

Was Charles Darwin a Racist?

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Abstract

It is widely acknowledged that Darwinism contributed to the problem of nineteenth and twentieth-century racism. It is sometimes claimed, however, that Darwin himself was not a racist but rather that others misused and even misquoted his writings. In this paper I explore Darwin's own views as recorded in his own writings. Darwin clearly held beliefs that today would be considered blatantly racist. It also is true that his writings made a major contribution to the problem of racism and were widely used to support racism. Darwin's conclusions were in stark contrast to the historical Christian biblical view that all humans are siblings, descendants of the first humans Adam and Eve, who were created about six thousand years ago.

Introduction

Darwinism has made a major contribution to many social problems including racism, sexism, capitalism, communism, and even Nazism (Bergman, 1993, 1999, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2004). Racism is the belief that biological differences in humans create a hierarchy that allows some races to be ranked as superior and others as inferior. It has been used to exclude certain groups, such as African Americans, from full rights in American society. The topic of racism is very important to understanding Darwinism because Darwin's theory of biological origins appears to have reflected his personal attitudes toward people of non-Caucasian races.

Darwin's attitude toward non-Caucasians was hinted at very early in his life. In the early 1800s, for example,

Darwin was concerned that his brother, Erasmus, might marry the author and reformer Harriet Martineau (1802–1876). Charles Darwin wrote to his sister Caroline about his concerns, stating that, if Erasmus marries her, he will not be “much better than her ‘nigger.’—Imagine poor Erasmus a nigger to so philosophical & energetic a lady.” Darwin concluded, “Perfect equality of rights is part of her doctrine. I much doubt whether it will be equality in practice. We must pray for our poor ‘nigger’” (Darwin, 1985, pp. 518–519). In Darwin's defense, it should be noted that Africans were commonly called “niggers” in his day and the words “colored” or “black” are twentieth-century terms. Granted, a major argument supporting the view that Darwin was not a racist is that he opposed slavery, as did most people in

his social class. His opposition to slavery, however, must be put into context with his other statements about human races, which I will now briefly review.

Racism Was Common in Darwin's Writings

The concept of race was critical to Darwinian theory, because Darwinism required the conclusion that some races were superior and therefore would eventually win out in the struggle for life. Darwin based his conclusion on the fact that there exist observable biological differences, not only between animal kinds, but also within *any one* animal kind. The theory went beyond this, however, and argued that such differences can aid an organism in the struggle for life against other creatures, both those of its own kind and those of other kinds.

Some of these differences in animal populations confer an evolutionary advantage that allows an animal to out-compete other animals in the evolutionary struggle for life. Darwinists

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reason that a rabbit that can run slightly faster or has slightly better hearing than other rabbits is more likely to escape its enemies and is more likely to survive to pass on this advantage to its offspring. It is, in short, superior. The same is true of other races (breeds) of animals. The complete title of Darwin's most famous work, *The Origin of Species*, was *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life*.

The "favored races" expression is obviously racist and was central to Darwin's ideas, as elaborated in Darwin's later writings. Even though Charles Darwin did not even discuss human evolution in *The Origin of Species*, he did draw racist conclusions in his 1871 book *The Descent of Man*. It was also obvious in *The Descent of Man* that Darwin's remarks about animal races, which Darwin had discussed in 1859, he applied to humans, especially in chapter 7, titled "On the Races of Man." This almost 40-page-long chapter covers in detail his conclusions about human races.

Darwin's Racism and the People of Tierra del Fuego

Although Darwin first discussed human evolution in the book *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871), he wrote much about the various human races in earlier books, beginning with the very first book he published, his 1839 *Journal of Researches*. In this early work, Darwin discussed in detail his perceptions of different races. When the exploratory ship *Beagle*, on which Darwin was the naturalist, first visited Tierra del Fuego at the southern tip of South America in 1833, Darwin's original reaction was one of shock at the natives. He described them as "savages" who were "without exception the most curious and interesting spectacle I had ever beheld" (Darwin, 1839, p. 228).

Darwin then superimposed animal traits and imagery on these people. He



Figure 1. A Fuegian Indian in native dress with a typical family dwelling in the background. Drawn by a crew-member of the Beagle. (Reproduced from FitzRoy, 1839.)

concluded from his interactions with the Tierra del Fuego natives that he found it hard to believe "how wide was the difference, between savage and civilized man," which Darwin concluded was "greater than between a wild and domesticated animal, in as much in man there is a greater power of improvement" (Darwin 1839, p. 228). He added that they were a "very different race from the stunted miserable wretches further to the Westward" (Darwin, 1839, p. 228). He concluded that the del Fuego natives resembled the devils that come on the stage in such plays as *Der Freischutz* (see Darwin, 1839, p. 228).

This is the first indication in his writings that he saw non-Europeans as "savages," and this bestialized image of them became increasingly dominant

in his subsequent writings. This view foreshadowed the evolutionary connections that he later drew, in vivid terms, between humans and animals. After meeting the Fuegians, Darwin concluded they were "the most abject and miserable creatures" he had ever seen, and that these

poor wretches were stunted in their growth, their hideous faces bedaubed with white paint, their skins filthy and greasy, their hair entangled, their voices discordant, their gestures violent and without dignity. *Viewing such men, one can hardly make oneself believe they are fellow-creatures, and inhabitants of the same world.* It is a common subject of conjecture what pleasure in life some of the less gifted animals can enjoy: how much more reasonably the same question may be asked with respect to these barbarians. At night, five or six human beings, naked and scarcely protected from the wind and rain of this tempestuous climate, sleep on the wet ground coiled up like animals (Darwin, 1839, pp. 235–36, emphasis mine).

The language Darwin used to describe these people was "overwhelmingly negative in tone, alternating between uninhibited outbursts of aesthetic revulsion and the recurrent images of bestiality" (Ellingson, 2001, p. 141). For example, Darwin said that in order to obtain food, they "unceasingly" wandered, and could not

know the feeling of having a home, and still less that of domestic affection; unless indeed the treatment of a master to a laborious slave can be considered as such. How little can the higher powers of the mind be brought into play! What is there for imagination to picture, for reason to compare, for judgment to decide upon? To knock a limpet from the rock does not even require cunning, that lowest power of the mind. Their skill in some respects



Figure 2. Fuegian Indians in native dress and in European attire. Top left: Fuegia Basket in 1833. Top right: Jemmy Button's wife in 1834. She was "decidedly the best looking female in the company," according to Lieutenant Sullivan (Hazelwood, 2000, p. 148). Middle left: Jemmy Button in his native dress, 1833. Middle right: Jemmy Button in European dress. Bottom left: York Minister in 1832. Bottom Right: Jemmy Button in 1834. All drawings were made by a crewmember of the ship *Beagle*. (Reproduced from FitzRoy, 1839.)

may be compared to the instinct of animals; for it is not improved by experience: the canoe, their most ingenious work, poor as it is, has remained the same, for the last two hundred and fifty years (Darwin, 1839, p. 236).

Comparisons of "primitive" humans with animals in an attempt to bestialize them continued throughout Darwin's later writings. For example, Darwin said that when a European man would display his bare arms to a Fuegian, "they expressed the liveliest surprise and admiration at its whiteness, just in the same way in which I have seen the ourang-outang do at the Zoological Gardens" (Darwin, 1839, p. 189).

Darwin's writings provide another example of his negative attitude toward the "primitive" Fuegians:

The next morning. . . Jemmy's mother and brothers arrived. . . The meeting was less interesting than that between a horse, turned out into a field, when he joins an old companion. There was no demonstration of affection; they simply stared for a short time at each other; and the mother immediately went to look after her canoe (Darwin, 1896, p. 222).

Darwin's reactions to "civilized" Fuegians were less negative than to other "primitive races," such as the Hottentots, and he even reviewed in some detail their positive qualities, such as their intelligence (see Darwin, 1896, pp. 206–207). Darwin further wrote that although the Fuegians "rank among the lowest barbarians," he was "continually struck with surprise how closely the three natives on board H.M.S. 'Beagle', who had lived some years in England and could talk a little English, resembled us in disposition and in most of our mental faculties" (Darwin, 1871, p. 34). Darwin concluded that the lowly nature of Fuegians could be changed.

Darwin's Use of the Term "Savages"

Darwin consistently called the inferior races, including both the native South Americans and the native Australians, "savages" and "barbarians" (see Darwin, 1859, pp. 18, 34, 36, 198, and 215). Most telling is Darwin's suggestion that the inferior "savage races" eventually would be eliminated by natural selection. In Darwin's words: "At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilised races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace throughout the world the savage races" as part of the process of evolution by natural selection (Darwin, 1871, p. 201). He also wrote in 1881 that in the future "an endless number of the lower races will have been eliminated by the higher civilised races throughout the world" (Darwin, 1893, p. 69).

Darwin likewise concluded that the anthropomorphous apes will also "no doubt be exterminated" by natural selection (1871, p. 201). After this extinction, Darwin believed that the break between humans and apes "will then be rendered wider, for it will intervene between man in a more civilised state, as we may hope, than the Caucasian, and some ape as low as a baboon, instead of as at present between the Negro or Australian and the gorilla" (Darwin, 1871, p. 201).

In Darwin's chapter on human races in volume 1 of his *The Descent of Man*, he admitted that "even the most distinct races of man, with the exception of certain negro tribes, are much more like each other in form than would at first be supposed" (Darwin, 1871, pp. 215–216). Nonetheless he added that there is

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 ... The races differ also in constitution, in

acclimatisation, and.... Their mental characteristics are likewise very distinct; chiefly as it would appear in their emotional, but partly in their intellectual, faculties. Every one who has had the opportunity of comparison must have been struck with the contrast between the taciturn, even morose, aborigines of S. America and the lighthearted, talkative negroes (Darwin, 1871, p. 216).

An evaluation of these statements indicates that these ideas were Darwin's own beliefs and not those of other persons. Evidence for this conclusion includes the fact that Darwin did not attribute them to others even though he used many thousands of references and quotes in his writings. In his study of Darwin, Ellingson (2001) concluded that Darwin's writings included the "constant play of bestial similes, metaphors, and comparisons" that represent "Darwin's protoevolutionary thinking." Ellingson adds that Darwin's "rhetoric is very difficult to distinguish from other bestializers of the 'savage', such as Volney or the American racist anthropologists" (pp. 141–142). It also is clear that Darwin's latter works reflected the beliefs of many nineteenth-century Europeans that they were superior to other races. Darwin's discussions in the *Descent of Man* (1871) were

written after, and partially in response to, the ascent of scientific racism to a position of dominance in British anthropology. Darwin's later discussions of race do show an unfortunate degree of accommodation with some of the ideas of the racist anthropologists; and his negative representation of the Fuegians would be used by those with overtly racist agendas as "scientific evidence" in support of their position (Ellingson, 2001, pp. 141–142).

Darwin interviewed Jemmy Button and the other Fuegian passengers during his long voyage but quickly grew frustrated with, in his words, "their apparent

difficulty in understanding the simplest alternative" (Darwin, 1896, p. 208). He argued that the communication problem existed because the Fuegian adults possessed the mental maturity of young children.

Every one accustomed to very young children, knows how seldom one can get an answer even to so simple a question as whether a thing is black or white; the idea of black or white seems alternately to fill their minds. So it was with these Fuegians, and hence it was generally impossible to find out, by cross-questioning, whether one had rightly understood anything which they had asserted (Darwin, 1896, p. 208).

Darwin's Attitude Toward Those He Called Savages

Darwin's attitude toward those persons he called "savages" is very obvious in his discussions. He wrote that after he spent some time with "these savages" in the ship, he came

to hate the very sound of their voices, so much trouble did they give us.... On leaving some place we have said to each other, "Thank Heaven, we have at last fairly left these wretches!" (Darwin, 1839, p. 241).

Darwin did not expect much of such people, and he generalized about what he called their childish undeveloped intellects compared to other people. He concluded that Europeans are under a great disadvantage

when treating with savages like these, who have not the least idea of the power of fire-arms ... Nor is it easy to teach them our superiority except by striking a fatal blow. Like wild beasts they do not appear in all cases to compare numbers; for each individual if attacked, instead of retiring, will endeavour to dash your brains out with a stone, as certainly as a tiger under similar circumstances would tear you ... We can hardly

put ourselves in the position of these savages, to understand their actions ... a body being invisible from its velocity, would perhaps be to him an idea totally inconceivable ... savages of the lowest grade, such as these of Tierra del Fuego, have seen objects struck, and even small animals killed by the musket, without being in the least aware how deadly an instrument it was (Darwin, 1839, pp. 239–240).

Darwin concluded that the Fuegians were like wild beasts because, he erroneously concluded, they did not respond normally to physical threats. His only evidence consisted of observations such as the fact that they did not run away when a pistol was fired in the air as he expected (see Darwin, 1839, p. 239). This response is not surprising because when Darwin visited them, the Fuegians had been in contact with Europeans and their weapons for over three hundred years. They were, no doubt, by then used to hearing weapons fired. Smith concludes that “the only evidence Darwin was looking for was the minimum needed to justify the placement of the Fuegians in a predetermined taxonomic niche, the ‘savage slot’ ... in the evolutionary hierarchy of cultures” (as quoted in Trouillot, 1991, p. 17).

Darwin Taught that Differences in Human Groups Reflect Different Levels of Evolutionary Development

For Darwin, perceived differences of relative states of evolutionary development from savagery to civilization energized his views. As Ellingson (2001, p. 143) noted, for this reason, Darwin saw differences even between human groups that were physically very similar. He suggested that although New Zealanders belong to the same human racial group as the Tahitians, in comparison New Zealanders were clearly inferior.

Darwin (1839) concluded that the New Zealander

may, perhaps, be superior in energy, but in every other respect his character is of a much lower order. One glance at their respective expressions brings conviction to the mind, that one is a savage, the other a civilized man (p. 501).

Darwin (1839) added that the Tahitians were “like amphibious animals in the water” (p. 486). Darwin (1859) also noted that he thought the Hottentots were one of the lowest races in existence, even lower than the Negro, and “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” (p. 424).

Darwin’s List of Inferior Humans

Brantlinger (2003) concluded that natural historians and “race scientists” from Darwin down to World War II hierarchized the races, with the white, European, Germanic, or Anglo-Saxon race at the pinnacle of progress and civilization, and the “dark races” ranged beneath it in various degrees of inferiority. ...Johannes Fabian writes of the “denial of coevalness” to those identified as primitive or savage. The term “Stone Age” applied to modern Australians or Bushmen is an obvious example: the illusion that certain people, races, or cultures are unable to speak the present and future tenses of history is implicit in the words *primitive* and *savage* (p. 2).

The humans that Darwin concluded were “inferior” included Hottentots, Negroes, New Zealanders, Australians, Tahitians, Fuegians and certain other groups. The “superior” peoples included the Europeans. The superior individuals he taught descended by evolution “from

barbarians” (Darwin, 1871, p. 404). The barbarians to whom Darwin referred included the Fuegians, because “such were our ancestors” (Darwin, 1871, p. 404). He also concluded he would rather be descended from a “little monkey” or an “old baboon” than from “a savage who delights to torture his enemies, offers up blood sacrifices, practices infanticide without remorse, treats his wives like slaves, knows no decency, and is haunted by the grossest superstitions” (Darwin, 1871, p. 405).

Darwin’s importance to the eventual development of racism has been carefully summarized (see Bradley, 1978, pp. 39–40). In one of the most detailed studies of Darwin’s views on human race, Greene (1981) concluded that

what we call “social Darwinism”—the belief that competition between individuals, tribes, nations, and races has been an important, if not the chief, engine of progress in human history—was endemic in much of British thought in the mid-nineteenth century, ... [and] Darwin’s *Origin of Species* gave a powerful boost to this kind of thinking, and that Darwin himself was deeply influenced by this current of thought (p. 123).

Darwin’s Conclusion about the Fuegians

A major conclusion Darwin drew from his encounters with the Fuegians was that they had a very low place in the hierarchy of human development

in this extreme part of South America, man exists in a lower state of improvement than in any other part of the world ... The Australian, in the simplicity of the arts of life, comes nearest the Fuegian: he can, however, boast of his boomerang, his spear and throwing-stick, his method of climbing trees, of tracking animals, and of hunting. Although the Australian may be superior in

acquirements, it by no means follows that he is likewise superior in mental capacity: indeed, from what I saw of the Fuegians when on board, and from what I have read of the Australians, I should think the case was exactly the reverse (Darwin, 1896, p. 230).

By saying “the case was exactly the reverse,” Darwin meant that the Australian was the “leading contender [for] the world’s ultimate savage, the lowest of the low” (Ellingson, 2001, p. 147). He saw the existence of “savages,” and the range of human races—from the lowest to the highest races—as clear evidence that our higher mental faculties “have been gradually developed” by evolution (Darwin, 1871, p. 35). Darwin even argued that “there is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties” (Darwin, 1871, p. 35).

Another conclusion Darwin drew from his ethnographic foray also reflected his attitude that the equality among individuals of the Fuegian tribes

must for a long time retard their civilization. As we see those animals, whose instinct compels them to live in society and obey a chief, are most capable of improvement, so it is with the races of mankind. Whether we look at it as a cause or a consequence, the more civilized always have the most artificial governments ... In Tierra del Fuego, until some chief shall arise with power sufficient to secure any acquired advantages ... it seems scarcely possible that the political state of the country can be improved. At present ... no one individual becomes richer than another. On the other hand, it is difficult to understand how a chief can arise till there is property of some sort by which he might manifest and increase his authority (Darwin, 1839, p. 242).

Darwin expressed his conclusion that the native people are in the ultimate

state of savagery and actually argued that their low state is too egalitarian to permit the improvements that are needed to allow some Fuegians to accumulate the property, wealth, and power necessary to produce a more developed society. Ellingson (2001) concluded that the

most problematic feature of Darwin’s ethnography is not its racism but its ethnographic shallowness. Of course, the *Beagle’s* sailing schedule, and Darwin’s primary interest in and commitment to other scientific research subjects, did not allow for extended residence with a people or for participant-observation ethnography, if such an idea had even occurred to him. Nor did the company of his companions on the ship, with their military preoccupations and defensive hostility to the natives, encourage sympathy or even closer contact with the Fuegians (p. 144).

Darwin Believed the Fuegians were Incapable of Being Evangelized

One of the most telling indicators of Darwin’s attitude toward the Fuegians that revealed “the true depth of his racism ... was his belief that the Fuegians were incapable of being evangelized” (Lubenow, 2004, p. 145). Darwin knew enough about the Scriptures to realize that all humans and only humans could be evangelized. Lubenow writes that “Darwin often compared the Indians of Tierra del Fuego to animals” and probably the

best evidence of how lowly he viewed the Fuegians is seen in how he viewed them spiritually ... The holy Scriptures make a clear and qualitative distinction between all humans and all animals. In Genesis 9, God gives the humans the right to use any and all animals for food. Yet human life is protected as sacred because we are made in God’s image. Anyone who kills a human being in what

we call “Murder 1” must forfeit his own life. [Darwin] ... having studied for the ministry at Cambridge ... had to be aware of the distinction that Scripture makes between humans and animals ... Although Darwin later denied human uniqueness, he was aware that the Bible taught that only humans were created in God’s image and that Christ commanded his disciples to evangelize all humans (Lubenow, 2004, p. 145).

Lubenow (2004) then quoted Admiral Sir James Sullivan, who as a lieutenant was a shipmate with Darwin on the *Beagle*:

Mr. Darwin had often expressed to me his conviction that it was utterly useless to send Missionaries to such a set of savages as the Fuegians, probably the very lowest of the human race. I had always replied that I did not believe any human beings existed too low to comprehend the simple message of the Gospel of Christ (pp. 145–146).

Darwin eventually realized that missionary activity was possible (and could be successful) even among the Fuegians. To Darwin’s credit,

he admitted he was wrong. In a letter to Sullivan, dated 30 June 1870, Darwin wrote, “... the success of the T. del Fuego mission ... is most wonderful, and shames me, as I always prophesied utter failure.” In another letter to Sullivan, dated 20 March 1881, Darwin wrote, “I ... predicted that not all the Missionaries in the world could have done what has been done” (Lubenow, 2004, pp. 145–146).

Lubenow (2004) concluded by noting that, although Darwin lived in a racist society,

the fact that Darwin would have denied the Indians of Tierra del Fuego the gospel, whereas other Englishmen at great sacrifice did give those same Indians the gospel, suggests that his incipient ideas on

evolution, even at that early date, caused Darwin to be even more racist than some of his peers. And the theory of evolution he developed is equally racist (p. 146).

Accounts of Fuegians by Others Were Not Racist

Descriptions of the Fuegians by other people who visited them during the same period in which Darwin wrote help us to appreciate the extent of Darwin's unjustified negative view of them. Charles Wilkes, commander of the United States Exploring Expedition, visited Tierra del Fuego only a few years after Darwin. Wilkes was described by his reviewers as a very perceptive and sensitive observer who had devoted considerable effort in developing a code of conduct for his crew to avoid harming the indigenous peoples that they encountered on their voyages. Wilkes described his encounter with the Fuegians as follows:

We were here visited by a canoe with six natives, two old women, two young men, and two children.... The expression of the younger ones was extremely prepossessing, evincing much intelligence and good humor. They ate ham and bread voraciously, distending their large mouths, and showing a strong and beautiful set of teeth. A few strips of red flannel distributed among them produced great pleasure; they tied it around their heads as a sort of turban. Knowing they were fond of music, I had the fife played, the only instrument we could muster. They seemed much struck with the sound. The tune of Yankee Doodle they did not understand; but when "Bonnetts of Blue" was played, they were all in motion keeping time to it. The vessel at this time was under way, and no presents could persuade them to continue any longer with us.... We found them also extremely imitative, repeating over our words and mim-

icking our motions. They were all quite naked. I have seldom seen so happy a group. They were extremely lively and cheerful, and anything but miserable, if we could have avoided contrasting their condition with our own (quoted in Ellingson, 2001, pp. 145–146).

Clearly, Wilkes painted a very different picture of the Fuegians than did Darwin.

Darwin's racial negativism was partly a reflection of the belief in white superiority, and the inferiority of the "darker races" that pervaded European society and discourse (scientific as well as nonscientific) in the nineteenth century (Ellingson, 2001). In Darwin's case, he carried his prejudices with him on his journey to Tierra del Fuego so that what appears in his writings to be an objective, rational assessment of non-European peoples and customs based on firsthand, ostensibly scientific, "observation" was, to a significant extent, an artifact that resulted from his racist framework.

Since Darwin's writings were critical in the development of evolutionary theory, his thoughts on the application of his own racism to evolution are crucial to understanding the history of racism. While he was far less racist than many of his disciples (such as Spencer, Haeckel, Hooton, Pearson, and Huxley), Darwin's theory provided the *basis* for their extreme racism as expressed in the eugenics movement. Darwin's works also supported the polygenist view of human origins in the major nineteenth-century debate between monogenism and polygenism (the view that all humans had one ancestor versus the view that we had several ancestors) regarding the origin of the races.

Darwin's Support of Eugenics

Although known as a kind and gentle man, Darwin openly supported the racism that his theory permitted. Darwin

also generally supported eugenics, even though he opposed some of the extreme forms espoused by many in his day. A major source of the racism inspired by Darwinism came, not from Darwin himself, but from the pen of Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton. Darwin was fully convinced that eugenic theory was valid, and he "canonized Galton with the words; 'we now know, through the admirable labours of Mr. Galton, that genius ... tends to be inherited'" (Kevles, 1985, p. 20). Darwin clearly agreed with eugenic ideas. After reading *Hereditary Genius*, one of Galton's major works supporting eugenics, Darwin wrote to Galton on December 3, 1869, that "I do not think that I ever in my life read anything more interesting and original ... you have made a convert of an opponent ... a memorable work" (quoted in Gillham, 2001, p. 169). Darwin ended his book on human evolution with these words:

The advancement of the welfare of mankind is a most intricate problem ... as Mr. Galton has remarked, if the prudent avoid marriage, whilst the reckless marry, the inferior members tend to supplant the better members of society. Man, like every other animal, has no doubt advanced to his present high condition through a struggle for existence consequent on his rapid multiplication; and if he is to advance still higher he must remain subject to a severe struggle. Otherwise he would soon sink into indolence, and the more highly-gifted men would not be more successful in the battle of life than the less gifted.... There should be open competition for all men; and the most able should not be prevented by laws or customs from succeeding best and rearing the largest number of offspring (Darwin, 1871, p. 403).

It should be noted that because Darwin agreed with Galton does not in itself show that Darwin fully supported the eugenics that many of Galton's followers

advocated. Darwin was favorable to the fundamental presuppositions of eugenics, but insisted that eugenic programs should be voluntary and not mandated by the state. Darwin and many others agreed with Galton on the issue of biological determinism of both intellectual and moral traits. The coercive ideology was primarily what later created the controversy over eugenics. Although Darwin's support for Galton and eugenics did not directly extend to overt racism, Darwin's works have inspired many coercive eugenic advocates, including current prominent racists, such as David Duke (Duke, 1998).

The Biblical View of Man

The Scriptures and all three "religions of the book"—Jews, Muslims, and Christians—teach that all humans descended from one man and woman, Adam and Eve, thus all are brothers and all races are equal before God (Ham et al., 1999). For example, Paul in his message on Mars Hill taught that God made every race of men out of one man (Acts 17:26). Although some Christians such as Weisman (1996) have used the Scriptures to justify their own racism, such as the belief that the curse of Ham produced the black race, these ideas have been extensively refuted and were never widely accepted (see Ham et al, 1999). Weikart (2004) concluded that

racism obviously predated Darwinism, but during the nineteenth century—in part through the influence of Darwinism—it would undergo significant transformations. Before the nineteenth century, the intellectual dominance of Christianity militated against some of the worst excesses of racism. Christian theology taught the universal brotherhood of all races, who descended from common ancestors—Adam and Eve. Most Christians believed that all humans, regardless of race, were created in the image of God and

possessed eternal souls. This meant that all people are extremely valuable, and it motivated Europeans to send missionaries to convert natives of other regions to Christianity. As contact with other races increased during the nineteenth century, the Protestant missionary movement blossomed, sending out multitudes of missionaries to convert non-European peoples to Christianity.... Even though some Christian groups, especially in lands with race-based slavery, developed theological justifications for racial inequality, most Christian churches believed that people of other races were valuable and capable of adopting European religion and culture (p. 103).

Conclusion

Anthropologist Marvin Harris and others, based on evidence such as outlined above, have "not hesitated to call Darwin a 'racist'" (Greene, 1981, p. 95). Supporters for this view "have no difficulty in finding passages [in Darwin's writings] that seem to out-Spencer Spencer," the extreme social Darwinist and racist (Greene, 1981, p. 96). The fact that Darwin was not consistent, indicating he held mixed views at different times in his life, does not negate his racism. It is clear that Darwin's racist ideas were exploited by his followers, especially those who already had developed racist ideas and prejudices, to support their own racist beliefs. For example, Darwin described the Fuegians and other non-Caucasians as "savages of the lowest grade [and] miserable, degraded savages" who are living in a "savage land" and in "a savage state" with a "wild cry" as they roam around like "wild beasts" (Lubenow, 2004, p. 143). It also is clear from the writings of racists that many of them used Darwin as support for their racism (Duke, 1998). From this review, it is easy to understand why they used Darwin's words to support racism.

In an attempt to obscure the charge that Darwin held racist ideas, his defenders often point to the fact that Darwin opposed slavery and approved of missionaries going to Africa. This behavior, although inconsistent, strongly reflected the views of his social class. Even though he held racist views, Darwin did not approve of brutality, and he did support humanitarian efforts to help other races. He also supported limited animal "rights." For example, he opposed mistreatment of dogs. Many racists today, such as David Duke, also claim that they oppose mistreatment of minorities and dogs, but this does not negate either their racism or Darwin's.

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