IMMORALITY IN NATURAL SELECTION

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Differences of opinion become evident when it is claimed that living things reached their present structure by natural selection. That improved kinds are formed by struggle through natural selection is not supported by modern findings. Influence of the doctrine of natural selection has been illustrated by behavior of industrialists and militarists, who have reasoned that, if evolution was accomplished by selfish initiative at the expense of other living things, it is easy to justify the same conduct now. It is dangerous to believe that man is the product of struggle among selfish, irresponsible lower organisms.

Many church people consider natural selection merely as an academic principle. Since they are not trained in science, they are content to let such matters be decided by the scientests. Such an attitubde, however, entails drifting with majority opinion, which never should be done in an important matter. The results of such doctrines as natural selection afffect society in general.

The term *selection* is used in agriculture in a somewhat restricted and technical sense. A good farmer does not plant just any seed from his crop, but chooses seed from the plants which please him most. He does not keep animals indiscriminently to become parents of the next generation, but chooses those which have the best characteristics. If the next generation of plants or animals is better, because of such restricted parentage, we say that the selection was effective; but, if the progeny are no different from those of unrestricted breeding, the selection in ineffective.

This choice of parents by man is called artificial selection. If the forces of nature accomplish a similar result we call it natural selection.

For instance, if a mixture of corn, *Zea mays,* is planted in central Canada, only a part of the crop will produce viable seed, the rest being killed by the early cold weather of autumn. It is as if nature had selected the early-ripening plants to become the parents of the next generation. If viable corn seed is planted in the same Canadian climate for several seasons, an early maturing strain will be sorted out.

Albino seedlings (plants without green coloring) sometines come up in a corn field, and of course soon die. Animals born in a crippled condition soon die if they are wild animals, and thus do not reproduce their type. In this waw natural selection maintains a standard, a type of lower limit, in the kinds of plants and animals.

Differences of Opinion

To this extent the effectiveness of natural selection is recognized by all observant persons. But differences of opinion become evident when it is claimed that living things reached their present structure by natural selection. Evolutionists insist that natural selection not only maintains a lower limit and sorts out types for new habitats, but also improves the kinds, making plants and animals which are larger and better organized than anything which preceded them. Thus new and improved families, orders, and phyla are said to have been formed.

It was this doctrine which convinced a large portion of scientists that evolution is correct. Ever since ancient times, a few writers claimed that living things arose from very simple beginnings, but these writers were not believed. Then Charles Darwin presented his theory of natural selection in great detail and "sold" the idea of evolution.

Furthermore, the doctrine of natural selection is still depended upon as the basis of evolution. "*Homo sapiens*, like all other organisms, has evolved from prior, extremely different species, by natural means and under the directive influence of natural selection."[1]

A thoughtful person can readily see that the theory of evolution by natural selection encourages selfish aggression and violence. It not only condones selfishness; it is founded upon it. The animal which asserts itself and overcomes its fellows is supposed to do so because it has superior genes. It therefore leaves more descendants than the average; and, thus, in time a superior strain is built up, and later, an improved species. But if a human being follows this example--asserting himself and disregarding the rights of others--we say that he is immoral.

Indeed there is no question but that those from whom Darwin received his examples were immoral. The struggle for existence was going on among *people* in nineteenth century England. Factory owners, in the absence of regulatory laws, were making fortunes and elevating their social standing. This was done by forcing women and children to work for twelve hours a day in miserable surroundings. Factory owners liked Darwin's writings because he gave them the idea that the struggle in industry was natural, as being among all living things, and in this way some industrialists justified their dealings.

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Struggle Based on Logical Deduction

Now it is true that, if the truth of this principle of forming improved kinds by struggle were well established, we would simply have to make the most of it. But it is not supported by modern findings. There is seious dearth of observation of the results of the process. "It must be admitted that even today our belief in the efficiency of selection depends on logical deduction rather than on the results of observation or experiment."[2]

Experiments actually give results which show that selection is not very effective. After a few generations of selection a certain strain of organisms has genes which are alike for a given character; then it is clear that it does not matter which seed is selected to plant, the progeny will be the same.

The example of Johannsen's beans is well known. By selecting beans of different size, Johannsen established strains which he kept growing in separate plots. As was expected, a large bean usually produced beans which were large on the average. He called these strains pure lines. Yet, when Johannsen selected large beans from a pure line, and also small beans from the *same pure line,* he found that they bore beans of the same size on the average. Selection within an isolated strain or pure line was ineffective.

The reason for this limitation of selection is that the genes for seed size were the same throughout the pure line. Within the line there was some difference in size, but this was due to environment rather than heredity. It is well known that changes caused by environment are not inherited.

Similar results have been observed in other species, but in those which are normally cross-pollinated it takes longer to reach the limit of effective selection than in beans, which are self-pollinated. In France, beets were selected for sugar, and from 1800 to 1878 the sugar content rose from 6 per cent to 17 per cent. From 1878 to 1924, however, the percentage remained 17 even though the same selection methods were used.[3] (Figure 1)

The science of genetics has established the truth that genes remain the same indefinitely unless they mutate. Such changes take place only rarely; and few, if any, have been observed which are beneficial to the particular plant or animal. In the above examples, either there were no mutations, or none that made larger beans or sweeter beets.

Of course natural selection affects mutant plants and animals with the result that a large proportion die without leaving off-spring, because mutants have less vigor than normal organisms. Selection never forms new or improved genes, but only chooses among the ones which appear naturally. **Scientists never have observed the appearance of a new character which would aid in changing an order into a higher order;** for instance a lizard with a milk gland or a feather.

Figure 1. Limitation of Selection, shown by improvement of sugar beets. The best beets at the beginning of the project had 6 per cent of sugar. 78 years of selecting the sweetest ones for seed increased the sugar content to 17 per cent. But at that time, all the best genes had been sorted out and there was no further increase. Likewise, selection in nature can not make changes beyond certain limits. Selection does not give evidence that simple types of plants and animals changed into complex types.

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Influence on Human Behavior

But let us return to the influence which the doctrine exerts upon human behavior. If man evolved from animals, it is easy to feel that he still is an animal at heart with a veneer of civilization. And, if this evolution was accomplished by selfish initiative at the expense of other living things, it is easy to justify the same conduct now.

In all fairness we must admit, however, that there are proponents of evolution who advocate moral behavior.[4] But the ethical obligations of scientists of which they write have been realized in spite of the doctrine of natural selection rather than because of it. The antisocial effects of the doctrine may be seen among persons whose moral characters are undeveloped, such as young people or persons who never have become morally mature. Our crime waves, which tend to become worse each year, are examples of the effect of selfish assertion.

There are many church people who are loath to disagree with scientists, and, therefore, they admit that evolution may be true, but add that God guided the process. These people do not achieve agreement after all, for in the doctrine of natural selection there is no provision for interference from the outside. It is just a free-for-all struggle.

Such church people do not know that it is unnecessary to accept such a doctrine in order to agree with scientists. There is a sizeable group of scientists who accept the doctrine of divine creation.

If we feel that man is an animal, we are in danger of losing our sense of repsonsibility, for

animals do not and cannot have this trait. Leading evolutionists do claim that man is an animal. G. G. Simpson[5] states:

> Man is not *merely* an animal, that is, his essence is not simply in his shared animality. Nevertheless he *is* an animal and the nature of man includes and has arisen from the nature of all animals. (Italics are his)

It is true that man has much in common with animals in a physical sense, but to claim that his mental and spiritual endowments have come from animals is not only inadequate-it is dangerous!

Conscience, Responsibility Important

Consider that little spark of divinity in the human heart which is called conscience. It makes one aware of doing right or wrong. If one has been taught rightly, and has not seared his conscience by repeated disobedience, it prompts him to do the best that he knows. Can you imagine an animal with such a mentor in its heart? It is most contented when its stomach is full, regardless of the method of filling that organ. It may learn to shun punishment, but it never feels remorse.

Of equal importance is man's sense of responsibility, which an animal does not and cannot have. It is not alone in the Bible that responsibility is taught; every nation assumes it when it formulates laws. Animals are not responsible, laws are not made for them, but they are fenced in. This is exactly what will befall people, if they insist on adhering to the idea that they are animals, and therefore not responsible for their conduct. They will be fenced in by autocratic governments.

It cannot be denied that the doctrine of evolution by natural selection gives aid and comfort to dictators. Adolph Hitler and Benito Mussolini were logical, if you grant the validity of their belief. They overlooked the truth that man's inmost nature has come down from God above.

It is not only unproved, it is even dangerous to believe that man is the product of struggle among selfish, irresponsible lower organisms.

References

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[2]Carter, S. S. 1957. A hundred years of evolution. Macmillan, New York.
[3]Jones, D. F. 1924. Genetics in plant and animal improvement, Wiley, New York, p. 414.
[4]Glass, Bentley. 1965. The ethical basis of science, *Science*, 150:1254-1261.
[5]Simpson, G. G., *Op. cit.*, p. 472.

SOCIAL DARWINISM

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Social Darwinism has been used by unscrupulous industrialists to condone their unethical practices toward laborers and competitors. Darwinism also offered a basis for acts which have resulted in racial strife. Further, the Darwinian theory of evolution has been used by militarists to glorify war. Abuses toward multitudes of human beings have been sanctioned and abetted with evolution as an excuse; and, if evolution is not true, such inhumanity toward men seems all the more tragic.

Application of the principle of "survival of the fittest" to human affairs came to be known as Social Darwinism in the nineteenth century. It is generally believed that Darwin did not condone the extrapolation of his natural selection theory into social relationships, but the fact is that he himself taught that human evolution proceeded through warfare and struggle between isolated clans.[1]

Robert E. D. Clark says, "Darwin often said quite plainly that it was wrong to ameliorate the conditions of the poor, since to do so would hinder the evolutionary struggle for existence."[2]

In a letter to H. Thiel in 1869, Darwin wrote:

> You will really believe how much interested I am in observing that you apply to moral and social questions analagous views to those which I have used in regard to the modification of species. It did not occur to me formerly that my views could be extended to such widely different and most important subjects.[3]

Wallbank and Taylor in their textbook *Civilization Past and Present* say that Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest "became a vogue that swept western thought in the late nineteenth century. It also became a convenient doctrine for justifying various economic and political theories."[4]

Unscrupulous Men Misused Theory

Unscrupulous industrialists took advantage of Darwin's theory to condone their unethical practices. When they put others out of business, they declared that it was just another case of survival of the fittest.

The railroad magnate, James J. Hill, manipulating to get more railways under his control, said that "the fortunes of railroad companies are determined by the law of the survival of the fittest."[5]

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