, because *the system in place* precludes his success and he knows that. In Tasmania, Stokes wrote, "They have sternly and systematically trampled on the fallen" (2.464). Napier too referred to it as a system several times (stressing that these are not "isolated facts ... solitary crimes ... [but] specimens of a *practice!*" [Napier, 95]), then at one point, he adds, "It is truly an abuse of the term to call it a '*system:*' it is a mass of knavery and blundering made up, like any other piece of moral patchwork, sometimes with the most dishonest, and sometimes with the most honest intentions" (47; his emphasis). Being a system and being muddled do not really contradict each other. It can be partly one and partly the other, a mish-mash as human beings are wont to do.

In every colony, it was a different patchwork. But the end of the line seems to have been the same in each case. A people relentlessly destroyed or forced to live on mere subsistence, leading to only one conclusion. This is genocide.

(I should add that Napier called it a system that leads to extermination of the natives; 147. Not isolated facts and crimes, as he said, but a practice; 95. He even quoted, on 174, one Cowper Rose who wrote in his *Four Years in Southern Africa*, "I hate the policy that turns the English soldier into the cold-blooded butcher of the unresisting native," and added "it is as stupid as it is cruel." Let us be clear that in 1835 at least one important, famous author, undoubtedly read by government officials who knew him and had offered him a job, and several others besides Napier, were repeatedly pointing out that a systematic policy was producing these results.)

Remember the mothers and the children. Remember the case described by

Alexander von Humboldt. The Indian woman, "this unhappy woman showed signs of the deepest despair. She attempted to take back to her family the children ... fled with them repeatedly ... and the missionary, after having caused her to be mercilessly beaten, took the cruel resolution of separating the mother from the two children" (*Personal Narrative*, 5.1.235). After one escape, she was whipped, then again escapes and finds her children and is separated from them again and sent away to another mission. "There she died, refusing all kind of nourishment, as the savages do in great calamities" (238).

We should remember these things the same way Darwin remembered slavery:

I thank God, I shall never again visit a slave-country. To this day, if I hear a distant scream, it recalls with painful vividness my feelings, when passing a house near Pernambuco, I heard the most pitiable moans, and could not but suspect that some poor slave was being tortured, yet knew that I was as powerless as a child even to remonstrate. I suspected that these moans were from a tortured slave, for I was told that this was the case in another instance. [*Voyage*, 430]

How similar this is to Gribble's account. How helpless both felt. Remember the mother in Gribble's story. Remember a system, remember the power and the powerlessness, and the cries. This is genocide.

Remember the words of Johannes Fabian: "Ultimately, anthropology's task is to give presence to those who, if at all, are spoken of only *in absentia*. I am now nowhere near to understanding all the implications of this ..." (*Memory*, 24).

And remember John Locke's words: "But the Conquered, or their Children, have no Court, no Arbitrator on Earth to appeal to. Then they may *appeal* [to heaven] ... and repeat their *Appeal*, till they recovered the native Right of their Ancestors ... If it be objected, this would cause endless trouble; I answer, No more than Justice does, where she lies open to all that appeal to her" (*Second Treatise*, §176).

We study history. We look for the most truthful telling of the details we can find. It makes for endless trouble. It is the closest we will ever come to heaven in this world.

The best description of genocide was given by William Shakespeare. "Hell is empty and all the devils are here," he wrote in *The Tempest* (I, ii, 215-16).

This is said by a sailor whose hair is on fire, just before he leaps from a burning ship into the sea. Ariel, a spirit, has done his work well. You don't have to go looking for devils, they will find you, they will deaf, dumb, and blind you, as a song has it, devils in your own backyard. Hell is empty. Every victim of genocide knows exactly how right Shakespeare was.

You have to remember these Shakespearian words were not said by a man calmly considering the state of his world. They were shrieked. And perhaps because Shakespeare knew we could not bear to hear the shriek, we don't hear these words from the man himself, but from the lips of the spirit who recounts the results of his handiwork. Shakespeare wanted us to use our imagination to hear the words screamed, or we could choose to suppress our hearing. The choice is ours. "Hell is empty" is the story of human cruelty, which may begin, as Lewis Carroll saw, in the most of pleasant of ways, "A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk"---along the briny beach or in the hallways of law and science.

~ 12 ~

Arguably, the most noteworthy thing about Darwin's writing on the Tasmanians, whether in his *Diary* or in *Descent*, is that it is impossible to tell from his remarks the extent of the injuries and injustices inflicted on the Aborigines. He holds back more than he reveals. For a scientist, that is a fault of some consequence. I don't see it as my task to make moral or political judgments about Darwin. I prefer to ask a more basic question from the narrow point of view of science: How could Darwin have run contrary to his own theory of natural selection to make all this violence seem palatable and natural by upholding the speedy extermination of natives as a natural process? One of the things that the 19th century should be remembered for is that it was a time when mainstream science was put into service for selfish and devious political ends. Science served the empire. And since, as I have said before, we are just a continuation of that century, one has to wonder how often this happens today.

Darwin certainly was aware of the rapidity of change in the colonies, far exceeding the extreme slowness of natural selection which he had always insisted on. Before *Origin* and before even the first two essays, he had a more honest sense of things. In the 1839 *Narrative*, he added this to his *Diary* comments about Tasmania: "Thirty years is a short period, in which to have banished the last aboriginal from his native island ... I do not know a more striking instance of the comparative rate of increase of a civilized over a savage people" (*Narrative*, 533; the first sentence but not the second was retained in *Journal*, 447, and none of this made it into *Voyage*). 'Striking

instance' is a kind of euphemism for unnatural. Since this was added after he had discovered natural selection, with its emphasis on the extremely slow appearance and disappearance of groups in the theater of life, I would have to guess that he realized how *unnatural* was the extermination of the Tasmanians, but it remained an unconscious realization. I don't know how significant it is that these thoughts gradually disappeared by the final *Voyage* (I tend to think it is; it is as if he gradually eliminated from his consciousness the fact of rapid conquest because it did not comport with natural selection). Judging from *Descent*, he gave up thinking about the European onslaught as unduly remarkable. It is another sign that natural selection had come to serve an imperialist agenda.

There is an interesting admission in *Descent* (217), in that section on the extinction of the races of man in Chapter 7: "One of my informants, Mr Coan, who was born on the [Hawaiian] islands, remarks that the natives have undergone a greater change in their habits of life in the course of fifty years than Englishman [*sic*?] during a thousand years." Yet no bells went off for him that this was at odds with natural selection and, therefore, that this was a cultural phenomenon. It was artificial selection. All he can do is conclude that changed habits lead to lessened fertility, which is one of the points he harps on in this section. And a diminishing population leads inevitably to extinction, as Darwin dispassionately tells us: "even a slight degree of infertility ... would sooner or later lead to extinction," as he says on the next page. Astoundingly, he can even note that "... infertility has coincided too closely with the arrival of the Europeans ..." (219), and still no bells go off for him that we have a cultural problem here.

In *Narrative* (520), he famously (i.e., to some of us) wrote, "Besides these several evident causes of destruction, there appears to be some more mysterious agency generally at work. Wherever the European has trod, death seems to pursue the aboriginal" (also in *Journal*, 435; *Voyage*, 375; shortly after this is the melancholy remark about the natives of New Zealand losing their land which will never get passed on to their children; and shortly before, he mentions the death of native children due to their wandering life but does not consider how much of this was a result of fleeing before parties of white men chasing them). The humanitarians of the age, like Georg Gerland, saw no mystery in it, as I pointed out previously.

There is only one place in *Origin* that I know of where Darwin speaks of rapid extinction: "... when by sudden immigration or by unusually rapid development, many species of a new group have taken possession of a new area, they will have exterminated in a correspondingly rapid manner many of the old inhabitants ..." (359). What was Darwin referring to? He does not

clearly spell it out. It is certainly an atypical remark because everywhere else he emphasizes how slow extermination is. This comment appears rather odd and exceptional. I think he was probably referring to cases where men had transported life forms, intentionally or accidentally, to other regions. Just two pages prior (357), he does refer to such cases of extermination through "man's agency". If so, then this resembles artificial selection more than natural selection because of the interference of man. Artificial selection is rapid compared to the natural kind.

I don't think 'artificial' should be limited to the activity of breeding. It should be used whenever humans interfere with natural selection. Or we could invent a new term for humans transporting animals and vegetation to new lands, such as 'inadvertent selection' or 'imperial selection', but natural it ain't. Darwin himself actually employs 'unconscious selection' to describe something similar (*Origin*, 58, 62). In *Variation* (2.255-62), Darwin discusses unconscious selection, which is like methodical selection but unintentional, at greater length. Interestingly, he also discusses the ways in which natural selection sometimes interferes with man's selection of domestic species. As he sums it up, "Natural selection often checks man's comparatively feeble and capricious attempts at improvement" (2.297). I raise this because it is quite possible that rebellion by natives could be viewed as an example of natural selection reasserting itself against Europe's efforts at capricious, imperial selection. Darwin always assumed that natural selection primarily favors the dominant races. But when a smaller race tries to check aggression of the stronger, that may be an even truer example of natural selection in action.

All I ask is that people *think* about these things and not assume they know all about natural selection and not assume that science is perfect. Science serving the powerful is quite possibly a more common phenomenon than objective science (if this exists at all). Do not worship professional science and academic opinion. Think it through for yourself. Genuine science (if we could ever get there) does not want to be worshipped. It demands constant questioning, not just of the world, but of science itself (which is actually a part of the world and not above it).

The invasion by a foreign, stronger force is more akin to something out of the Twilight Zone than to anything natural. I say that because as I was writing the second paragraph above, the Agnes Moorehead episode of *The Twilight Zone* suddenly appeared on my TV screen. This is the one in which an old woman in an isolated hut has to fend off the arrival of diminutive aliens in a small flying saucer, but it turns out she is the giant alien on a foreign planet, combating American astronauts---U.S. Air Force, Space Probe No. 1---which we don't learn until the very end. The episode is entitled "The Invaders" and

serves as a perfect metaphor for western colonialism. Rod Serling introduces the program by describing her home as one of those bleak, dying, out-of-the-way places, untouched by progress. She represents all Aborigines, resilient and resourceful.

The twist ending means that we don't know what's going on until the end. We are tricked into sympathizing with the alien before we find out she is an alien; we think she is one of us (of European stock). Besides being one of us, she is also represented as something good, as someone naturally defending herself and her primitive way of life (untouched by progress, as Serling says) ---she is in a sense nature rightfully defending herself. We've been rooting for her success, as she asserts herself against the artificial selection of the invaders who are trying to root her out. The twist implies that we would never have taken her side if we knew from the beginning who she was. Had we known that she was the alien and the invaders were Americans, we would have---because it is what we do, because it is who we are---rooted for the invaders over nature. It was a brilliant way to show us who we are, but the brilliance is perceived only if we think about what all this reveals. History demands that kind of reflection too. If you don't think about it, you don't get it.

Isn't the British transport of violent criminals (and some non-violent) to Australia very much like transporting a strange species to a new environment? And might you not expect those criminals to wreak havoc just as bringing in foxes or rabbits or a new plant life to a place they did not exist before would have a disastrous effect on the environment? I think it is fair to say that human colonization resembles artificial more than natural selection, but nowhere in *Descent* does Darwin take that position. He quite irrationally talks about colonization and extermination of natives as if they were natural processes, whereas the open rebellion of natives is much closer to what can reasonably be called natural. He renamed colonialism's artificial selection *natural selection* and gave it his full support.

One last attempt to portray European conquest as natural would be to cite it as an example of animal migration. Could European expansion and invasion of distant lands be considered a form of migration? Not on Darwin's terms. Darwin does bring up migration from time to time in *Origin* (especially Chapters XI and XII). He makes one specific reference to the great length of time this takes: "... enormous periods of time being thus granted for their migration ..." (449). This rules out European imperialism, which happened quickly, as an example of species migration. At another point, he implies that migration is as long as anything else that happens with natural selection because natural selection may be operating in the course of these migrations.

When he refers to a species "undergoing modification during some part of their migration" (394), he is thinking of a gradual process over a great length of time.

Even when it comes to the migration or dispersion of seeds by winds, sea currents, or birds, Darwin allows that they might be transported up to hundreds of miles "but not from one distant continent to another" (404). The only thing that might be comparable to European invasions would be, if such a thing ever happened, an elephant or even a deer or beaver carried away by a hurricane to a faraway land. Absurd, isn't it? I chose this analogy of a storm carrying animals long distances rather than something like this: Imagine elephants (or any large animals) traveling over large expanses of sea to invade and conquer another species of elephant of less bulk with inferior tusks, or how about beavers building boats to find beavers with inferior technological dam building skills whom they could conquer.

That kind of analogy is silly to imagine, too silly for words. Imagine elephants or beavers wanting to prove their superior weaponry or technology or physicality against another species they'd never met before! What species would ever dream of doing such a ridiculous thing? Imagine building large boats and sailing far, far from home to invade and subdue distant strangers. Unimaginable. But some will tell me they have no trouble imagining it. What about a gene for human restlessness and wandering? Wouldn't that make European adventure plausibly natural? Maybe. But even if we assume, as some believe is possible, that there is such a gene, Darwin could not possibly have known that. From his standpoint, human colonialism is like nothing else in nature. Yet nowhere does he acknowledge that.

(Fascinatingly, in 1880, one correspondent to the Australian *Queenslander* writes in defense of what whites are doing to blacks: "We are all savages; look beneath the thin veneer of our civilisation and we are very identical with the blacks; but ... we, the invading race, have a principle hard to define ... it is *innate in us*, and it is *the restlessness of culture*, if I dare call it so ... This brings us here to wrest the lands of a weaker race from their feeble grasp and build up a country that our children shall inherit; and this feeling is unknown to the native of Australia;" in Reynolds, *Whispering*, 117, emphases added. The *Queenslander* series of editorials along with letters pro and con was entitled *The Way We Civilize* and later published as a pamphlet.)

We can also ask: Why would nature do something like that when, on the whole, nature tends to act locally? Savages were suited to their local environments. They were a successful species on nature's terms. Natural selection as it took place in their territory made them fit. Therefore, one could conclude, only something unnatural could make them disappear from the

world. Darwin was certainly aware such an argument could be made. Waitz made this very point in a book Darwin read. Said Waitz, "If it were true that the colonists have contributed but little to their destruction, and that the main cause, as has been asserted, lies in their own mode of life, then it is inconceivable why they have not long become extinct, since there has not been an essential change in their mode of life" (Waitz, 167). He moves from this to mentioning "the crimes committed against the natives by the Whites," such as getting rid of natives by poisoning them with arsenic and boasting of it. Waitz certainly did not consider these crimes natural.

Nothing in their biology or immediate environment is leading them to extinction, but only the unnatural cause of distant foreigners colonizing and murdering them. Darwin never confronts this argument---Darwin never says, Here is a theory which contradicts my own approach and let's see if it has any merit---and he never describes anything in nature that is remotely like European colonialism. This colonialism was not slow or local or about having a slight incremental advantage, all of which are characteristic of natural selection. It is truly a wonder he could not see that.

Culturally speaking, it is not a wonder at all. Earlier in this chapter, I described the ways in which the law was manipulated to take advantage of Aborigines and drive them towards extinction. Darwin and other scientists were doing the same thing with science. Darwin was manipulating natural selection, which should be slow, local, and giving species slight advantages, to make it appear that natural selection was responsible for what was happening to Aborigines at the hands of European colonialism. When Herman Merivale (discussed in Ch. 6, §§ 5, 6) called the law of Mr. Darwin and Mr. Poepig imaginary, he was accusing them of manipulating science and statistics to make things look bad for Aborigines. It was a rigged game from both ends, law and science.

I previously called this manipulation, as used in the law, the principle of "heads we win, tails you lose." An example of this principle in science was the dispute between polygenists and monogenists (which I introduced previously at the end of §1 of this chapter). The former held that the various races of man were descended from distinct species. The latter believed that all human beings came from a single progenitor. Wallace's 1864 paper "The Origin of Human Races" was in part an attempt to reconcile the two positions. "Man ... I believe must have been, once a homogenous race" (clxvi). But this was before the human brain developed, he argued. Since the higher faculties have come into play, this created "distinct races of men" (ibid.). In *The Descent of Man* (210), Darwin expressed the hope that as a result of the theory of evolution, "the dispute between the monogenists and the polygenists

will die a silent and unobserved death." But like Wallace, he also believed that the races were profoundly different in their intellectual capacities---different enough to be called sub-species (*Descent*, 204, 210). What difference did any of this make to the Aborigines of the world? Even Stephen Gould had to admit that the theorists on both sides changed nothing:

Evolutionary theory swept away the creationist rug that had supported the intense debate between monogenists and polygenists, but it satisfied both sides by presenting an even better rationale for *their shared racism*. The monogenists continued to construct linear hierarchies of races according to mental and moral worth [this is exactly what Darwin did]; the polygenists now admitted a common ancestry in the prehistoric mists, but affirmed that races had been separate long enough to evolve major inherited differences in talent and intelligence. [*Mismeasure*, 105; emphasis added]

This was precisely the reconciliation that Wallace offered and that Darwin implicitly accepted. Heads we are superior, tails you are inferior. It does not matter if the races have a common ancestry or not. Either way, the final result is that the darker races lose. Under any scientific theory or legal theory, it is heads, we Europeans, always win. Some people will still call this science objective. I would not.

Racism is practical rather than theoretical. It will make use of any theory to achieve its end results. It is not even hard and fast about itself. It will be racist, or a mixture of racist and humanitarian, to whatever degree necessary to get control of everything. A racist can accept evolution or creationism. It is all the same to him. Whatever the theory, the racist can make it serve his agenda.

There is racism and there is racism. There are degrees of arrogance, boldness, and ruthlessness in erasing the humanity in the Other. There is the Other as inferior and the Other as really, really inferior. There is the Other with no rights at all and the Other who, though inferior, is respected as having certain rights because they have an independence that has to be acknowledged. The British may have regarded many peoples of the earth as inferior, but at first they still had to recognize their sovereignty and deal with them through negotiations, diplomacy, and sometimes treaties. Even in a place like Australia where treaties were not the order of the day, there was still in the early decades of European invasion diplomacy, negotiations, and reciprocity, as Lisa Ford frequently reminds us. There was an acceptance that the natives had their own system of laws which they would use, for example, to deal with criminals.

By the time Darwin turned thirty in 1839, a gradual change from this pluralism had been underway for the last two to three decades, so that the Other who used to have some rights was losing even that little bit in a system that would no longer be pluralistic but monolithic in its application of British law. In Darwin's lifetime, the Other was being transformed into a creature so inferior---and here comes the new part---that it had no rights or self-government or jurisdiction or control over any aspect of its own lives and culture. Racism had become more total just because it could get away with it. The Other had become so low in the estimation of a majority of Europeans, including the intellectual elite, that nothing about them had any analogies in European culture. They were closer to animals than to European humans---and this was so because British officials and settlers had finished negotiating with them as human beings, and having finished with that, they decided to forget that they had in fact only recently negotiated with them as if they were human beings just like themselves. That is why Darwin could write at the very end of *The Descent of Man* that savages (particularly the Fuegians as a prime example) "possessed hardly any arts, and like wild animals lived on what they could catch; they had no government, and were merciless to every one not of their own small tribe ... I would as soon be descended from that heroic little monkey ... as from a savage who ... knows no decency ..." (689). He was doing in science what the colonial system was doing in law. The humanity of the indigenous had to be erased so that Europeans could take everything and feel justified in doing so.

Judicially speaking, the land was re-imagined as if Aborigines had never been there. Yes, they were there physically *like animals*, but they were never there as an independent human culture with jurisdiction over its own affairs. Nothing of their laws and culture would remain. These would be wiped out from history as if they had never existed, once British sovereignty became the only acceptable sovereignty. In New South Wales, two courts (one in 1829 and one in 1832) did not even mind rewriting history and creating a judicial fiction that the Aborigines had always been subject to British law (see Ford, 161-62, 164). This most certainly had not been the case, but it became the new history. Ford calls these judicial pronouncements "bold feats of fiction" (162). This became the new reality for scientists like Darwin. The legal system and science were conspiring to create a decidedly less human Aborigine.

The self-evident humanity of Aborigines had been blotted out from history, except by a handful of humanitarians who were mostly ignored. Animals do not engage in negotiations and diplomacy. Darwin would have read Bonwick's criticism of George Robinson for exaggerating his role in

negotiations and for giving no credit to "his own dark companions" for bringing in one "warlike tribe in peace" (*Last*, 224) and Bonwick's observation that the older Aboriginal women took the lead in negotiations and were "the real arbiters of war" (225). In Bischoff's Appendix, he would have read Colonial Secretary George Murray's opinion that the natives are "possessed with the idea which they appear to entertain in regard to their own rights over the country, in comparison with those of the colonists" (Bischoff, 192), which suggests the natives had ideas of jurisdiction and a basis for negotiations. The first letter of Governor Arthur in that Appendix mentions that the natives complain "the white people have taken possession of their country" (187). These are big hints that the natives were conscious of fighting for their land and their rights to it and that British officials were aware of this. Darwin chose not to pay attention just as he failed to pay attention to the more explicit comments of Bonwick on the negotiating abilities of Aborigines.

For a time, in the first decades of the 19th century, there would be what Lisa Ford calls in the history of New South Wales "a jumble of diplomacy and jurisdiction" (Ford, 52) and "a pattern of nonprosecution [of Aborigines] by the attorney-general and the courts before 1827" (162) because it was recognized that Aborigines had jurisdiction over their own affairs. But this gradually gave way to British attempts to create an "unfettered territorial jurisdiction" (54), a pure jurisdictional control by the British; and Aborigines slipped into history, as imagined by Europeans, as animals who had no conception of their own jurisdiction and rights.

Darwin's words at the end of *Descent* on savages as animals having no government marked the crescendo of European racism. A more thoroughly denigrating racism had taken hold in Europe, and America, and Darwin was a beneficiary of that. It informed his science because his culture said that this is the way it has to be. Darwin brought a ready-made ideology to his science, an ideology that had been developed in the colonies. The only thing these newly racialized savages were good for was extermination, but it had to be made to look like nature's work. Racism is practical. It will allow only as much humanity and rights in the Other as circumstances force it to allow. When power becomes total, then the Other is allowed precisely nothing, not life, not history, not memories.

I think that Wallace implicitly understood that something odd was going on with colonialism. He was sensitive to the resulting injustice to Aborigines of the "heads we win, tails you lose" game, even though he never quite acknowledges that science was participating in this. At the end of that essay on civilization in Northern Celebes (delivered as an address at the Ethnological Society of London in January 1865), which I have previously

quoted from, he clearly recognized that natives have been overwhelmed by European competition and draws the proper conclusion that Europe should ease up, though he never argues that European colonialism should cease altogether. Just the year before, in "The Origin of Human Races" in which he explained and defended his and Darwin's theory as admirably as anyone ever did, Wallace talked about the extinction of native peoples as blithely as Darwin would several years later in *Descent*. But in the Northern Celebes paper, doubt is creeping up on him. He does not just say we know we are superior, but adds "or think we know" (67), and on the same page, he begins the last paragraph with "If we are satisfied that we are right in occupying the country ..." as if this required some thought and not mere assumption.

By the time he gets to the end of that essay, he is extremely worried that direct competition with Europeans could be the end, the disappearance, of the natives. He wants colonialism to be more for their benefit and not for Europe's own selfish ends. Just as Napier had earlier advocated that we should think about what is "extremely profitable and pleasant to them" (Napier, 106; his emphasis). Taking a stand against selfishness is not something a pure believer in natural selection should be doing. (Darwin said in *Origin* [112], that the only thing natural selection cannot do is modify one organism for the benefit of another, but it can "produce structures for the direct injury of other species" [234].) While I wish Wallace had been even more explicit, he was very close to realizing that the extinction of savages as a result of European actions is not in accord with natural selection. But it seems that precise, clear reasoning on this point was no more possible in their day than it is in ours. It would take a playwright to realize that "Hell is empty and all the devils are here" and still, nobody listened.

But the voices are there if we pay attention. "When the dead have something to say, not even time will shut them up." If it takes a medical examiner (CCH Pounder) from a TV show, *NCIS: New Orleans*, to remind us of that, then that's how it is and we should listen. My old acting teacher Jane Dentinger would have reminded us that we are obligated to do no less.

12

RESTORING MESSINESS TO HISTORY

Search history, and in the north and south, east and west, the story is ever the same,---we come, we civilize, and we corrupt, or exterminate.

---F. Boyle in James Bonwick, *Last* (344)

Our system has always failed. We demoralize and we extirpate, but we never really civilize.

---Alfred Wallace, *Malay*, 1.257

What will Zaphod's bewildering mission turn out to be? Will it be something he finds stimulating and challenging or will it just be a monster wanting to take over the Universe for no very good reason?

---Douglas Adams, *Hitchhiker's* (147)

~ 1 ~

It was never pure. *The Origin of Species*, I mean. What is surprising is that anybody ever thought it was. It's like they were trying to pull the wool over our eyes and their own as well. Given all the brutal language in *Origin* and the language of colonialism, given the way it sings the song of the dominant and tough luck to the small and weak, how could anyone have claimed even for a minute that this was objective and the result of a pure concern for truth? The book mixes objective and subjective analysis of the evidence in such contorted ways.

The Social Darwinists did not ruin Darwinism, even if they took it to extremes that Darwin would not have cared to think about. They took what

was already an impure science and made it more impure. From impurity to impurity---not from purity to impurity.

The holistic evolutionists were not pure either. We all have ulterior motives, as Bob Dylan and so many others would remind us. The holists were animated by a different spirit, but a spirit nonetheless, projecting their meaning into nature. They were tired of seeing their society become more and more competitive and more ruthless. They hated what it was doing to other peoples. They knew nature had its cruelties, but why should that be a model for human society? Or to spin it from the opposite angle, why should the extreme violence perpetrated by empires be the model for understanding nature? If we have to be creative in pursuit of science, why can't we pursue a different kind of creativity? We create our visions, even those of us who try to stick so close to the bare facts. That may be an impure truth, but it is more realistic and gets us closer to the only kind of purity we will ever know.

The holists intuitively understood that you can only get out of a theory what you put into it. It comes down to this: It's like apple pie. If you want a good pie, you will put the best ingredients into it. Put cheap stuff into it and guess what you will get when you take it out of the oven. This analogy is not mine. It comes from a wonderful old film *Over 21* (1945), starring Irene Dunne, name above the title (and the screenwriter was the same man who wrote the screenplay for the film that kicked off this book). It takes place during World War II. She plays the wife of a man (co-star Alexander Knox) who has quit his job as editor of a New York newspaper and joined the army for officer training, which has proven to be very difficult for him. He fears that at forty, he is too old for this. Unbeknownst to him, the paper is in trouble, in part because his wisdom and strong voice are missing from it; and his wife, who writes screenplays, has undertaken to continue to write editorials under his name without his knowledge (even the publisher does not realize what is going on). The husband eventually finds out but does not let on. At the officer graduation ceremony where he has been requested to speak, he tells them that he cannot say anything better than something he found in a newspaper and he reads them his wife's first editorial "The World and Apple Pie".

I don't remember all the words of the editorial exactly, but it was about what kind of a world we want to build after the war is over. It is full of hope and American idealism. Building a new world is like making an apple pie, she wrote (one of the jokes in the film is that she can't bake at all, but she gets the general sense of it). The world can only be as good as the ingredients we put into it. What comes out can never be any better than what we put in. You cannot beat the rules and that is a fundamental rule of baking. If even a small

ingredient is bad, it will tell in the final product.

The application to foreign policy (so goes the editorial) is this: What we want for ourselves, things like (if I recall correctly) freedom, happiness and prosperity, mercy and justice, we should want for other countries. If we put that into our baking, we will gain the rewards. The humblest person on earth is entitled to these things just as much as we are. Though she does not say this in the editorial, one could extrapolate from this the idea that if we approach other countries with ignorance, arrogance, greed, and self-righteousness, we will reap the corresponding results. (That is as good a summary of the history of western foreign policy as can be made, I think.)

This apple pie approach is just as true for scientific theories or any kind of theory. Social Darwinists could get out of Darwin's theory only what he put into it. They were not bad bakers. They were very faithful bakers, using the ingredients that had been given them. It should be no surprise that Darwin made dominance and ever more dominance the organic purpose of evolution. He came from a dominant nation after all. Why shouldn't he put into the theory the ingredients that would ensure his country was right and on the right path? He put his culture into natural selection and imposed it on all human beings and cultures. If we could break down every theory into what we cram into it, if we would only stop and think about that once in a while, we would have learned a great lesson. The lemon tree I've been hoping for may turn out to be an apple tree. Or maybe it's a hybrid. There is no perfect lesson plan here.

I realize one could also interpret *Over 21* as saying that this woman has as little idea how to actually make a better world (or better theory, if you will) as she has how to bake a pie and that her advice is as hokey as the Hollywood movies she writes. Hey, I didn't say my interpretation is the only one. And one could also see in the American idealism she expresses a hidden agenda to make the whole world conform to one idea of freedom and prosperity that will favor America more than anyone else. It's not a perfect story. There are flaws everywhere you look in life. But why ignore the one potential lesson I've taken from it? If the world is a mess and our theories are too because we are careless about how we cook them up, let's look at all sides of it.

We will never get anything better out of a theory than what we put into it. And if what comes out of a theory surprises us or disturbs us, then we only have to look back at the original ingredients. That's where all the trouble lies. The only fixing any theory requires is to rethink what went into it. Will that make life messy? I don't know. Maybe it is too burdensome to always go back to the origin of things in order to understand where we are today. But it is even more of a pain to constantly have to do all the shoveling it takes to make

sure the past is buried. We only have to choose which kind of mess and which kind of effort we prefer.

And so here in this last chapter, I will collect a number of impure and messy thoughts.

~ 2 ~

We like to fill history with pure heroes and pure villains. We like monoliths. Academics are great at creating villains and heroes, and not very good at justifying their creations. They make each person represent one thing. But no one is that pure or perfect or single-minded. Everybody has many red threads running through them. We just like to forget that.

The keepers of history do the forgetting for us. They select only what they need for their ideology and discard the rest. Darwin was a lone genius, Chambers was an amateur, Rafinesque was an outsider and a kook, Lamarck merely a forerunner, Erasmus Darwin a precocious dilettante, Malthus a hater of the poor, John Locke gets to be two things (an advocate of representative government at home and a founder of *terra nullius* abroad), and this or that person (like Napier, Gerland, Bannister, Robinson, or Langfield Ward) a forgettable, obscure humanitarian. Everyone is pigeonholed, history is simple, and we can remain in perfect control of the future.

Rafinesque is written off because he scattered his work in so many different directions. It is said that he had an evolutionary insight but did not follow through and that his poetic talents were minimal. But we overlook that whatever may be the poetic merits or demerits of *The World, or Instability*, it is by any reasonable measure a great essay on nature, gradual change, creativity, tolerance, love, justice, and the essential equality of human beings. Read it not as a poem but as an essay, and the richness and humanity of his thoughts comes shining through. He reminds us that there is another way to be an evolutionist besides the survival of the fittest kind.

If Darwin is mentioned in any essay today or a documentary film, you can be sure that we will get a glib summary of a historical fiction. We tell the tale of Darwin going abroad, making observations, and coming home with the theory of evolution. The truth is rather the opposite: He took the theory of evolution with him into the field and sought further confirmation. He inherited evolution, he did not self-generate it---an ironic mistake for a theory about inheritance and descent. Popular scholarship got it completely wrong. They took a theory about inheritance and misrepresented its own hereditary features. Mindboggling, isn't it, that a theory about origins should be forced to be so dishonest about its own origins. It still stuns me.

People reduce Malthus to his famous population principle and if they add

anything else, it will be that he despised the poor and was in favor of treating them harshly. (I recently read one current writer who reduced him to "this apologist for greed," even though it is or should be well known that Malthus thought extreme wealth was a social problem.) They suppress the truth that his attitude towards the poor was more complex, that he did not favor suddenly ending the poor laws, that he considered extreme wealth to be as much of a social ill as poverty, that Europe's extermination of native peoples he held to be highly immoral, that he warned against applying the population principle in the same way to human beings as to nature at large, and that there was a lot more going on in his thinking that influenced Darwin than the one principle of the danger of overpopulation.

In dismissing Robert Chambers as an amateur, we have forgotten that science is mainly about getting the evidence essentially right and that Chambers mostly did that quite well; we have forgotten that he was anything but amateurish in spotting a pattern of evidence. Equally important, we have forgotten what it's like to see evolution (or any theory) for the first time. You don't need to be perfect to be a good scientist---what you really need is to keep your eyes on the prize, which is to pay attention to significant patterns of evidence, and if, along the way, you can reveal the unconscious prejudices that have blocked us from seeing this evidence, then you have achieved something truly supreme. We dismissed too easily the excitement and freshness of Chambers's vision. Evolution generated a sense of wonder and gratefulness in Chambers that could have done us a world of good, if only we had retained it. We did ourselves no favor by losing his voice. We threw away not only his simple scientific acumen but also his grasp of the humility and brotherhood in evolution. Reading his work, you feel the force of a blind man learning to see nature in a new way. We need that.

We're told that Erasmus Darwin was not as great a scientist as his grandson because he speculated too much and did not prove his case. But Erasmus only claimed to have proven that there was enough evidence here to make us keep looking. Nothing wrong in that. Evidence to be valuable does not have to give us certainty, it only has to open our eyes and make us thoughtful. Erasmus did that and more. He also thought it was important for us to know other things, like: Some disasters are so big, the words 'tragedy' and 'melancholy' are too small to capture them. And he asked us to remember: We're all flowing towards the same river; whatever baggage you're carrying, whatever prizes you think you have, one river takes us all in, us and all our smallest moments, not just the momentous. We come from the same place and we're going to the same place, the dominant and the weak. Collect all the data and that's what you'll see. But some people are so busy establishing the presumed important

weight of certain pieces that they miss the whole that binds us. Erasmus did not miss it. He pursued the small because he wanted to see the whole. Size or strength does not matter to nature and nature is not a bully on behalf of the stronger. Everything that is born nature wants to be born.

Erasmus Darwin understood all that. Even atheists should pray, God bless Erasmus Darwin.

Distinctions of smallness and largeness also did not figure into the essential reasoning of John Locke. He was, like Saxe Bannister, an advocate of one system of justice for all. A true humanitarian. Many scholars have chosen to remember him as a proponent of colonialism and have fabricated his support of *terra nullius*. But justice and rights, no matter the trouble they cause, was his thing. The greater the party committing an injustice, the more aggravated is the crime. Might does not make right. It makes for less right. Dominance does not make destiny, or not necessarily. The more dominant a group is, the less right it has. Locke denied that the stronger over the weaker was a valid law of nature, or at least, he argued, it did not create natural rights. The rights of the small and weak can never be made to go away---not by philosophy, not by religion, not by ideology, not by military success---nothing can make rights disappear. Virtually every academic who celebrates the famous and the powerful would like to forget this part of Locke. And at a time when the Bible was so often misused (as it still is), Locke was brave enough to tell his society that the Bible does not support power and domination---that God in the Bible gave his blessings to all mankind, not just to one portion of it. The ancient rabbis would have loved John Locke.

We have conveniently forgotten that when Locke said land belonged to whoever put it to productive use, he said it in the context of his belief that there was plenty of land for everyone, for the farmer and the hunter. And if that assumption turns out to be wrong, then other principles come into play, like negotiation or mutual consent. He constantly insisted that whatever you take, there must be "enough and as good" left over for others to enjoy. No one has the right to take it all. We have put out of our minds all that he said about how unjust it is to deprive the native inhabitants of their land and how their descendants never lose the right to claim it back. One of the hidden springs behind genocide is that, in a world of impure justices and injustices, genocide tries to achieve the purest injustice. No descendants will be left to protest and to grieve and to demand. Genocide simplifies and purifies history immensely. But John Locke affirmed the right to remember and Saxe Bannister told us that rights are never forgotten; and if that creates trouble, then so be it.

We love to reduce history and the people in it to one thing so that we can tell one simple tale of progress leading to us and our victories, our conquests. But history was always a mess of possibilities. We have arrived at the simple tale we tell by suppressing that mess.

Are we too stupid to handle the complications? I don't think that's it. I think our intellects can handle the complexity of history. What may bother us more is that this complexity points to different possibilities. That is what we don't want to face. There were more possible avenues and outcomes in history and in our contemporary society than we would like to admit. We don't want to see the choices. Fate or destiny is deciding it all for us and relieving us of any responsibility. Destiny is marching. That's how it was in history and that's how it is now.

They were all more complicated than we have been led to believe. We all are. We know that. We just don't like to incorporate this into our historical studies. We don't like to remember the choices that were made, that indeed they were choices, and that we still have choices to make, that we are not goosesteppers in a march of progress. There is no march. There is only a scattering of footsteps, as Olive Schreiner, God bless her, might have put it. She also said that unlike in a stage play, the hero may not always arrive in time.

None of which means that from time to time a hero did not try to show up.

~ 4 ~

In Chapter 2, I quoted James Bonwick on the imperial aspirations of America: "It is this heartless egoism of our common race of Britain and America that so shocks the benevolent mind, and chills the aspiration for a better policy toward the native peoples" (*Last*, 380). Criticizing the greed and selfishness of western countries was a common theme for humanitarians. Several decades before Bonwick, Charles Napier was unhappy about the way the British had turned national wealth into a god and about their indifference to the harm this does. At the end of the century, Alfred Wallace, despite his commitment to natural selection as one of the great scientific achievements of his time, blasted "the unblushing selfishness of the greatest civilized nations" and pointed to a massacre of Armenians, "while the representatives of the great powers coldly looked on," as one of the terrible consequences of this greed (*Wonderful Century*, 377-78). Despite their great military power, "not one of them has raised a finger" to save these people. Barbarism was a charge he frequently made against modern civilization (e.g., at the end of both *The Malay Archipelago* in 1869 and *The Wonderful Century* in 1898).

Darwin covered up this western barbarism in a number of ways. One of the

most interesting is that he ignored the very plausible idea that native resistance to white invasion was a case of natural selection rejecting the artificial selection being imposed by the invaders. He took what was an obvious case of artificial selection (western barbarism) and renamed it natural selection, so that he could give it his full support and fool himself into thinking it was entirely natural. Darwin manipulated his concept of natural selection to make it apply wherever he wanted it to apply; politics intruded into his science, a fairly obvious fact that scholars still stubbornly deny. Wallace was incapable of playing such verbal, trickster games. He was constantly questioning the application of natural selection in human cases---and he has been belittled for it ever since, while the label of genius has been slapped onto Darwin and made to appear indelible.

Here, in the closing chapter, I feel like I have not paid enough attention to Wallace. Originally, before I knew much about this history, I thought my focus would be on Darwin and Wallace. Wallace was the one great humanitarian I knew about. I had planned to devote much more space to him. I did not know how many others I would discover. I have been so shocked and delighted at the other voices I have uncovered that I often lost sight of Wallace for long periods of time. I would like to make it up to him just a bit. The following will still not do him full justice.

To many, Wallace seems to have been all over the place (on more than one issue) and not entirely consistent on the humanity of indigenous peoples. While Wallace did express views about savages as harsh as Darwin's and did assume that western civilization was superior and that savages could benefit from efforts to civilize them, he never, ever used these ideas to justify a harsh colonialism or to look the other way when colonialism committed injustices against native peoples. He never used science to stop his criticisms on humanitarian grounds. It could even lead him to question his science---for examples, the applicability of natural selection to all facets of human nature and the value of competition in modern life.

Wallace is often quoted for his comments in the "Origin of Human Races" essay on the inferiority and inevitable disappearance of savages. The writers who do this hardly ever point out that Darwin fully agreed. Wallace was only following him. They never point out that Wallace did not stop there, even if it meant risking inconsistency. He generally strove to put humanitarianism first.

He was capable of comparing the savage unfavorably to civilized people who had capacities for abstract thinking and for moral and aesthetic appreciation "of the infinite, of the good, of the sublime and the beautiful" that went far beyond what the savage needed for survival ("Limits of Natural Selection", in *Contributions*, 340). But he did not argue that the savage was

innately inferior. It was circumstance that gave the savage his character. In the same essay, he follows the previous quote with "Yet the rudiments of all these powers and feelings undoubtedly exist in him [the savage] ..." He singles out one tribe for "as pure a love of truth as the most moral among civilized men" and another for "high artistic feeling" (341). "Instances of unselfish love, of true gratitude, and of deep religious feeling, sometimes occur among most savage races" (ibid.). This can sometimes sound patronizing but most of the time it is not. In a letter written from Borneo in May 1855, he said "The more I see of uncivilised people, the better I think of human nature on the whole, and the essential differences between so-called civilised and savage man seem to disappear" (ARW 1.55). Whatever his opinion at one moment or another was, he was always sensitive to issues of justice.

He has often been ridiculed for departing from Darwin on any scientific issues, as if Darwin were the unassailable great scientist and Wallace only a pygmy by comparison. But Wallace always had good points to make. He was always thinking and paying attention to the facts. In that same essay, "Limits of Natural Selection", Wallace expressed strong doubts that natural selection could explain the development of the human brain (as well as several other things, like man's relatively hairless body). "I do not consider that all nature can be explained on the principles of which I am so ardent an advocate" (333). He believed a higher power was responsible, but that was not his main point. He has been ridiculed for this departure from Darwin ever since. Scholars have missed the essential import of what he was saying.

The human brain has capacities that far outstrip anything mankind needs for survival. Wallace and Darwin had always insisted that natural selection proceeds only by small degrees and yet the human brain has leapt so far ahead. Savages may live a more materially meager life than those who live in western nations, but Wallace was impressed that their brains were just like everyone else's. Therefore, they have mental capacities for more than they really need. Human beings are capable of abstract thought, higher mathematics, complicated music, a dedication to morality (like absolute truth-telling, which Wallace witnessed in some savage tribes) to the point that harm to oneself might result, and more. These faculties, said Wallace, "are utterly inconceivable as having been produced through the action of a law [i.e., natural selection] which looks only, and can look only, to the immediate material welfare of the individual or the race" (359). We are "driven to the conclusion that in his large and well-developed brain he [the savage] possesses an organ quite disproportionate to his actual requirements ..." as if the human brain were being "prepared in advance, only to be fully utilized as he progresses in civilization" (343).

Wallace was not challenging the basic truth (for him and Darwin) that natural selection could still explain most of organic life and even the development of man's mind up to some very early stage. He was clear about that. "I do not see that the law of 'natural selection' can be said to be disproved, if it can be shown that man does not owe his entire physical and mental development to its unaided action ..." (370). While he believed that a higher power was necessary to account for man's singularly advanced mental abilities, he knew his proof of this was sketchy and did not insist that he was right. The real point he was driving at was this: "even if my particular view should not be the true one, the difficulties I have put forward remain, and I think prove, that some more general and more fundamental law underlies that of 'natural selection'" (360). There could still be, and probably is, a natural law that will explain everything, but natural selection is not sufficient: "It is more probable, that the true law lies too deep for us to discover it; but there seems to me, to be ample indications that such a law does exist ..." (ibid.).

Wallace was very aware that Darwin and his friends regarded him as a heretic (see January 1871 letter to Darwin, CCD 19.46, where Wallace twice refers to his heresies). He stressed in that letter, "I *fully agree* with every word and every argument which goes to prove the 'evolution' or 'development' of man out of a lower form" (his emphasis), but he must have known this would do him no good with Darwin if he disagreed on any other points. In *Descent* (669 n21), Darwin misquotes Wallace as believing "that some intelligent power has guided or determined the development of man," and cites p. 350 in Wallace's *Contributions*. What Wallace actually said there was: "I do not lay much stress on this, but, if it be proved that some intelligent power has guided or determined the development of man, then we may see indications of that power, in facts which, by themselves, would not serve to prove its existence." Wallace complained to Darwin that his quote was "a caricature of anything I have written" (CCD 19.167). Darwin admitted in reply that Wallace's views were "almost stereotyped in my mind" (CCD 19.185). But Darwin never corrected the misquotation. It was there in the first (1871) edition of *Descent* and it was still there in the second (1874) edition.

Perhaps Darwin's most honest response to Wallace (a kind of let-us-agree-to-disagree) was in a slightly earlier letter to Wallace: "... really in such complex subjects, it is almost impossible for 2 men, who arrive independently at their conclusions to agree---fully---it w^d be unnatural for them to do so" (CCD 19.51).

Wallace never insisted that divine or spiritual action was the explanation for the human brain, as so many have falsely imputed to him, and that would include Darwin. He rather insisted that some natural law in the end was likely

the explanation, but it was not natural selection. Wallace correctly claimed that his inquiry was "thoroughly scientific and legitimate ... [and] strictly within the bounds of scientific investigation" (*Contributions*, 335). To put the whole matter another way: Wallace did not want to see natural selection reduced to an ideology that wiped out all pesky evidentiary problems. There is a profound point in Wallace's reasoning. He was essentially arguing that human beings do much more than survive, and therefore, that 'more' needs to be explained or at the very least acknowledged. Declaring that it all comes down to survival and natural selection is dogmatism (ideology), not science. Natural selection may explain attributes related to survival, but when humans engage in activities that go beyond survival, then most likely another natural law is needed to explain this. That is an astute and scientifically correct argument.

Despite his clarity and keenness, so many authors continue to misinterpret him. In an article on language in *The New Yorker* (June 28, 2010), Oliver Sacks, neurologist extraordinaire (to whom I will always be grateful for introducing me to the work of another neurologist, Antonio Damasio, who demonstrated that emotions are bound up with any act of thinking), takes Wallace to task for misstating the problem and proposing the wrong solution: "While natural selection could explain the appearance of immediately useful abilities, only a divine creator, he [Wallace] felt, could explain the existence of potential powers that might become manifest only with the development of an advanced culture hundreds of thousands of years in the future" (27). That is not accurate. Wallace was not insisting that "only a divine creator" could be the answer, but rather that we have a serious problem here that natural selection does not account for and, thus, *another natural law* will have to be sought.

Sacks believes that the "elegant solution" to the problem (in his particular example, how we became literate, mastering the invention of letters to write and read) is that human beings made "a brilliant and creative new use of a preëxisting neural proclivity" (27-28). In other words, writing and reading are not "a direct evolutionary adaptation" but the result of the wonderful "plasticity of the brain" whose amazing capabilities are by-products of an already existing neural development. Wallace (and Darwin too, I think) would have called this a no-explanation. It is nothing short of a reliance on miracles. That plasticity of the brain is one hell of a miracle producing some spectacular by-products. There is no other organ in any animal or plant that has such fantastic, accidental offshoots and so many of them. Sacks has not resolved the problem so much as hidden it behind a reliance on the miraculous. Wallace's questions still stand.

This argument of Sacks seems to be the general position of most scientists today. Jerry Coyne makes the same argument in *Faith Versus Fact*. He claims "we now know that our overengineered brain is not a puzzle for science" (184) and argues that anything as complex as the human brain will be able to perform novel tasks (what Sacks called by-products) that were not part of what it was originally designed for (ibid.). Also like Sacks, he derides Wallace for making the human brain "an exception from pure naturalism" (134), thus falsifying what Wallace actually argued. When it comes down to basics, Sacks and Coyne are just as guilty of departing from naturalism. These by-products (a term also used by Coyne) or novel tasks have also been called exaptations ("existing features that are co-opted for future uses;" see Ian Tattersall, 208) which is just a fancy word for miracles. "In other words, the novel way of processing information [by the human brain] had not evolved for anything. It had just appeared ... lying fallow until its possessor actively discovered its new uses" (219; Tattersall's emphasis). He also stresses the novelty by describing these properties as "unpredicted by anything that had gone before." Yeah, we get it, it's a miracle.

This verbal gamesmanship does not solve anything. There is no need for such terminology when all that is meant by exaptation is that we have a re-adaptation of an already existing adaptation. Other examples which Coyne gives (a parrot imitating human speech, lyrebirds imitating chain saws and car alarms, blue tits opening milk bottles, etc.) do not come close to the extraordinary higher functions of the human brain. When someone can teach a dolphin to sing opera arias, play piano, do calculus, and lie like an academic, then I'll agree that maybe fantastic by-products could be a natural explanation. Whatever the real naturalistic explanation of the human brain may turn out to be, scientists have not found it yet, but instead of admitting that, they cover it up with terminology that sounds like they are explaining something, when all they are really doing is reaffirming a belief in miracles.

The problem is not so much explaining the higher functions of the human brain as recognizing and explaining any biological features which are not really about survival. Instead of inventing bizarre terminology, which covers up the problem rather than confront it, why don't scientists take seriously that there are aspects to life, even for some animals and plants, that are not related to a struggle for survival, and then seek to understand what this might tell us about nature? Why force everything into the adapt-or-die scheme? That is not good science. And Wallace knew that.

On a related problem of sexual selection, where Wallace also questioned the sufficiency of Darwin's explication and wondered whether we really know enough about the human condition, Desmond and Moore comment, "There

spoke a spiritualist who was looking to the wrong realm" (*Sacred Cause*, 362). (His spiritualism was no worse than exaptation.) They cannot conceive that nature might have more reality to it than the two categories of survival and sexual differentiation. Darwin himself was not too thrilled with Wallace's objections. Wallace had first broached these ideas in an April 1869 review of a book by Lyell (actually, even earlier, in private, Wallace explained some of his misgivings about Darwin's ideas on color and sexual selection in a letter to him; see CCD 16.752). The month before Wallace's book review, Darwin had written to him in anticipation, "I hope you have not murdered too completely your own & my child" (CCD 17.157). When Darwin did read the review, it mostly pleased him, telling Wallace it was "an immense triumph for our cause," but as to Wallace's remarks on man, Darwin could only say, "I differ grievously from you, & I am very sorry for it" (CCD 17.175).

These are rather extreme reactions to Wallace's suggestions (murdering our child!?), not to mention that the scholarly focus on Wallace's spiritualism (his belief in a higher power directing man's development) is a misdirection. It suggests that Wallace had hit a nerve. Wallace was quite reasonably bringing attention to evidence that natural selection could not explain---that there was more to nature than duking it out for victory. Even Richard Dawkins, who also looks on the higher faculties of the human brain "as a by-product" (which explains absolutely nothing as neither he nor anyone else seem to realize), admits that "The Darwinian world-view ... doesn't ... claim to explain them at the sort of level that will seem particularly satisfying ..." (*Greatest Show*, 402). Dawkins still thinks that whether the explanation is satisfying or not, the higher animals directly follow "from the war of nature, from famine and death" (403). Wallace had committed the unforgiveable sin of pointing out that this does not take in all of nature.

Desmond and Moore, and other scholars, do not criticize Wallace for his spiritualism because it is their own considered opinion. Sacks, Dawkins, and Coyne do not thrust aside Wallace's views and propose "by-product" as the brilliant answer we've all been looking for because they have considered the matter deeply. These put-downs of Wallace and offering their own sense of miracle have long been the considered opinions in the general intellectual atmosphere about Wallace, which again, in the words of Agnes Arber, is compulsive to a humiliating degree. This atmosphere tells everyone that Wallace must be dismissed. Doesn't the scholarly world feel any sense of shame about this? And why the double standard? Darwin continued to modify his science, bringing in other things besides natural selection. Scientists who disagree with him nevertheless respect him for not putting a hold on his thinking process. Why isn't Wallace's questioning of the limits of natural

selection just as valid? Perhaps more valid. There is a better case to be made that Darwin's unqualified support for colonialism compromised his science than there is that Wallace's interest in spiritualism undermined his science, and yet the latter is all we ever hear about from so many scholars, while there is almost utter silence on the former. What would the scholarly world do without the double standard? It would be out of business.

In his autobiography, Wallace had to this say about fitness and human beings:

It is a question of fundamental justice ... It is a crime against humanity for one nation to govern another *against its will*. The master always says his slaves are not *fit* for freedom; the tyrant, that subjects are not *fit* to govern themselves ... Many savage tribes ... are really better governed to-day than the majority of the self-styled civilized nations. [*My Life*, 2.121; his emphases]

This is sandwiched in between comments on the injustice of Britain not allowing the Irish self-rule and America "ruling the Philipinos against their will" (further on at 2.222, he also criticizes America for depriving Puerto Rico of liberty and the "barbarities of slaughter" committed by civilized nations in China).

I think Wallace pointedly chose the word *fit*. He understood it was possible to misuse the ideas of fitness and survival of the fittest. There are times when these concepts have no scientific value. They are misleading and harmful. As he also said, just prior to the above quotation, "But to my mind, the question of good or bad, fit or not fit for self-government, is not to the point." Justice is the point. Occasionally, scholars will get Wallace's message. In their biography of Darwin, Desmond and Moore sum up Wallace's view: "judging by the 'social barbarism' of Victoria's England, morally crippled by a cut-throat capitalism, selection had no power to enhance civilization" (*Darwin*, 570). But most of the time scholars dilute his acuity. Wallace was the very opposite of a Social Darwinist. He was intimidated by no one, not even by Darwin whom he admired enormously. To this day, most scholars find that unforgiveable. But Darwin understood his friend well by noting one example of his fierce independence: "You are about the last man in England, who would deviate a hair's breadth from his conviction to please any Editor in the world" (Darwin to Wallace, Mar. 27, 1869; CCD 17.157).

Admittedly, Wallace often seems to be progressing towards more humanitarianism in fits and starts, as I characterized it earlier (Ch. 10, §1). Above I quoted his 1855 letter in which he said that uncivilized people have improved his opinion of humanity as a whole. Then in 1864, in the essay on

the origin of human races, he characterizes them as inferior and doomed to extinction. In 1865 come the essays on how to civilize savages and the progress of civilization in Northern Celebes, both of which are extremely sensitive to the injustices committed against natives and hold a lower opinion of so-called civilized people. In 1870, in *Contributions to the Theory of Natural Selection*, while he argues that the brains of savages have the same potential as that of civilized people, he is back again to predicting the inevitability of their extinction due to their inferior development (318-19).

Then, late in the day, Wallace directly questions the strict application of the Malthusian law of population to humans. It was in one of his last letters to Darwin that it occurred to him that maybe the two of them had pushed the Malthusian population principle too far in the case of man. Inspired by an American socialist, Wallace questioned whether this law of population "ever has operated or can operate in the case of man, still less that it has any bearing whatever on the vast social and political questions which have been supported by a reference to it" (July 9, 1881; ARW 1.317). Late this was, but at least the moment came.

Of course, Malthus had already made these points, but no one paid attention.

What to make of all this back and forth "progress" in Wallace's thinking? One thing is this: It is hard to let go of the prevailing opinion of western superiority (held by Darwin too) and strike out independently. I know this is the umpteenth time I have leaned on this, but Agnes Arber got it so right when she said that the general intellectual atmosphere of any given age has an effect which is compulsive and to a humiliating degree no less. Saul Bellow called it "the savage strength of the many." Wallace knew something was wrong and never stopped seeking a more just view of the world. He kept plugging on, trying to shed that compulsive atmosphere, the savage many, and always getting a little further down the road of justice.

The struggle to get it right is what defines Wallace, assuming anything defines him, and not a perfect set of ideas, arrived at and endlessly repeated. The man was always willing to learn and to pay attention to any cries of injustice. That last moment in the letter to Darwin came because he never stopped questioning the relationship between science and justice. If this left the total output of his thinking a bit messy or even very messy, then all the more power to him. Life is a mess, a true mess, why shouldn't our thinking about it reflect that? It is a truer way to live than to hold onto an ideology. We need to be as messy as life itself and not force an artificial order on it.

People forget that the most important thing about science is seeing the evidence and that, even when you have a good theory---a theory far, far better

than any nearest rival---the evidence is still more important than the theory. When scientists lose sight of that (which is quite often), it means the theory has become dogma and its value considerably diminishes, even as it is celebrated more and more as the greatest theory ever.

When theory becomes dogma, evidence loses its freshness. The true scientific goal is to keep the evidence fresh and alive. That's what Wallace did (that is why he could champion economic independence for women as in accord with natural selection and why he doubted that natural selection could explain the wonderful properties of the human brain). A good theory, the best theory, is only a window onto the facts, not a fact itself. When a window for viewing becomes a fact, science has lost. The window has closed. That tragedy is always ready to take over in any scientific field.

That is why exposing unconscious forces is so important in science and why making the unconscious conscious is the highest scientific achievement. That's what Chambers did. It is the unconscious that turns theory into dogma and a false fact. It is that unconscious need for power and dominance that makes a dogma out of something that should have remained connected to love of the evidence. Theories have value only so long as love of evidence does not go out the window---only so long as it remains in the picture and theories remain exactly where they belong, in second place.

We demonstrate our fear of real science whenever we dismiss the Wallaces and the Gerlands because they would not mindlessly go along with dogma. When people like Wallace or Gerland or Chambers do put evidence first and theories second, they risk ridicule, ostracism, denigration, and finally obscurity. It happens every time.

~ 5 ~

Here is another myth that has just been waiting to bite the dust. We think that racism as a recognizable, serious problem came into existence with the Nazis and that the fight against racism as a social problem did not really get under way until the 1950s and, furthermore, this fight has been progressing by leaps and bounds ever since. The truth is that racism was identified as a problem at least by the late 18th century and that, despite efforts to raise awareness and defeat it, the fight was stalled for well over a hundred years. The history of the story of anti-racism is not one of leaps and bounds. It went nowhere for so long. Part of the answer to why that was so is that the academic and intellectual atmosphere of the time was hostile to any humanitarian concerns and another part is that greed was the dominant motivation for almost everyone.

We forget that racism exists for many reasons and one is that somebody---

actually, a lot of somebodies---benefit from racism. They benefit enormously. If no one benefitted from racism, it would not exist.

Not only is racism not an anachronistic idea for the 19th century, but as anyone should be able to plainly see, by the time the Nazis came along, the fight to raise consciousness about it and openly combat this disease was already a long, hard, and mostly losing, battle. What would the Nazis make of all this? Would they not conclude that their racist program had every chance of success? They were emboldened by what had come before and had every reason to believe their ideas would be more welcome than not. Were they wrong?

You know that saying attributed to Edmund Burke (in *Bartlett's Quotations*, but the letter in which he supposedly said it has not been found) about how all it takes for evil to triumph is for enough good men to do nothing? Well, the Nazis had arrived on a scene where good men---the leading men of society and the universities and scientific professions---had been doing nothing or very little for Aborigines for over a hundred years. The Nazis drew the not unreasonable conclusion that they could triumph. Doing nothing and the many ways of doing it is a story in itself. The full story of it is still waiting to be told. This book has been a start.

~ 6 ~

It needs to be said again: It was greed more than anything else that lay behind the growth of racism and maybe even the creation of it. It might seem ironic that *after* the emancipation of slaves and *after* civil rights for Jews in Europe, racism against dark-skinned people and Jews became more intense. But it makes perfect sense. Liberation of minority groups made the white population feel more threatened. Now wealth and economic opportunity would have to be shared with the Other. The value of racism for the white majority is that it offered new ways to suppress economic equality. The humanitarian impulse behind liberation of slaves could be throttled and limited in its effect, while at the same time credit could be claimed for having a humanitarian impulse that led to a very limited liberation.

The fact is that humanitarianism was never allowed to have its full say. The humanitarian impulse was narrow in its operation, creating a shortsighted version of emancipation and nothing more. Except in a very few, like Gerland, Bannister, Napier, and Richard Hill, no one used that impulse to examine the greed that led to slavery in the first place and that would continue to affect the lives of those formerly enslaved. Greed could make sure that economic power remained in the hands of a few. This was worked out to perfection in the colonies. Racism would be an action system to secure the

success of greed. Beliefs were merely secondary.

Perhaps the most striking thing about Darwin's work is that one man in one and the same book could write, "Natural selection acts only tentatively" (*Descent*, 167), and then with such assurance tell his readers that the inferior races of the world had only a few more centuries to live. We will inherit everything, which is the very most that greed can promise. It is truly ironic that the man who came up with natural selection did not foresee that natural selection in the form of indigenous people rebelling would subvert the complete success of the racist artificial selection of colonialism. Natural selection was never inherently racist. It was only Darwin's use of it that was.

~ 7 ~

There have been a number of books recently that try to explain the success (they always mean material success) of the west. Nicholas Wade's *A Troublesome Inheritance* is in part about that. Niall Ferguson's *Civilization: The West and the Rest* is all about that. There is no doubt about some of the achievements in this or that area, which we have claimed constitute one overriding success. That claim is doubtful. But we have a right to be proud of some of the accomplishments. That pride was there in the 19th century. The west was leading the way in seeking and gaining knowledge of nature (at least any knowledge that will help us manipulate nature, all other knowledge being chucked to the wind), in inventing things, like military weapons but also generally improving the material well-being of people, making advances in medicine, in sanitation, in growing food, perfecting mass entertainment (some of which is quite good and quite a relief in a world that will weary you down to the bone), and in building a more complex society and living arrangements. Much of this has been worthwhile.

Only read the "philosophical notes" of Erasmus Darwin's epic poems written in the late 18th century and you can see all the ingenuity and inventiveness of the west bubble up in almost every comment. He is constantly suggesting experiments for other philosophers, i.e., scientists, to try and he wonders if we can create machines to do this, that, and the other thing, to make our society more productive and our lives easier. The intellect of an Erasmus Darwin is the best the west has ever had to offer.

This is all great and I can only marvel at a mind like his that was so curious, so inventive, and so optimistic about what our society can do. BUT it has also has to be said that this society which was so good at feeling its oats and stretching its muscles to solve every problem became incredibly arrogant. Our very talents made us arrogant. We believed we were leading the way for all of humanity, and because benefits would accrue to all, it was perfectly

okay if we gave free reign to our greed. So what if we took a little more? So what if there were casualties along the way? So what if there was a cost to this that has never been measured? We have a right to commit plenty of mistakes, considering all the good we were doing.

It may seem perverse, indeed an oxymoron, to conjecture an imperialism of the Enlightenment. Yet benevolent and emancipatory hopes, as we have seen, easily lent their sanction to coercive projects. British 'improvers' moved, at home and abroad, in the faith that they ultimately knew better than those on the ground. Their confidence depended, in part, on the assumption that they possessed a more profound understanding of how Nature worked ... The Scientific Revolution ... appeared to offer Europeans new and special modes of reason. [Richard Drayton, 90]

Science in a sense is neutral, but ironically and unwisely, it is almost never put to neutral use. *The Origin of Species* is a classic example of that. We have convinced ourselves that our prejudiced and self-interested, even coercive, usage of science is ideal science, and we've trained ourselves not to look too closely at the consequences.

None of the bad consequences mattered because what we were headed for--a great consumer society---justified any missteps and overkill that might take place. It's all part of destiny, the march of progress. The people who sit on top of the world get the privilege of making a lot of mistakes. And being on top of the world, they don't have to answer to anybody, and they get the bulk of the benefits.

That's not how ancient Jews saw it. I mean, the Pharisees and rabbis who did more than give us ethics. They insisted that everybody must be held accountable for their deeds, even the people at the top. People in power are no exception. No one is above the Torah/Constitution. No one rises to divinity. We are all mortal, we are all low, we all come from a humble place. We are motivated by low, selfish desires probably more than we would like to admit. Divinity is something to think about as an ideal to guide ourselves by, not something we actually become. It is something we can have a relationship to, not something we own. It is a standard we can all argue about. We can incorporate some of it into a Constitution, but it will never be perfect or perfectly captured. The Constitution is always incomplete and serves as a guide in a never-ending debate. Like evolution, the Constitution is a continuing creation. Nobody owns it. Nobody owns power or possesses it to an infinite degree. We can oppose power that does too much crushing.

Destiny is no excuse. Progress is no excuse. Nothing is an excuse for the excesses of power. Like Hillel said: In a place, where there are no men, stand up and be a man. Or a woman. Be a class act who questions progress, a sacred cow if ever there was one.

~ 8 ~

I have mentioned recent books by Niall Ferguson and Nicholas Wade. Both are celebrations of western domination disguised as objective study of cultures. Ferguson denies he is doing this: "Make no mistake: this is not another self-satisfied version of 'The Triumph of the West'" (*Civilization*, 13). But that is exactly what he is doing (see 5, where he refers to those who would dispute that the west has conquered all over the world and who argue that "the West cannot claim superiority ..."; he calls their view "demonstrably absurd.") Ferguson exults that even where western countries may be losing some political power, they have still succeeded in westernizing the rest of the world with its inventions, style of dress, modes of economic competition, and emphasis on consumerism.

The defenders of western imperialism take one of two approaches: Either they refuse to discuss its deep faults (such as excessive greed, violence, arrogance) and refuse to consider whether and how much this contributed to the success of the west, à la Nicholas Wade in *A Troublesome Inheritance*, or they acknowledge but understate the bad qualities and the harm inflicted, and claim that whatever the injuries, the benefits outweighed them, à la Niall Ferguson in *Civilization: The West and the Rest*. Both approaches want to make the west look good by playing up the benefits, hoping to blind us to anything that might detract from a story of unparalleled good.

Given that western imperialism did some good things, the question that is just begging to be asked is: At what cost to the indigenous peoples were these benefits accomplished? No one knows better than Ferguson that "At what cost?" is always the supreme question. He has no hesitation asking this question for other political societies or systems that he finds reprehensible.

Ferguson is clearly no admirer of the French Revolution and I cannot blame him for that. Whatever value came out of the French Revolution, it has to be weighed against its costliness in blood and repression. Ferguson is glad to bring up this point for France's radical pursuit of liberty and equality (149-57). He calls it "the first demonstration in the modern age of the grim truth that revolutions devour their own children" (153; cf. 155, 157). He is proud of Edmund Burke for having seen so early what was happening in France (150-51). Ferguson nails Stalin's regime in a single sentence: For the years that witnessed an increase in industrial production from 1929 to 1932, "few asked

how many people died for every ton of steel produced under Stalin (the answer was nineteen)" (231).

Burke was admirable for his insights about the French Revolution. But so were Charles Napier, Saxe Bannister, Langfield Ward, Georg Gerland, John Locke, and so many others for their insights about the faults and costs of imperialism. Does Ferguson admire them as well? Napier rebuked Parliament for its action of "publicly to tell a lie" when it deemed a territory in Australia to be uninhabited (Napier, 213). Locke stood up for the future generations who would complain of losing their land. The 1837 *Report* of the House Select Committee on Aborigines in addition to decrying the injustice of an imperialism run amok also pointed to the economic insanity of it. Not doing well by savages made for "unprofitable customers" (*Report*, 45; also see 44, 51, 73-74, 75 where it frequently returns to the theme of the harm done to the economy when savages become a burden on the State instead of productive members).

All these people were as wise in their way as Burke was in his. Would Ferguson be willing to admit that? Well, we all have our heroes, though I no longer call mine heroes. Whenever someone says, "Look! Look over there! There's a hero, let's celebrate him," I say we should look around and see who's being erased. More often than not, 'hero' is a misdirection. It's not that there aren't heroes in history. There are. It's just that the term is being used to make us miss some of the really great ones.

Ferguson knows that "At what cost?" is the real bottom line in history. Yet he makes sure to stay very far from asking this question about European imperialism. *He adopts a double standard in the study of history.* (The only time he asks about the costs of imperialism, he means the cost to the imperial country; see *Civilization*, 306.) The victims of the French Revolution and Stalin matter enough to Ferguson to cast doubt on the overall value of those political events, but the victims of European imperialism do not matter enough to shake his conviction in the supreme worth of western empires.

Ferguson will acknowledge that some bad things happened as the west pursued its imperialism. "Western civilization is far from flawless. It has perpetrated its share of historical misdeeds, from the brutalities of imperialism to the banality of the consumer society" (324). One of his techniques is to occasionally acknowledge some brutality here and there, so that he can claim to have been historically honest, but he never gives it his full attention as he does the positive aspects of western culture. It is like the current political euphemism, "Mistakes were made," uttered by officials when they are investigated at hearings. They mean, of course, "So what? Let's forget about it and move on." In Ferguson's book, page after page extols the west, with only

an occasional interruption to lament a rare mistake. Ferguson is almost always brief about western misdeeds and never sees them as part of the reason for material success. They are aberrations that do not deserve to be incorporated in his central story.

Despite his claim that the peoples subjugated by the west "are equally important members of the drama's cast" (xxv), it is clear that if you removed these lines from the preface, you would never glean this thought from the rest of the book. The full story of these peoples is absent. They matter to Ferguson only in so far as they prove the west's ability to westernize everyone. He is as dismissive of other peoples as Bagehot was when he said "we need not take account of the mistaken ideas of unfit men and beaten races" (Bagehot, 209), though Ferguson would never put it quite so starkly. What Bagehot and Ferguson are saying is that the opinion of the losers in history do not count.

There is much to admire in the development of the west---things like an open society, a spirit of innovation and the freedom to innovate, competition of the healthy kind, some consumerism, advances in medicine, the rule of law, the work ethic, and more. Both Wade and Ferguson give us a generous selection of these qualities. But words like justice and injustice do not appear in their analysis of the success of the west. Nor do they consider whether extreme greed may have been a factor in western success. The west may have gained more because it wanted more and was willing to be ruthless about it. Ruthlessness was not an element in this triumph as they see it. I don't mind celebration when it honestly presents itself for what it is---there is a lot to be genuinely celebrated---but why call that objective examination of the evidence, which is what both Ferguson and Wade claim to be doing?

Everything is slanted in favor of appreciating the west's greatness. Ferguson never clarifies for his readers that the rule of law (a great western achievement) applied to the invaders and their relationships to each other as they competed for wealth. It never applied to the natives. Europeans had mixed motives, he tells us. "Some came to invest, others to rob" (146). But how does one invest, in the legitimate sense of the word, in land and resources that were stolen to begin with?

The presumed bottom line which Ferguson adopts for his arguments is that the benefits of imperialism have far outweighed any harm inflicted. He just never consults those who have been harmed to find out what they think. He has little patience with criticism that would see it any other way. "Empire has become a dirty word, despite the benefits conferred on the rest of the world by the European imperialists" (288). Even contemporary criticism of imperialism at its height was wrong: "perhaps contemporaries should have praised the English 'savings glut' rather than grumbled about imperialism" (219). This is

just a more polite way of making Bagehot's point that the viewpoint of losers does not count. Ferguson's position is easy to sustain as long as you underrate the harm that was done.

If we reject Ferguson's double standard, the question has to be asked---just as we ask it about the French Revolution or Soviet Communism or unrestrained capitalism or monopolies or protest movements or anything---what was the cost? For Ferguson, the victims in France and the Soviet Union matter. But Aborigines do not matter in the same way to him, so he will never ask, What was the cost of colonialism to indigenous peoples? Forsake the glib answer that, oh yes, well, of course, there were some bad things (mistakes were made!), but the benefits were greater than the injuries. How could anyone know this without a full investigation? It might be more difficult to come up with numerical answers in some colonies. How many Aborigines in Australia died for every ton of wool produced? In Tasmania, an island, the population was fixed at a certain initial amount and could not deteriorate below zero, so the ratio of people killed to tons of wool produced might not be as dramatic as in Stalin's Russia. But there will be ways of totaling up the good and the bad and finding a reasonable measure of the real costs and benefits.

The trouble with the celebration of western imperialism is not just that it is dishonest about the full truth of the subject, but that it is dishonest about what it really wants, about its own greed to have it all. Granted that there are some benefits to imperialism that we can hold onto, the celebrants of it seem to be saying that it is not enough that we have invaded, we conquered, we stole, and we killed---we were the outright victors---we must also win in history. All historical memories must be ours, must be from our point of view, or else our victory is incomplete. We must be vindicated. We must be seen *and remembered* as good and beneficent. We gave more than we took. We need total control of history to hammer home that point and ensure the final victory. We must assume either that we did nothing wrong or that the benefits we brought far exceeded the harm, and that these benefits were unquestionably the result of the good things and not the bad stuff like rapacity and bloodthirsty violence. The tragedies of the indigenous cannot have nearly the same weight as our accomplishments.

The need to make such an argument may be very great, but this is not objective history. This is loaded history. This is greed raised to the n^{th} degree. We want control of the present and the past and the future. This is history made to serve the memories of the powerful conquerors and dashing to pieces all other memories. This is a complete takeover of history by one group that dictates the terms. It is this that ancient rabbinic thinking objected to. Did

injustice, excessive greed, arrogance, some bloodthirstiness (varying from country to country), and a lot of cruelty play a significant role in the material success of the west? If they did, Ferguson and Wade fail to consider it.

The defenders of western colonialism are making large claims, but in another way, there is a smallness to their vision. It is like saying we have a right to defend our way of life but you don't have a right to defend yours. The hypocrisy of this is heightened by the fact that the western way of life contains a lot of aggression, whereas the indigenous way is relatively passive--certainly less grasping and more content to enjoy the given (how often they were accused of laziness)---and yet we think they have less right to form their homeland security and defend their quieter lives. We have shrunk our sense of right and wrong.

Ferguson wants to believe that what's done is done. All we can do is look back and say we regret the excesses that took place, the violence and denigration, and hope it is all truly behind us. Is that all we can do? Could we not also look back and give a full accounting? Do we owe that much? What does it mean to regret the violence and the stealing? How do we regret without telling the full truth? Do we also regret our arrogance and self-righteous attitude that God or nature or history ordained us to be the winners? Most societies and systems will create a mixture of victims and beneficiaries. The question Ferguson knows is right but is unwilling to face is this: The imperial success of the west was achieved at what cost to the indigenous populations?

"At what cost?" is really just another way of asking, "Do the so-called losers in history get any say in deciding whether progress was at too high a cost?" Many people will respond that if that is allowed, it is a foregone conclusion what their answer will be. They will obviously condemn progress. Maybe. But then it's a foregone conclusion what the victors will decide. Is there no objective answer?

The only answer may be that the dead and their descendants must be respected. Treating native peoples as just so much fodder in the cause of progress is not respect. Is it that the victors are afraid that if they listen with too much sympathy to the voices of the dead, they will become just like those people whom they listen to? There is a risk in listening. The only answer may be to just do it and then see where that takes us. Nothing is permanent, and nature as a whole may have other plans for us.

In these days of religious terrorism which seeks only to commit ungodly murders and which confers absolutely no benefits on anyone, western imperialism can seem like a blessing. At least it can claim not to be an unmitigated evil. But this has nothing to do with our responsibility to confront

our own peculiar mixture of good and evil. The ultimate question for western civilization is whether humanitarianism can become as strong a force as our hunger for continual material improvements. Can it make an equal claim on our desires? Or will we forever let it slide into second place or even lower?

~ 9 ~

Some things are so hard to say, they are bound to come out a little bumpy. That would be true of the last section and this one too. Here is another shot at it.

What would a full accounting even mean, assuming it could be done and anybody really wanted to do it? What would it look like, and most importantly, with what spirit would it be done? Like so many things in life, it is not what you believe and what you do that matters, but how you believe and do it. Who will make this accounting is another question, but my concern here is: How will an accounting be done? Will it be done grudgingly, dismissively, if it is done by the conquerors, or vindictively, if it is done by the indigenous? Or will it be done with sympathy, by whichever side is doing it, and will it hit us hard and actually stop us in our tracks, when the conquerors think about how much we took and how we took it and how little we gave back? Can anything make us stop our constant hustle for progress and self-righteousness (we are the greatest culture, our science is great and pure, our democracy is incomparable and always fair)? No culture is always anything. But all those things might have some truth to them, if we were capable of picking up the pieces when we haven't done good.

Ferguson does not do a remotely adequate job at accounting the full costs of imperialism in *Civilization*, but he did much better in his previous book *Empire*. How did he do it though? In what spirit? As examples, he certainly discusses the genocide in Tasmania (*Empire*, 89), the severe violence used to repress the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica (160-63), and the Indian Mutiny in 1857 (121-28). He is not averse to using words like genocide (89) and ethnic cleansing (304). But it makes no difference in his conclusion about the value of western imperialism. One gets the feeling he could recount every single atrocity and he would still say: Despite the fact that "the record of the British Empire was [not] unblemished," it did so much good that "it more than justified its own existence" (304; the last comment is actually about its record in the 20th century). It was all worth it. Ferguson is able to relate atrocities and at the same time dismiss them as inconsequential in the grand scheme of western progress. He points out that the German and Japanese empires would have been worse (*ibid.*). That is true, but it is like threatening a child who complains of abuse, "Shut up, or it will go worse for you."

Ferguson has no difficulty making judgments in hindsight about worth. What would he have thought of humanitarian efforts at the time, if he had lived back then? What would he have said of contemporary proposals to make significant compensation for the land that was taken or to restore natives to their homelands? His passing comments on this are too slight for me to draw any conclusions. Overall, he seems like a full-steam-ahead-with-imperialism kind of guy. And what do we do with humanitarian complaints about our current situations? Or do we wait until it is over and then moan and move on, like we always do?

I can't help it, but I find "It was all worth it," like "mistakes were made," incredibly thoughtless and more than a little overbearing. Am I alone? I'm pretty sure I'm not, but if I were, the first thing I would say about that claim is that it does not pass the smell test. That is admittedly more intuitive than analytical. So I would follow it up with: It points to a double morality. I will explain. How many times have we seen the following scene in an action movie or TV drama? The bad guys have surrounded the good guys, who might number just a few or a couple of dozen. The bad guys want them to turn over one person and they will let the rest go. Aside from the fact that the bad guys are lying sons-of-bitches and can never be trusted, the good guys agree that they can never accept such an offer. The requested person is willing to surrender, but the rest won't have it. We are all in this together. We cannot sacrifice one for the greater good. It goes against all our principles.

We may not really believe in this kind of morality. It's noble, it's fanciful, it belongs in fiction, not in the real world. But we admire it, don't we? We wish it could be true. It feels right. The defenders of imperialism espouse the exact opposite morality. They have no problem sacrificing tens or hundreds of thousands of the indigenous for the greater good. They would gladly accept the terms of the bad guys. We'd boo them in a movie, wouldn't we? If an imperialist type thinker among the good guys spoke up and said that we are not all in this together, that we must give up one in order to save everyone else, we would gnash our teeth and grumble. But that's fiction. That's our better selves coming out in a dream. In the real world, we are on the side of imperialism and we believe in surrendering the innocent to the larger forces of progress.

That's the thing that underlies all imperialist thinking: We are definitely not all in this together. Humanity is disconnected and, as far as we are concerned, we are in it for ourselves. Sacrificing others, especially if it is the Other, is not a problem. It ain't hard to laugh at somebody else's troubles, it don't make you lose any sleep at night. It is just what Georg Gerland said: Civilization has rejected primitive peoples, the primitives did not reject

civilization. We are not in the same world. We have this double morality and we extend it to history. We memorialize *our* tragedies. When the worst events happen to us, we cry that we must never forget. But we are not sure that other peoples have the same right to never forget their tragedies.

For my part, I prefer French writer Pascal Bruckner who is in some ways just as conservative as Ferguson. He believes the west has been berated too much for its faults and its good deeds too often belittled. But in *The Tyranny of Guilt*, you can feel him wrestling with the agony of having a conscience. How do we remember things that are impossible to atone for? What do we do about it now, even as we admit that something has to be done? Are memories and rituals meaningful? Are they useless? If "being civilized means knowing that one is potentially a barbarian" (*Tyranny*, 39) and if "The finest gift Europe could give the world would be to offer it the spirit of critical examination" (221), can we achieve this without becoming deflated by endless self-flagellation or, at the other extreme, gratifyingly self-righteous? Does digging up all the bodies have to mean digging up all the hatreds (159) and will this "open a bottomless chest from which revenge and rage can be drawn to make contemporaries pay for the crimes of their ancestors" (*ibid.*)?

Ferguson does not wrestle. He just asserts that we should acknowledge some of the bad things and move on. He admits, then immediately moves on to "It was all worth it." Mistakes were made. The admission is presumptuous, it has no weight. It is lighter than air and floats away. Bruckner's admissions have gravity:

... there is no people that is not demanding full investigation into the offenses of which it has been the victim. It is not clear that humanity will be able to deal with this avalanche of demands, engaged as it is in a process of global exorcism of its misdeeds. *Crime will always exceed the possibilities of pardon, and memories will always be too numerous*: the dead will not be avenged or sufferings amended, wounds closed. *Healing is not certain*, nor are therapeutic rituals always effective. Too much impossible mourning will remain, too many accursed tragedies. *Only history, written or oral, can give these millions of dead the tomb they deserve*. One thing is sure: we are only at the beginning of this mechanism. All these expressions of suffering, all these distressing memories are going to multiply because *the only inadmissible violence is dissimulation, silence*. [*Tyranny*, 214; emphases added]

I agree with those last words more than I know how to express. To deny a

voice to the so-called losers in history creates a silence that is abominable. The only answer to those who would enforce such a silence and such an injustice is to let those historical voices speak and we will see what happens. If we cannot do that, then doing what is right has no place in this world.

~ 10 ~

When we write about history and think about the future, some of us are looking for an answer to the question, Is there a God? I think that's what gives me a growing ache in my chest, the more I look into this. Is there a God of justice? I don't mean finding out that there is more justice than injustice in the world. That hope is long gone. I don't mean correcting injustices of the past with the justice of truth-telling. Historical justice is an oxymoron. There's no such thing. The only true historical justice would be to prevent the original injustice from happening. It is way too late for anything like that.

I'm not sure what I mean by finding God in historical study. Maybe the ache in my chest is that I fear I will find out it means nothing at all. Could we at least build a shrine to commemorate what happened? At this spot in the road in the course of history, some people were destroyed, some got rich, some were buried, most were forgotten. Let's write it all down. And can we build one that won't be kicked down by know-it-all academics with self-serving credentials? Both Bruckner and Ferguson are conservatives. Here is the difference between them: Bruckner would welcome and respect any shrines that tell the truth; Ferguson would kick them over and put in their place odes to progress and material success.

While I was pondering what to say in this section and how to say it, I happened to turn on the TV. There was an episode of an old series, *Route 66* with Martin Milner as Tod and George Maharis as Buz; the show follows the exploits of the two protagonists as they travel America. In a previous episode, they called themselves the look-arounders, meaning to oppose their way of life to that of the hunters. This time, somewhere on a lonely road, they have been shanghaied into teaching kids in what looks like a mostly Spanish-Indian, very small, very poor town in New Mexico. The title of the episode is "Trap at Cordova"; "it's not on the map," as one character says. Their little school does not have state approval. The kids are supposed to be bused to a bigger school, three hours traveling each day, fifteen hours a week, and they need the kids to help with work in the fields. The police threaten to close the small school.

At the end, Tod, who is Yale educated, goes to a legislative committee in Santa Fe to plead the cause of these poor people. (His partner Buz says to him, All I'm saying is if, whatziz name, Mr. Smith can go to Washington, why

can't you go to Santa Fe?) He cannot speak to the economic issues of big versus little schools, but he can tell them a bit about the human side of the story. This is what Tod tells the committee (these words are mostly correct, but I'm not sure they are verbatim, which is why I am not putting this in quotation marks; also, I left out a lot, but I believe I caught the main points): This place isn't going anywhere. There's no justification for it on the basis of economics. In Cordova, they live for today. They don't care to think ahead. They don't believe in progress. Maybe that's wrong, maybe not. The world is already moving fast enough. Do we have to take all the little towns and make them part of that? If Cordova is going to die, let it do so in its own time. Or maybe they'll just outlive us all.

All this, and more, is in his speech. It could have come from a 19th century humanistic appeal to a colonial power, word for word. Let them live out their lives by their own choices. If they pass from this world, let them pass in their own time, on their own terms, not ours.

We should build shrines, lots of them. (And the shrines come from an episode of *The Closer* [Brenda Leigh was given a lesson by a traffic cop in what motor vehicle accidents mean to the surviving families], which I was watching at the same time as *Route 66*, flipping back and forth between the channels. Two TV shows from today and yesterday talking to each other over the decades.) Is there a God of the small and the voiceless and the run-over? Is there? Or is the only God the one who looks with favor on nothing but more material progress coming from further on down the road? Who will tell us which one to pray to? We should build lots of shrines and find out if there is a God who gives his blessing. We should build them out of respect and out of curiosity, if we have any left.

We should build shrines to all the Aborigines who did not fit in with western modernity. We should build shrines for all the humanitarians who tried to push western science and politics in a more humane direction and kept trying, despite the polished, savage resistance to their efforts. We should mark every spot along the road where they disappeared from history. The future may belong to the triumphant, but history belongs to everyone, or else it is a lie.

~ 11 ~

If revolution was in the air---for the rights of men and women everywhere---it was embraced by very few and Darwin was not going to be among them. I cannot explain why except to say that it was not part of his social heritage. Being anti-slavery was part of it (anti-legalized slavery, that is; let's be clear and specific about what really happened in history). Many people of his class

were. Practically his whole family was. Darwin was not being especially revolutionary as an abolitionist. As for his scientific "revolution", it was aimed at a small part of religion, a small part about how God created the world, by establishing that creation is not an arbitrary act of God's will but proceeds according to an intelligible plan with causes and effects, and Darwin was not the first to promote this view or prove it probable. Is that all there is to his revolution?

His revolution insisted on man in order. Man in disorder, man in social disorder, man questioning order, would never be in the order of Darwin's vision. He really did not like it when anyone questioned whether natural selection could explain everything about human beings.

There are more things in heaven and earth than we can possibly dream of because we limit our looking---we limit the evidence that we allow ourselves to see. Academics in most fields fail to tell us the full panoply of the evidence. They give us misdirections instead. But the evidence tells us that this problem---of order or disorder, of strict hierarchy or diversity---has been around throughout history. The people who wrote the Torah and the people in the Torah thought about it a lot. The Tower of Babel story tells us that people at one time early in the history of humankind were enslaved to serve one task, the building of the Tower. This was imperialism. God did not like that and scattered mankind into disorder, creating many languages, peoples, cultures. Man in order (perhaps I should say fascist order, or the order of racism) was too much for God, a betrayal of what he believed humanity was meant to be. I am interpreting a bit, but not much. It is as if God were saying, I am going to create an illusion of many different human cultures, and your task will be to learn to see that you are all connected: Respect the differences before you seek unity.

We have not advanced beyond ancient cultures. Our modern Tower of Babel is consumer electronics or perhaps technology in general. We seek to enslave every culture to serve that one goal. There is no progress. We are just traveling in a circle. And we are stuck with another Tower of Babel---the classifying of human beings into order, rank, and races. Instead of respecting the differences and seeking a unity founded on differences, we have turned disconnection into something to be worshiped as a hard and fast truth that separates us. We try to force everyone into serving technology and those cultures that don't are declared inferior. We have not learned anything from the biblical lesson. This is not about religion. This is about a deep cultural problem in western society. You cannot escape existential dilemmas. This holds whether you are religious or secular. The ancients wrestled with them just as much as we do, but we choose to forget that by rewriting ancient

documents like the Bible. As we have chosen to eliminate much of the evidence of what Darwin wrote about savages and create a fictional version of the real person, we do it to ancient Hebrew culture as well, creating a fictional Bible in place of the real one.

Paul tried to tell us that God loves oneness. God passed his promise, his covenant, down through one man each time---from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob and finally to Christ (Romans 9:6-13). Paul would replace Jew and Greek with a single people serving one cause, Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28). Oneness, man in order, is a big theme with Paul. He was reinventing the Babel Tower. Paul failed to tell us that the Hebrew Bible was just as much, if not more, about diversity. He did not stop to see that the covenant was passed on to twelve tribes and not only to the twelve tribes but also to the non-Jewish foreigners who were among the mixed multitude that went up out of Egypt (Deut 29:10-12). It didn't suit Paul's theme. He missed a lot about how diversified the members of the covenant originally were.

God made a promise to Abraham but Moses makes it official. It goes into effect on one particular day: "...the sworn covenant of the Lord your God, which the Lord your God makes with you this day" (Deut 29:12). Moses did not just say that today is the day that God enacts the covenant with you. As in any good contract, he has to spell out what he means by 'you' (or 'all of you' as he says at 29:10). Who is this 'you' that God is making a covenant with? It is "the heads of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and the sojourner [or foreigner, immigrant; Hebrew: *ger*] who is in your camp, both he who hews your wood and he who draws your water" (29:10-11). The covenant is not just with Israel, but with the stranger, sojourner, alien, immigrant, foreigner (all are correct translations of *ger*) who is in the midst of Israel (the current preference of Hebrew scholars seems to be resident alien). There is no implication that the *gerim* are here only awaiting conversion. They are accepted as foreigners.

Thirty-six times in the Torah the stranger or immigrant is mentioned (this is the traditional rabbinic count). Jews are bidden not to forget the immigrant, to help or be kind to the immigrant, do not do him wrong, practice justice towards him, keep one set of laws for both native-born and immigrant (the immigrant is not to be judged by a different set of laws), and yes, even to love the immigrant and stranger because Jews were once strangers in a foreign land and know what that is like (e.g., Ex 22:21, 23:9; Lev 19:33-34; Deut 27:19). There is no commandment to convert the immigrant.

Kindness to the stranger who remains a stranger---the Other---is central to the foundational consciousness of Jewish culture. Israel is not a monolithic dream of a homogenous people. It was always about diversity. Pointedly, at

no point are the children of Israel commanded to conquer a large portion of the earth and to convert the stranger to the single cause of Israel. There is no divinely sanctioned imperialism in the Torah. Jews are to establish a small home with well-defined borders and must respect differences in the immigrant. To conquer the world and subject it to one system is such an un-Jewish aspiration and so anti-Torah.

Paul never embraced the Pharisaic/rabbinic emphasis on diversity or multiplicity. "Once God has spoken, twice have I heard this ..." (Psalm 62:11). The rabbinic interpretation of this verse was that there are multiple meanings hidden in Torah; you can break each verse into pieces and splinters by striking it with a hammer (Sanhedrin 34a). The oneness of God translated into multiple meanings in rabbinic tradition---and multiple cultural identities. God may be one for the ancient Jews, but his message is tolerance of diversity.

For my purposes, the two outstanding points the Torah makes several times about the stranger are: "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him" (Ex 22:21; cf. Ex 23:9, Deut 10: 18-19 and 23:7) and "You shall have one law for the sojourner and for the native" (Lev 24:22; cf. Ex 12:49, Num 9:14, 15:16, 29). An alternative version of the latter is "The stranger [or immigrant] who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native [or citizen] among you" (Lev 19:34). (For many of my remarks here, I am indebted to Terence Donaldson's wonderful *Judaism and the Gentiles*; for his comments on the Hebrew *ger*, see 484-86; he finds 68 mentions in the five books of Moses alone.) In other words, do not differentiate or discriminate against the stranger. One law for both alien and native. Diversity within a unified legal system. Do not disconnect from the alien. This harks back to what I said early on (Ch. 2, §5) about Granville Sharp's insight that slavery is "destructive of the human species" (*Representative*, 80, 97). It is destructive by virtue of disconnecting social groups from each other. Injustice towards a part will reverberate through the whole and bring harm to other parts. This is implicit in the Torah too: Native and alien are bound together into a whole of mutual justice and respect.

It is wrong to think of the Torah as a collection of divine commands. A better description would be that it is a combination of divine suggestions and divine wrestling with human ego, desire, greed, and human customs---with existing categories of human life. Native and stranger are a given, a part of human reality. The Torah does not establish native-born and strangers as categories to be observed. They were already there. Nor does it outright abolish these categories. One could say it undermines them in the following way. What it does is to say, or suggest, that *if* you are going to have such

categories (the Torah is often forced to accept the human situation), then this is how you shall handle them: Do not oppress; do not establish separate laws; do not differentiate and disconnect from the stranger; remember your connections to these people whom you call aliens; remember and connect to your own experiences as an alien ("for you were aliens in the land of Egypt," Ex 22:21, Lev 19:34, Deut 10:19). A few thousand years later, Granville Sharp would make some of the same points.

Wherever humanitarians have appeared in history, they have worried about disconnection as the source of even worse problems, like racism, xenophobia, and genocide. They have worried about the destruction of the human species and the harmonious wholeness of creation---whereas the hierarchists never worry about any of this but simply assert that any instance of subordination or extermination is a part of nature's plan and, more importantly, necessary for progress. The battle between these two views---holistic versus hierarchical---has never ceased.

I am not introducing a religious theme into the secular topic of evolutionary theory. Religion has nothing to do with it. I am combating or attempting to combat modern arrogance. The existential themes of life have been around forever. The ancients were as much concerned with them as we are. They were just as sophisticated, just as rational, just as historical, just as sensible and foolish as we are in attempting to figure out what is what. We are not superior. We have nothing over them. They too struggled to understand human nature, where we fit in the scheme of things, where we come from, and whether we can tolerate diversity or do we have to force everything into one mold. Is holism or hierarchy a better, more truthful way to view the world? Their answers are comparable to our answers and as good as ours. Their mistakes were just like our mistakes. The grammar of their wrestling with these questions may have been different than ours, but I can assure you that they were no less rational than we were.

One of the worst things we ever did was invent the word *religion*. There is no such thing as religion. There are only *cultures*, which is a broader and looser term, much less loaded with preconceptions than *religion* is. Existential problems never change. That's what we should pay attention to, that's what ails us, and not the manufactured, bogus conflict between religion and the secular. Existential dilemmas, often the exact same ones, remain in every culture, and calling them *secular* or *religious* does not change a thing.

In the play *Ajax* by the very ancient Greek writer Sophocles, Ajax enters the scene completely mad. The goddess Athena, visible to the audience but invisible to the human characters on stage, mocks him and enjoys her act of having driven him crazy. But if we pay attention, we realize that Ajax has

gone mad because he had always considered himself to be the number one warrior in the world and now he has just lost a contest with Odysseus. For the first time in his life, he is the second best fighter in the world. His self-image has been shattered. He cannot adjust or bend, so he breaks. He goes mad and then commits suicide. Ajax could not accept that he could be more than one thing.

When Odysseus appears later on, he tries to convince the authorities to give Ajax an honorable burial despite the shame of his suicide. Odysseus, we realize, has the flexibility that Ajax lacked. The rules of tradition are pliable for him. He would rather bend (including bending his attachment to tradition) than break. (I owe this interpretation of *Ajax* to a great philosophy teacher I had at Queens College in New York, Professor Henry Wolz---one of the great teachers who become more unforgettable as time passes.) It reminds me that the Talmud points out that copies of Torah are made with the pliable reed, and not a more rigid implement, to teach us that to study and learn Torah you have to be as bendable as that reed (Ta'anith 20b). Torah, even in each of its verses, is more than one thing. Only the man or woman who bends can fully appreciate what Torah has to tell us.

(Ancient Greek wisdom was not very different from the rabbinic sort. Some of the points made above about the stranger and native-born are similar to a theme in the Greek play *Medea* which is in part about the place of barbarians, Medea's culture, in Greek society, which is represented by her husband Jason, but I do not feel qualified to further comment on this play.)

I am not here to proclaim that the central message of Torah is to learn to bend or to love the stranger. There is no one final lesson. The Bible, like the writings of Darwin or the essays of Wallace or the varied output of Rabelais or the plays of Shakespeare or the plays of the Greeks, has no one theme. Any great work has multiple threads running through it. 'God don't like empire or oneness' is one theme of Torah, not the ultimate theme. The problem of one versus many, autocratic rule (in personal or social life) versus the flexibility of diversity, goes back for ages. We are just as capable as the ancients of letting irrationality intrude into our system of knowledge (science) and they were just as sophisticated as we are in finding rational answers. We are not superior, better, wiser. We see and we are blind. This includes the so-called great ones in our society. If Darwin came up short in some respects, it is a far more serious problem that we have come up short in discussing what he said. It is nothing but arrogance to misrepresent his complete views. It is arrogance to treat him or any modern figure as superior to previous accomplishments. If we are serious about defeating arrogance and if we truly (as opposed to hypocritically) believe that this is one of the purposes of

science, then we had better learn this---learn it well and learn it fast---that our "advances" are just travels in a circle.

~ 12 ~

A last ditch attempt to save Darwin from the charge of racism comes to us from Stephen Jay Gould. Gould knew very well that Darwin had his prejudices and could in no way be considered an egalitarian. "The common (and false) impression of Darwin's egalitarianism arises largely from selective quotation" (*Mismeasure*, 417). He recognized that towards some peoples Darwin felt contempt (ibid.) and that Darwin arranged peoples "in a hierarchy of cultural advance, with white Europeans on top and natives of different colors on the bottom" (416). But this is not racism, Gould argued, because a) Darwin was not a biological determinist, that is, he believed savages had the potential to improve, and b) his prejudices amounted to paternalism, not racism. Using Gould's own standards, it is possible to prove that he was wrong.

First, I should note that I presented enough evidence in Chapters 2, 3, and 5 to establish that Darwin did lean in the direction of biological determinism. The best spin one could put on his work is that he might be said to be a cautious determinist, but it is clear that in *The Descent of Man*, he was fond of citing physical evidence that put savages closer to the world of animals. He even mentioned differences in the convolutions of the brain between Europeans and savages (*Descent*, 196; cf. 228, 229). Darwin made it clear that this will have profound differences in intellectual capacity. If one believes the brains are very different, this will not leave room for a belief that savages can improve to the white man's level.

Gould ignored this direct evidence of Darwin's biological determinism. But even if we assume that Gould was right about Darwin believing savages were improvable and therefore not trapped in inferiority, it turns out to be a distinction without a difference. In another essay in *The Mismeasure of Man*, Gould eloquently describes the effects of believing in biological determinism: "Few tragedies can be more extensive than the stunting of life, few injustices deeper than the denial of an opportunity to strive or even to hope, by a limit imposed from without, but falsely identified as lying within" (60-61). That is exactly what colonialism did, when it wasn't murdering people. It stunted life, denied opportunities, and imposed this from without, while claiming the limitations were due to the internal nature of savages. So does it really matter if Darwin was technically a biological determinist or not, if ultimately he gave his tacit assent to the colonial project (tacit in *Descent* by virtue of its euphemisms, but much bolder in *Origin*)? I can't see that it does. It's the same

difference, no matter how you slice it or dice it. Paternalism is a misdirection that Gould gave himself so that he wouldn't see the evidence of Darwin's support for the colonial enterprise and what it was doing to natives. If you are looking for examples of the stunting of life, it does not get any more stunting than extermination.

Colonialism denied Aborigines opportunities by disconnecting them from their land, from the law, and from other human beings, even from good scientific thinking. In the words of Georg Gerland, Aborigines did not reject civilization, rather civilization rejected them. Another word for rejection is disconnection. Colonialism thus fulfilled an essential premise of racism---the activity of disconnecting people from humanity. This is exactly what Ahad Ha-Am said in 1894 about how racism against Jews is possible in a world that is generally becoming more humane: "When we are occupied with Humanity, we forget about the Jews, and when we are occupied with the Jews, we forget about Humanity" (Ahad Ha-Am, 106). Forgetting is another word for disconnecting.

The quality and quantity of deprecating remarks Darwin made about savages goes beyond mere paternalism. And I don't see how anyone can call the calm acceptance of their disappearance at the hands of Europeans paternalistic. Is it a paternal instinct to tolerate a people's eradication? This is not just about Darwin. The failures of Darwin here were the failures of the mainstream science of his day. And the failure to see Darwin's truly bad anthropology is a failure of contemporary mainstream science and academic freedom.

Gould also made the inaccurate claim that "All [in Darwin's time] were racists by modern standards" (*Mismeasure*, 422), though earlier he had made an exception for Alfred Wallace who has been "justly hailed as an antiracist" (70). Never mind for a moment that Gould was wrong that Wallace was the only one. Even taking at face value that remark about all being racist, Gould acknowledged that there were harsher racists and kindlier racists; here, he said, is how we can distinguish them: "those we now judge most harshly urged that inferiority be used as an excuse for dispossession and slavery, while those we most admire in retrospect urged a moral principle of equal rights and nonexploitation, whatever the biological status of people" (422). I ask: Which one most accurately describes colonialism?

In the very next sentence, Gould claimed, "Darwin held this second position along with the two Americans best regarded by later history [Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln]." That is true only in regard to legal slavery. It is an untrue statement when it comes to the issue of colonialism and the extermination of the colonized. On that score, Darwin held the first position.

Colonialism was as dispossessing and exploitive as slavery. Darwin supported it as one of the consequences of native inferiority. It would be people like Wallace, Charles Napier, Georg Gerland, John Stokes, Saxe Bannister, Langfield Ward, and many members of the Aborigines' Protection Society who really fulfilled the position Gould admired. Darwin turned his back on what colonization and the idea of savage inferiority were doing to natives. Gould never addressed this. He brought his usual historical curiosity to a full stop.

~ 13 ~

Darwin the naturalist and Darwin the anthropologist were not the same creature, as I have said previously (Ch. 11, §1). The naturalist in Darwin would never condemn a bird for not using its wings to fly. Instead, he would ask what is the reason for this, how does this help this particular species of bird in its particular environment to be well-adapted for life. But in his anthropology, Darwin was quick to judge savages for being without morals or having low morals (as Europeans judged them). He was too ready to assume the worst and never asked how their culture adapted these people to the struggle for existence and to the physical conditions of their lives. He never thought about the various reasons for a particular custom, but always assumed it was due to some inferiority in them. Nor did he stop to consider that the overwhelming force of Europeans might not be natural and could be having a detrimental effect on native morals and morale.

And last but not least, he ascribed too much to war and battles in the so-called struggle for survival among savages. He never noticed how skilled they were at negotiation, diplomacy, and trading. He missed that part of human life completely.

All this should make us uncomfortable. I hope so. It is a serious matter that a great scientist could have been so misguided about the human condition. We might also wonder how it is that others who had access to the same information that Darwin had could have come to such different conclusions. I think the answer in part is that they paid attention to evidence that told us how much alike human beings are. In theory, Darwin saw some of this too, but he was so taken aback by what he considered profound differences that he convinced himself savages were morally and intellectually inferior. Gerland, Napier, Bannister, Wallace and others paid more attention to all the data, though they had their limitations as well. All tended to assume the superiority of western civilization and that its arrival could bring good things to the natives.

Gerland had a low opinion of many of the characteristics of indigenous

life---they were indolent, rigid in their ways, unable to raise themselves above nature, and possibly doomed to a very slow decay, even without outside influences. But Gerland was not stuck with a single lens to view native life. In Chapter 7 of his book, Gerland sees immoral excesses or dissipation (*Ausschweifungen*) among primitive peoples, particularly in regard to drunkenness and sexual depravity (he is hardest on the Polynesians), but he is extremely careful (much more so than Darwin) not to exaggerate and to keep himself open to other explanations. He does not believe everything he reads in the accounts of travelers.

Sometimes, he points out, accusations of immorality were invented to cover up or distract attention from European cruelty; sometimes incidents of immorality occurred but they were sporadic or confined to the nobility among savages and did not affect the people as a whole; sometimes stories of depravity were told to justify turning the savages into slaves. There is a lot going in the reports about native peoples. Too many people had made the facile claim that North American Indians were by nature addicted to alcohol. But Gerland states that we have to examine the facts more precisely. What he sees is that sometimes alcohol was forced on them and used to deceive them or even to annihilate them. And sometimes people will drink to escape despair. He also admires their efforts at resisting alcoholic beverages. It is complicated. Prone by nature to addiction is too easy an answer for Gerland.

Or look at his remarks about a fact that many travelers had noticed in some savage cultures: Men dressing like women. The quick assumption is that this is an unnatural vice. Gerland says not necessarily. Sometimes it played some kind of symbolic role in their traditions. Sometimes it symbolized their having been vanquished by another tribe, or it was used by priests-magicians in their rituals, or it could serve to mark someone as a coward, and sometimes, it was found that these men who dressed as women lived very modestly and were honored in their culture for their chastity.

What Gerland did (and others like Wallace and Napier) was that he brought a lot of goodwill to his study of other peoples. The goodwill anthropologists did not hear a report of something odd and then jump to the conclusion of inferiority and immorality. Maybe the growth of humanitarianism depends on something that simple: How much good intention do we bring to the table?

Remember that Gerland said that savages did not reject civilization, civilization rejected them. When civilization got the facts about savages wrong or analyzed them incorrectly, it was rejecting savages. When it assumed the worst about them, it was rejecting them. Rejection became the foundation of early European anthropology. It was another way of

disconnecting from native peoples. Remember that when we consider how things went awry. I sometimes wonder if Gerland's belief that the inability of indigenes to rise above nature would mean their eventual doom was also a way of rejecting them. I think it probably was and it is not to his credit. Fortunately, it was not the main thrust of his writing. In fact, his usually more generous approach gives us the tools and the sensibility to see this defect in his thinking process. I am grateful that overall he left us a better way to carry out anthropology. He was a far better anthropologist than Darwin, yet we don't remember him. And if anyone is in a thinking mood, think about this too: How come humanitarian scientists like Gerland and Wallace, imperfect though they were, did not become icons whom we honor? Or a non-scientist humanitarian like Napier. How come they have never been offered a membership card in the hall of heroes? Where are all the potential icons of yesteryear? Where did they go?

~ 14 ~

I pointed out earlier that Nicholas Wade and Niall Ferguson never fully discuss what the true cost of empire building was. There is nothing new in this. The representatives or spokespeople of our civilization have always done this. We can see it in George Rolleston's "Address on Anthropology", which I discussed in Chapter 3 (§5). He had sent his paper to Darwin for the purpose of disputing one slight point made by Walter Bagehot on the superiority of modern to ancient civilization. Neither Rolleston nor Darwin responded to Bagehot's emphasis on increased lethal abilities as one of the major accomplishments of their civilization.

At the end of his address, Rolleston ponders whether we have truly advanced from societies thousands of years ago. He is very hopeful that we have and is not fond of the pessimists' answer to this. Rolleston was something like the 19th century equivalent of Wade and Ferguson---very sure of the triumph and value of western culture. He believed the pessimists had drawn their evidence from "an exclusive contemplation of the bright side of the past" (905). He further believed that "Noble actions ... were not ... so very common in the olden times" and that they entertained "practices which the moral sense of all civilised nations has now definitely repudiated" (905). Our advances are indisputable. Ferguson could not have said it better. (Actually, Walter Bagehot is an even better exemplar of what Ferguson and Wade stand for: an unabashed belief in the superiority of modern western civilization.)

One might ask whether Rolleston painted modern morality---"the very really improved material, mental, and moral positions which we enjoy" (906)--in too bright colors. I would not dispute the material advance, but have we

progressed mentally and morally? Rolleston seems to think so---and advocates that we in the 19th century are a more humane society far beyond the ugly brutalities of the past. On the last page of this address, he writes:

Mutinies and rebellions are not altogether free from unpleasant incidents even in our days; but the execution of 6000 captives from a Servile War, in the way that Crassus executed his prisoners after the final defeat of Spartacus, viz. by the slow torture of crucifixion, is, owing to the advance of civilisation, no longer a possibility ... Much of what was most cruel, much of what was most foul in the daily life of the time, had ... the sanction of their state religion and the indorsement of their statesmen and emperors to support it. [906]

I believe one of the unpleasant incidents he was alluding to in the first sentence was the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica in 1865. It is striking how he trivializes the brutality of this "unpleasant incident" especially in view of his standards of what constitutes inhuman brutality, as I will explain below.

What is so peculiar about this entire comment is that he seems to be doing his best to suppress from his consciousness everything Bagehot had said about how deadly our civilization is when we approach "inferior" human beings---not only to suppress but to deny any truth that Bagehot's words might contain, to deny that the barbarity of crucifixions or their equivalent are not far behind us or beyond us. But before I say more about that, I have to state that I am very fond of Rolleston's actual very last words, which follow the above comment. He acknowledges the bravery of those men in classical times who risked their lives to improve their world, and he concludes, "What they did before, we have to do for those who will come after us." That deserves at least three amens. Yet there is something missing. In these last pages, Rolleston never once refers back to Bagehot, as if he were completely unaware that Bagehot had argued that the advance of civilization included not only the possibility of large scale killings, but the actual doing of it. He never sees in Bagehot, or rather what Bagehot was pointing to in their contemporary culture, the same kind of extraordinary violence that could be found in Roman times.

Rolleston seems to be doing his best to obliterate from his mind all the violence that his society was committing in many parts of the globe. He seems to have no sense that the last sentence (in the above blocked quote) which he wrote about classical civilization was just as true of western imperialism. Under modern colonialism, the sanctioning of brutal violence and the denial of justice had state support all the way. As for that first sentence, he is way

too dismissive of such "unpleasant incidents" as Morant Bay---439 killed, hundreds flogged, and 1,000 houses burned. The Royal Commission had called these punishments excessive, unnecessarily frequent, reckless, positively barbarous, wanton and cruel (see Semmel, 70). British society, including the conservative London *Times*, was horrified. Had Rolleston forgotten the cruelty of it? I would be willing to bet he had, since he could bury it under the rubric of "unpleasant incidents".

It might be objected that as bad as the Jamaican massacre was, it does not compare to the 6,000 crucified by Rome that Rolleston mentions. But a lot less than 6,000 killed in ancient times could distress Rolleston. When Rolleston laments the atrocities of the past, he also includes Roman gladiatorial combats, and "300 Spartans sacrificed to the law-abiding instincts of their race at Thermopylae", and "the numbers of Helots whom Spartan policy massacred in cold blood not so many years after", and those "whom the polished and cultivated Athenians butchered in the same way" (note the use of 'polished' and recall Darwin's use of 'butchered' in his original *Diary* for what was being done to the Indians), and to cap it off, he can even regret that Homer did not spare more than five words in one line "to express reprobation for the slaughter of the twelve Trojan youths at the pyre of Patroclus" (all on 905). True butchery and barbaric bloodthirstiness are not found in numbers alone. Rolleston and Darwin knew that. It could be found in the killing of twelve young men.

Rolleston was portraying his own culture in too noble a color and repressing the violence that a naive Bagehot had almost inadvertently brought attention to. Rolleston and Darwin would have known that repeating rifles and machine guns had been invented and utilized in their time. They were not invented to hunt animals. They had only one purpose: To kill human beings *en masse* and as quickly as possible. This was not an abrupt frenzy of violence. This was cold, calculated violence that would lead to what Victor Hanson has called "a sustained industrial approach to slaughter" at Verdun, in his book *Carnage and Culture* (9). It would be wrong to judge Rolleston or Darwin in hindsight and blame them for not anticipating the horrors of both World Wars and the Holocaust. I would not even critique them for failing to see ahead just a few short years to the British war with the Zulus from January to July 1879, which occurred in their lifetime.

In this six month war, "the British had shot down at least 10,000 on the various battlefields of Zululand, and no doubt nearly as many later succumbed to wounds" (Hanson, 311). In the one major battle that the British lost at Isandhlwana on January 22, when all their troops were destroyed (due in part to the incompetence of the British general who did not follow his own

protocols), nevertheless "2,000 Zulus were killed outright, and another 2,000 crawled away to die or were so disabled by wounds as to be incapable of fighting" (288). After that loss, in less than fifty days, the British began bringing in from England "nearly 10,000 additional enlisted men and more than 400 officers" (307). In the last battle at Ulundi in July 1879, "In less than forty minutes, the British square[of European and African troops] ... repulsed 20,000 Zulus, killing at least 1,500 in the process and wounding twice that number ..." (310). The major problem that the British had with their weapons was that they overheated, so fast and furious did they kill (296). It was difficult for the brave Zulu warriors to get even close to British troops as the weapons they were up against could destroy them at a thousand yards (280, 283, 284, 292).

This kind of slaughter approaches that of World War I and strongly hints at what was to come in the Great War. The warriors were killed in such great numbers with hardly a chance to survive. This war with the Zulus occurred just a few years after Rolleston's address. Though it could be argued that he might have seen something like this coming, I don't think he can be blamed for not anticipating the violence of that specific war. But he should have seen the possibility of it. He would have or should have known that in December 1838, "fewer than 500 Boer ranchers defeated 12,000 Zulus at the Ncome River (thereafter known as Blood River), killing more than 3,000 outright and wounding thousands more" (Hanson, 284), and they did this with weapons inferior to what was coming just a few decades later. If Rolleston read James Bonwick's *The Last of the Tasmanians*, as Darwin certainly did, or an earlier history of Tasmania by John West, he would have read of many massacres and the abduction of women and children. How is any of this less horrifying than the killing of twelve Trojan youths?

It was a frequent complaint of Rolleston's and Darwin's contemporary humanitarians that, as Saxe Bannister put it in 1840 for New South Wales, "Massacres, the most illegal as well as the most cruel, became at length the usual practice ... towards the natives" (*Humane* [1840], viii). How is this an advance beyond Roman barbarity? For Rolleston it is because he writes off all contemporary violence as "unpleasant incidents".

Rolleston should also have known that so much economic effort was put into creating new weapons of massive destructive power and into the ability to muster and train armies very quickly to put these weapons to effective deadly use. If he learned it from no one else, Bagehot reminded him: "it seems likely that the aggregate battle array, so to say, of mankind, the fighting force of the human race, has constantly and invariably grown" (Bagehot, 45); "the aggregate fighting power of mankind has grown immensely, and has been

growing continuously ..." (46). (Bagehot even argues that men in classical civilization were too effeminate and unwarlike, whereas today "in all countries the great cities could pour out multitudes wanting nothing but practice to make good soldiers ..." [47].) I proposed in Chapter 3 that it was Bagehot's bluntness about this that may have made Darwin uncomfortable. He was not the polished thinker that Darwin and Rolleston were.

James Hanson points out that many see in rationalism, dissemination of knowledge, democracy, and capitalism "the seeds of perpetual peace and prosperity", but they are also "the real ingredients ... of a most murderous brand of battle ... and the foundations that have created the world's deadliest armies ..." (Hanson, 453). Bagehot was saying essentially the same thing, if in far less detail, but far more approving of it than Hanson who is only describing. Rolleston and Darwin certainly knew that the science of warfare was constantly upping the ante and that factories could and did pour out modern weapons on a scale never known before and that soldiers were constantly trained to put them to use.

Western civilization had gotten better and better at organized killing. That was a major point made by Bagehot. Darwin and Rolleston knew that. To be fair, it should also be borne in mind that Europe, and Britain in particular, did not go to war to collect trophies or booty or merely to prove its manhood, and then run back home, satisfied that it had proven itself. It did not go to war just to plunder, though it did plunder other countries in a far deeper way than ancient Greece and Rome did. It has been said by many writers (including Hanson) that for Europe, the battlefield was an extension of politics. Once you've reached your political goals, the battles and killing can end for the time being. For this and other reasons, Europe did not carry out violence to the extreme that it might have, not yet anyway.

But if we are going to remember that Europe occasionally limited its killings, we should also remember that when genocide or near-genocide occurred in European colonies, it was generally not through mass murder, though lethal violence always played some role. The preferred method was to demoralize a people---principally by taking their land and by depriving them of their food sources, and also by breaking up families. Those steps will hasten the destruction of any culture. It is very hard to survive or survive in good spirits, when your basic means of existence are taken from you.

I don't know how much of this colonial drive to totally destroy other peoples Rolleston was aware of, but this isn't about Rolleston alone. It's about the scientific culture of his time and that means Darwin's too. Darwin certainly knew that demoralization was taking place, even if he covered it up with euphemisms, and he knew that it was leading to extermination. He wasn't

a cheerleader for all this, he wasn't actively promoting it in gung-ho fashion, but he accepted it with equanimity, and by accepting it, he was expressing a kind of approval and encouraging others (and himself) to think it was quite normal and a part of nature's plan. He helped to sustain an atmosphere in which the humanitarian naysayers to the western style of conquest would be regarded as foolish and out of touch with progress and science. He was part of the problem of 19th century inhumanity and misuse of science. He was not part of the solution.

When Emma Martin in 1843 advised her audience, "Go into the wide fields of nature, and by the process of an inductive philosophy, collect data ..." (*God's Gifts*, 16), that is something Darwin would undoubtedly have given his assent to. But when she continued, "... which will teach you how to banish crime and poverty, and cause you no longer to be the victims of kings and priests," she would have lost him. Note well that she was not counseling violent overthrow of the establishment. She was urging them *to collect data*, with the implication (and I base this on her life's work) that the data can be used *to prove* that injustice is occurring, what are the causes of it, and what needs to be done. Darwin collected data and all he saw was natural selection, hierarchy, and domination.

What we see in both Rolleston and Darwin is a willful blindness to an ugly part of their culture. The fact that you have become sensitive to atrocities of the past and to the horrors of tribal warfare with its own terrible shedding of blood, while you turn your back on the destructive actions of your own culture, is not evidence of the advance of civilization. Alfred Wallace loved the accomplishments of the 19th century not a whit less than Rolleston and Darwin (or Wade and Ferguson, for that matter), but he was not blind to its faults, nor would he minimize them for the sake of making the good things look grander. In *The Wonderful Century*, he could review and praise such things as the improvements in travel and communication over long distances, sanitation, photography, theoretical discoveries in physics, chemistry, and biology (notably evolution), and even understanding the importance of dust for life on this planet. But he could also devote attention to the three worst failings of the century: militarism, greed, and the irrational use of natural resources (which he called the plunder of the earth), contributing to, among other things, the unwise growth of colonialism.

In his chapter on militarism, you can smell the Great War coming. Wallace spelled out what Darwin and Rolleston were unwilling to pay attention to. He saw "a revival of the war-spirit throughout Europe" with its armies "continually being equipped with new and more deadly weapons" (331). Some of the developments in weapons that he pointed to had occurred before

1860. He does not attempt a full-scale review and does not pick out England for special treatment. He is concerned with the six great powers of Europe and especially their maritime power. What he sees is "a mad race ... to increase the death-dealing power of their weapons, and to add to the number and efficiency of their armies ... all the resources of modern science have been utilised in order to add to the destructive power of cannon ... new explosives ... in shells, mines, and torpedoes; rifled cannon of enormous size and power ..." (333). Wallace was willing to conclude what Darwin and Rolleston were not: "it makes any thoughtful person sad to see such skill and labour, and so much of the results of modern science, devoted to purposes of pure destruction" so that European powers are now "able to destroy life and property to an extent probably fifty-fold greater than the fleets of the first half of the century" (334). These modern wars were strictly for national aggrandizement or they were the result of dynastic squabbles and "were *never* waged in order to free the slave or protect the oppressed without any ulterior selfish ends" (341; his emphasis; he calls colonialism 'thinly-veiled slavery' on 337).

This militaristic mentality had repercussions within each society. As Wallace put it in the last pages of *The Malay Archipelago*, yes, we have materially and intellectually advanced to create "a vast accumulation of wealth" but also "such an amount of poverty and crime" and it led him to question "whether the evil has not overbalanced the good" (2.284). Only an Alfred Wallace or an Emma Martin could ask this question. Only such ones as these could insightfully remark, as Wallace did, "We should now clearly recognise the fact, that the wealth and knowledge and culture of *the few* do not constitute civilization ..." (ibid.; his emphasis). Or as Malthus more or less put it, the health of a society should be measured by how well the people at the bottom are doing, not by the success of those at the top (*Essay*, Ch. XVI).

Perhaps we have a modern-day Wallace or Martin in Richard Drayton. He clearly admires some of the accomplishments of the west and *hopes* it will lead to a true global community, but unlike Ferguson, he knows it has not done that so far and has had some terrible costs, perhaps too high: "The communities and environments destroyed in the midst of European expansion, according to the wisdom of science and the needs of commerce, are lost forever; and we cannot be sure that any larger universal good has compensated us for this loss ... Can we any longer sustain the barbarous belief that a city's happiness is unaffected by the violence and plunder it projects beyond its walls?" (Drayton, 272-73). A hardy few have been saying that for a long time now.

Darwin and Rolleston knew what was going on. They knew there was a

build-up of violence---the amount and efficiency of it---and that it was leading to an excess within their own time, no matter what the distant future might hold. They had no conscience about it. Or they had a conscience but chose to suppress it through euphemisms and other means. A euphemism is a good way to promote the conviction that the less we see, the more we know.

It is ironic that Darwin missed or ignored the escalation of arms. He had made brutal survival the centerpiece of his system, even to the degree that he missed the importance of peaceable negotiations in human life. Yet he paid no attention to one of the most brutal aspects of western civilized life: the arms race.

Darwin and Rolleston had fooled themselves into thinking theirs was a less violent and more just society. They are not responsible for not realizing where the developments of their time were ultimately leading to. That is too much wisdom for any one man or woman and it is even less possible that an entire society or a majority could achieve that kind of prophetic vision. But they did not have to have the foresight to understand the ultimate outcome in the 20th century---just the bit of bad outcome that came about in their day. They blinded themselves not to the future but to their present with the level of violence their society was capable of and did in fact commit. If only they had forsaken ideology, if only their eyes had been more open and honest, if only they had gone into the wide fields of nature and truly collected all the data.

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