



## The Burning Bush - Online article archive

### A Romanist Priest speaks & The Dark Side of Darwinism

I am sending out two articles for your consideration.

1. I have little or nothing in common with the thoughts and words of Roman Catholics priests. However, I have ever been an observer of what they have to say!

There appeared in the 'Belfast Newsletter' of the 15th of June, a letter from a priest in Coalisland, Co. Tyrone, one 'Father' (a title forbidden to be used by men by the Lord Jesus) John McCallion.

His comments on the pro-abortion stance of the 'Nationalist' parties, traditionally loyal Romanists, is an eye-opening insight into the state of Irish Roman Catholicism. The abuse of children by its clerics has reaped a harvest indeed! Sadly, that harvest has the people embracing, if anything, something more wicked than that which they had cast away!

2. The **second article** was written, it is very apparent, by an admirer of Charles Darwin, while it is equally apparent that he was aware of his RACISM.

I send it out without any endorsement of its contents but simply to illustrate that RACISM and EVOLUTION appear to go hand in hand.

I also do so, wondering just when the BLM movement will turn against Charles Darwin? That would mean a radically overhauling of the text books in all schools as well as the theology in the majority of Bible Colleges and Seminaries, as well as the burning of countless books and articles which extol Darwinism as the 'be all and end all' of intelligent thought!!

I leave you to peruse the articles.

Sincerely in Christ,

Ivan Foster.

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### **Priest: Constitutional nationalism is now firmly in the abortion camp**

"The volte-face of Sinn Fein, along with growing elements of the SDLP, tried to impress us with their 'pro life' credentials with the tactical voting at the assembly on June 2 and was a farce!

When Michelle O'Neill along with the pro abortion leadership of the SDLP met with Stella Creasy in their collective push for abortion, did they not realise the extent with which this bill entailed?

Where was their great acumen that apparently betrayed them when the bill advocated that babies with Downs could also be subject to the arbitrary points of this injustice?

By their vote they seem to see abortion like de cafe coffee; that it has a less harsh variety than the regular sort.

Well sorry, abortion is abortion and their hoodwinking of themselves that they can ease their conscience is pathetic

This apparent u-turn confirms only one thing that constitutional nationalism is firmly in the abortion camp.

Such support for this evil has resulted in 129 deaths since commencement of lockdown."



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### The Dark Side of Darwinism

Charles Darwin, nineteenth century English naturalist, is known as one of the most brilliant minds in history. He was a curious intellectual and a brave adventurer, well-liked by those who knew him personally and greatly revered in the scientific community. His 1859 and 1871 books, *On the Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*, enlightened the world with a transformative understanding of life that became the foundation of modern biological thought. But there's a darker side of Darwin, a side that perhaps calls into question his prized intellect and cherished legacy. Darwin's writing was racist, and discriminatory beliefs and practices follow directly from his theories. If you're a lover of evolution or biology major like I am, you may be tempted to reject that claim. But hear me out: Support for the idea that Darwin's theories are racist may come from where you least expect it.

I'd only heard of Darwin's dark side in passing, and I'd always assumed that Darwin's critics were driven by ignorance or ulterior motives. But as I scrolled by debates online about Darwin's theories, I noticed something peculiar: Darwin's defenders most often cited his abolitionist identity, notes from his diaries, or quotes from people who knew Darwin. His accusers, on the other hand, often directly cited text from *The Descent of Man*. Conclusions drawn from the authorial approach to the question, in which defenders focused on proving that Darwin himself was not a racist, starkly contradicted conclusions drawn from the approach of consulting Darwin's text itself. I'm familiar with Darwin's theories, but I had never actually read his books; I suspect the same is true for most of you. However, I found that to determine whether or not Darwin's theories are racist, the text of his books is revealing and conclusive. Information outside the text of *The Descent of Man* can help us understand the man behind the pen, but it does nothing to soften the brutal racism and white supremacy found in the text of his theory.

Although best known for *On the Origin of Species*, Darwin does not address human evolution and race until his 1871 book, *The Descent of Man*, in which Darwin applies his theories of natural selection to humans and introduces the idea of sexual selection. Here his white supremacy is revealed. Over the course of the book, Darwin describes Australians, Mongolians, Africans, Indians, South Americans, Polynesians, and even Eskimos as "savages: " It becomes clear that he considers every population that is not white and European to be savage. The word savage is disdainful, and Darwin constantly elevates white Europeans above the savages. Darwin explains that the "highest races and the lowest savages" differ in "moral disposition ... and in intellect" (36). The idea that white people are more intelligent and moral persists throughout. At one point, Darwin says that savages have "low morality, " "insufficient powers of reasoning, " and "weak power of self-command" (97). Darwin's specific consideration of intellectual capacities is especially alarming. He begins with animals: "No one supposes that one of the lower animals reflects whence he comes or whither he goes, —what is death or what is life, and so forth" (62). His remarks soon expand to humans. "How little can the hard-worked wife of a degraded Australian savage, who uses hardly any abstract words and cannot count above four, exert her self-consciousness, or reflect on the nature of her own existence" (62). Darwin writes that Australians are incapable of complex thought, and insinuates that they are akin to lower animals: His perspective on non-European races is incredibly prejudiced and absurd. Modern evolutionary scholars and teachers tend to ignore or omit that component of Darwin's theory, but it hasn't gone completely unnoticed. For example, Rutledge Dennis examined Darwin's role in scientific racism for *The Journal of Negro Education* and found that in Darwin's world view, "talent and virtue were features to be identified solely with Europeans" (243). White supremacy is clearly embedded in *The Descent of Man*, regardless of Darwin's brilliance or the accuracy of the rest of his theory.

Darwin makes a disturbing link between his belief in white supremacy and his theory of natural selection. He justifies violent imperialism. "From the remotest times successful tribes have supplanted other tribes. ... At the present day civilised nations are everywhere supplanting barbarous nations" (160). Darwin's theory applies survival of the fittest to human races, suggesting that extermination of non-white races is a natural consequence of white Europeans being a superior and more successful race. Further, Darwin justifies violently overtaking other cultures because it has happened regularly throughout natural history. The arc of Darwin's evolutionary universe evidently does not bend toward justice: He has no problem with continuing



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the vicious behavior of past generations. Claims such as those made evident in the title of a 2004 book, "From Darwin to Hitler, " may not be as alarmist as they seem.

Not only does Darwin believe in white supremacy, he offers a biological explanation for it, namely that white people are further evolved. He writes that the "western nations of Europe ... now so immeasurably surpass their former savage progenitors and stand at the summit of civilization" (178). Darwin imagines that Europeans are more advanced versions of the rest of the world. As previously mentioned, this purported superiority justified to Darwin the domination of inferior races by Europeans. As white Europeans "exterminate and replace" the world's "savage races, " and as great apes go extinct, Darwin says that the gap between civilized man and his closest evolutionary ancestor will widen. The gap will eventually be between civilized man "and some ape as low as a baboon, instead of as at present between the negro or Australian and the gorilla" (201). Read that last line again if you missed it: Darwin's theory claims that Africans and Australians are more closely related to apes than Europeans are. The spectrum of organisms is a hierarchy here, with white Europeans at the top and apes at the bottom. In Darwin's theory, colored people fall somewhere in between. Modern human is essentially restricted only to white Europeans, with all other races viewed as somehow sub-human.

The text of *The Descent of Man* clearly contains a racist and white supremacist ideology, but not everyone who reads Darwin's theory believes that the text tells the entire story. Adrian Desmond and James Moore argue against the idea that Darwin's theories are racist in their 2009 book, *Darwin's Sacred Cause: How a Hatred of Slavery Shaped Darwin's Views on Human Evolution*. As the title suggests, Desmond and Moore claim that Darwin's intent in studying evolution was actually to bolster the abolitionist cause. "Darwin's starting point was the abolitionist belief in blood kinship, a 'common descent'" (xvii). In response to Darwin's defectors, they say that "the real problem is that no one understands Darwin's core project. ... No one has appreciated the source of that moral fire that fueled his strange, out-of-character obsession with human origins" (xix). How can Desmond and Moore claim to know Darwin's intent? They reached their conclusions after an exhaustive search through "a wealth of unpublished family letters and a massive amount of manuscript material, " and use "Darwin's notes, cryptic marginalia (where key clues lie) and even ships' logs and lists of books read by Darwin. His published notebooks and correspondence (some 15,000 letters are now known) are an invaluable source" (xx). Using these sources, Desmond and Moore attempt to make a substantial case against the idea that Darwin was racist, citing evidence such as the diary that Darwin kept during his Beagle voyage. Darwin writes of slavery, "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" (quoted in Desmond and Moore, 183). Darwin often wrote thoughts that don't quite align with the ideas in *The Descent of Man*. In his theory, Darwin suggests that it is natural for more successful races to dominate over others, and speaks comfortably of white Europeans exterminating other races. However, he wrote in his diary that "the white Man ... has debased his Nature & violates every best instinctive feeling by making slave of his fellow black" (quoted in Desmond and Moore, 115). Desmond and Moore view Darwin's later contradictions of his racist ideas in *The Descent of Man* as reason to interpret the text of Darwin's theory cautiously.

Desmond and Moore also offer details of Darwin's life that they claim are incongruent with his purported racism. Darwin came from a family that fought to emancipate Britain's slaves, and many of his friends and readers were abolitionists as well. As a young man, Darwin took lessons in bird-stuffing from a local African American servant. Desmond and Moore write, "Evidently the sixteen-going-on-seventeen year old saw nothing untoward in paying money to apprentice himself to a Negro, and the forty or so hour-long sessions which he had with the 'blackamoor' through that frosty winter clearly made an impact" (18). Desmond and Moore see Darwin's willingness to associate with African Americans as evidence that he was not prejudiced. Finally, the authors bring up a story that is actually mentioned in *The Descent of Man*. When Darwin writes of similarities he has noticed between savages and himself, he mentions "a full-blooded negro with whom I happened once to be intimate" (232). Again, Desmond and Moore see Darwin's personal experiences with colored people as evidence that he is not biased against them; further, they believe this information should influence our interpretation of *The Descent of Man*.



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A final argument made in favor of Darwin blames the time period in which he wrote. The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education writes that "Darwin, like [Abraham] Lincoln, believed in white supremacy, but he was far more enlightened and sympathetic to blacks than most white men of his time" (39). In this view, The Descent of Man must be considered within the context of its conception, namely a period and location in which white supremacy was the norm.

The external information supplied by Darwin's personal notes, experiences, context, etc. adds to our understanding of Darwin himself, but it cannot change our understanding of his theories. The question of whether Darwin was a racist man is separate from the question of whether his theory was racist, and the answer to the former question has no bearing on the latter. The text of The Descent of Man is undeniably racist, and readers only engage with the presented text: They don't know what Darwin wrote in his diary, whether his family supported abolition, or how much he interacted with African Americans, nor should a reader have to know these things in order to correctly interpret the text. The Descent of Man exists separate from its author and context. Claims that readers should not take the racism in Darwin's theory literally in light of external information reject the nature of literature. As Roland Barthes says, "a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. Yet this destination cannot any longer be personal: the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted" (148). Barthes' argument is especially salient in this case because The Descent of Man was written so long ago, and Charles Darwin is long dead. Darwin and the context in which he wrote his theory have long passed, but the text lives on and will continue to exist as an independent entity that deserves to be interpreted as such.

Thus, the value of considering contextual details depends on which question we are asking. When wondering about Darwin himself, a full range of sources is applicable. However, when determining whether Darwin's theories contain dangerous racial ideology, the alarming text of his theories cannot be at all softened or explained away with outside information. Now I understand why I've never been asked in a biology class to read the original text of Darwin's theories: Our contemporary reverence for Darwin's gentlemanliness and the pure scientific brilliance of his theories is an overly optimistic illusion that shatters upon a closer look at his publications.

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