

PART II:

AN OLD MAN'S SURPRISES

CHAPTER FIVE THE NEW BEGINNING

Thirty years have passed. The year is 1867. After the slaughter of 558, 052¹ Americans, at a cost of over \$2-billion dollars, just two years ago the U.S. Civil War ended— with the anti-slavery Darwins fervent supporters of Lincoln and the North.

Between the time of the notebooks of young Darwin and now, the British have put 16,000 troops into their Afghanistan War to be massacred with only 161 survivors. David Livingston and Richard Burton have captured headlines with explorations opening Africa to the whites. Sir John Franklin has pushed into the Arctic to the distress of polar bears. In science, Louis Pasteur has developed the vaccination for what in our time erupted out of obscurity to become anthrax as a tool for terrorism. Gregor Mendel in almost total obscurity has discovered what is to become the gene theory that in the 20th century will reshape Darwin's theory. Charles Babbage has invented the calculating machine that points to the modern computer.

In social theory, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels have stirred the pot of revolution with the Communist Manifesto. Auguste Comte has written four volumes to establish the new field of sociology, then tried to commit suicide by drowning himself in the Seine. Herbert Spencer has set out to further pioneer the

rise of social science by launching what becomes nine volumes on biology, psychology, sociology, moral evolution, and systems science. In literature, Charles Dickens is doing what he can to reform the dark underside of England. Just three years ago in Russia Fyodor Doestoevsky published *Crime and Punishment*.

Meanwhile, largely dropped out of history because of their gender, hundreds of women, heartened by such advances for human evolution as the 1848 Seneca Falls convention and declaration, are beginning to stir the pot of social and intellectual change.

One of them, who we briefly met in chapter one, is Ras Darwin's old girl friend, Harriet Martineau. While generating a steady stream of reformist fiction, she has also produced a three volume history of England, the first widely read book on political economy, a book on morals, and six volumes of her translation from the French of the works of Auguste Comte. Florence Nightingale has pioneered leavening the horror of war with the new profession of nursing. Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has helped rouse the U.S. to end slavery.

Charles Darwin is now 60 years old. Behind him lies his marriage of 28 years to Emma, their joint production of a colorful and beloved family of ten children, and the unsettling sorrow of the death of three of them.

The Darwin of Fact Rather Than Fiction

Were we dealing with a familiar and long established part of Darwin's life and theory, this brief opener might seem to be enough of his life —and time now to get on with the lost top half for the theory. But we are dealing here with a voyage to a long obscured and in crucial particulars still widely unknown world. It is a world

of one man's mind in which the completion for his theory, which could have transformed our lives, grows out of the forgotten "agony and the ecstasy" of this particular great life. It can only be fully appreciated and understood if, first, we briefly immerse ourselves within the man himself, the challenge he faced, the beloved home and the love of family that became his laboratory, and what happened to the completion for his theory first in his time, and then— with cataclysmic results — in our own time.

Back in the notebook days, as we've seen, he worried that he might never be able to support a wife and family and also science at the high level he aspired to. Yet here is this miracle that can creep up on us as we age. In addition to the immense amount of research and writing that have made him one of the most famous people in the world of his time, and a big family, and a big place with lots of servants, and a home and grounds and greenhouses become a scientific research center, he is carrying on a correspondence that even in the days of letter writing would have swamped most email users today— and all this despite the fact he is very, very sick a good bit of the time.

Shortly after marrying Emma, this mystery begins that is to send him to bed, or sanitariums, or health-imposed vacations with the family on the Isle of Wight and elsewhere for much of the rest of his life. It strikes with a stomach ache, with a loss of energy, with a bloating and enormous production of gas that confines him to his room to avoid social embarrassment, often mounting until he is completely bed-ridden. But now, most distressing as the sense of responsibility flails at him during another period of exhausting illness, he is being forced by what the Greeks of Plato's time would have called destiny to tackle the second great challenge of his life. For what he faces is not only the expansion and completion of his theory of

evolution— enough in itself to drain the mind and energy of a much younger man. Now he must go beyond evolution to face the challenge that only now, over 100 years later— as we teeter on the edge of the fateful question of whether evolution is enough —we can see is the increasingly urgent question of revolution.

An interesting fact bearing on this question is that the one of the main reasons why Darwin was able to make both his known and famous and lost contributions to our species is that he had become wealthy through his great skill as a canny investor—with Emma’s fortune and his own inheritance he went heavily into railroad stocks, which were the Silicon Valley bonanza of his day. But here was no stereotypical capitalist of those days, Scrooge-like counting up and cackling over his money while the world around him went down the drain. Rather, in keeping with the concern beyond self and family that was to distinguish his response to the challenge, free of the necessity for or the restrictions of grants by foundations or governments, Darwin’s sideline talent for money-making underwrote both the first and the potential for the second Darwinian revolutions. Beyond the transformation of his sprawling home place into the greatest research center of its time, his money-making also went into wider public service.

Here is this man, by now recognized as one of the world’s greatest and presumably busiest scientists, and what is he also doing? To the amazement of those intimate enough with the family to visit and see what unfolded during a typical day, Darwin was still faithfully serving his little home village of Down as a magistrate to settle local disputes. His disciple George Romanes tells us of being there when Darwin was called off to settle where along a particular road it would be proper to allow a hog run—that is, where farmers can cross the road with their pigs. The incident is of a piece with his development and ongoing management of the job

insurance plan for the villagers of Down that brings into sharp contrast the revolution, which he had no idea he would set off, with the revolution Marx and Engels were at the same time actively plotting only 16 miles away in London.

Foreshadowing what on a global scale is again raising concern in our time, in the time of Darwin, Marx, and Engels the pattern of boom and bust, as well as the ruthless nature of all-out or unregulated, capitalism was imposing tremendous hardships on the British lower and working classes. The high born and affluent folk of the owner and manager class, such as the Darwins and the Wedgewoods, either having inherited wealth or becoming wealthy during the boom years, could ride out the recurring great depressions with ease. But thrown out of jobs by the hundreds of thousands with nothing to fall back on, the misery and degradation of the masses was to Charles Dickens, who portrayed this in his novels, and pioneering economists such as the super-brainy John Stuart Mill, morally insupportable. In *Das Capital* and their pivotal involvement in the formation and leadership of the Communist International, Marx and Engels had set out to try to change this situation with world revolution.

Similarly concerned, Darwin felt the best he could do was to try to protect the people of the village in which he lived. Anticipating the social security and unemployment insurance plans later instituted throughout Europe and in the U.S., to put an economic floor under the villagers Darwin set up the Down Friends Club to collect regular contributions from the locals during the boom years to provide support to them during the bust years. So year after year he has both managed and expanded the fund through canny investments. But now—dreading the idea in the worst way—he must go beyond this tiny effort to attack the larger problem. He must complete a theory for building the better world on a scale comparable to the

size of the challenge.

Building the Greater Theory

A large part of what he dreads is having to once again go through what he suffered with the publication of *Origin of Species*. Laying out the evidence to support the case that Natural Selection, not God, was responsible for the development of all plant and animal life on earth had not only brought down on him the condemnation of hordes of ministers. It had also brought on the attack of many of the most powerful scientists and influential journalists of his time. And this time it was sure to be much worse worse.

As he no doubt had often groaned in bed with his “stomach tied in knots,” there had earlier rained down on the hyper-sensitive Darwin the charge that *Origin of Species* was “an abuse of science” that only provided new clothes for the arch-conservative philosopher Hobbes’ reprehensible idea that all life is governed by the “war of all against all.”

Regarding “business as usual,” *Origin* had been perceptively cursed as “*laissez-faire* run amok,” a justification of “throat-slitting competition.”²

“‘Might is right,’ and therefore...Napoleon is right, and every cheating tradesman is also right.”³

Another prophetic charge that had been hurled at him — which today we may see has worldwide come to be — was that *Origin* **would** be put to use by “the free market fanatics ‘who reduce all the laws of action and human thought habitually to the lowest and most sordid motives.’”⁴

The most painful experiences for Darwin, however, had been those that

reached back into the past to touch the most cherished adventures of his youth. During the famous debate about *Origin* between Bishop Wilberforce, otherwise known as “Soapy Sam,” and T.H.Huxley, known as “Darwin’s bulldog,” a “grey haired Roman nosed elderly gentleman” rose and “lifting an immense Bible first with both and afterwards with one hand over his head, solemnly implored the audience to believe God rather than man.”⁵

This was Robert FitzRoy, with whom long ago as captain of the Beagle the 24-year-old Darwin had daily dined in the captain’s cabin— two bright and ambitious young men way back then who, with great relish and mutual respect, had argued about religion, science, and women, while sharing the greatest adventure of their lives.

Even more unsettling was the feedback of his beloved Cambridge professor Adam Sedgewick, with whom the worshipful young Darwin had roamed Wales in search of geological specimens just before he was invited to journey around the world on H.M.S. Beagle.

From Sedgewick had come word that he’d received his copy of *Origin*, but with “more pain than pleasure. Parts of it I admired greatly, parts I laughed at till my sides were almost sore; other parts I read with absolute sorrow, because I think them utterly false and grievously mischievous. You have *deserted* . . . the true method of induction, and started in machinery as wild, I think, as Bishop Wilkin’s locomotive that was to sail with us to the moon.”⁶

Now the pressure of friends and adherents, and the relentless honesty of his own mind, insists he must face it. It had been bad enough when he was dealing with the world of apes and less, from which friends as well as enemies might easily refuse to accept kinship. But now he can no longer avoid the psychic poke in the

eye or jab in the ribs of having to deal directly with ourselves and what drives *human* evolution.

So great is his dread the toll is showing. Shortly before writing what is to become *The Descent of Man*, his photographs show the startling change from an assertive, clean-shaven, square-jawed, side-burned and almost belligerent appearance of considerable vigor toward the pale and even yellowed old man with mournful face, wistful eyes, and long white beard of the favored picture today. He has, in fact, aged so rapidly he has had to introduce himself to old friends who couldn't recognize him.

But it can be avoided no longer. And so over the long, very cold winters from 1868 through 1870, holed up in the cocoon of his study at the home place in Down, Darwin goes to work with his last great sustained burst of energy to write out everything that once again surfaces in the pages of this book — which was then to sink out of sight in one of the most astounding turn of events in the history of science and society.

Indeed, although the story of the disappearance of anything that threatens the prevailing paradigm is familiar to those motivated to look for it in the past, given the size of this suppression, and the fact this happened in our so-called modern world of advanced science and widespread and intensive education, I would say there are few things comparable within the previous span of human evolution.

***The Demolition of the Greater Theory,
the Bog Holes of PseudoDarwinian Mind,
and the Road Blocks to the Better World***

“I have been led to put together my notes, so as to see how far the general conclusions arrived at in my former works were applicable to man,” he writes in typical understatement on the very first opening page for *The Descent of Man*.⁷

In other words, his clearly avowed purpose in writing *Descent* is to go beyond the prehuman, in what we may today see was the *first half* for the theory he wrote about in *The Origin of Species*, to *complete* his theory of evolution by now probing the nature of *our* species.

I am deliberately emphasizing this because— although it may seem obvious to us today, coming at it fresh, and particularly given the fact I supply that he says this on the very first page of *Descent*— this vital point was to be ignored or otherwise missed by an overwhelming number of Darwinian scholars and evolutionary scientists throughout the entire 20th century.⁸ As noted earlier, in an extensive sampling of books on Darwin and evolution theory, I could find only a dozen or so who reported any awareness of what fills most of the rest of the chapters of this book; and of these, I found only *four* authorities who wrote of what is here with an appreciable degree of understanding.

As noted in the Prologue, the earliest challenger of what first became status quo science, and then regressive science for the 20th century, was the Russian naturalist and philosopher Prince Peter Kropotkin in his posthumous *Ethics* in 1924.⁹ Next came the eminent Darwinian authority John Greene, author of *The Death of Adam* in 1959.¹⁰ Then within his scholarly masterpiece *Darwin and the Emergence of Evolutionary Theories of Mind and Behavior* came the extensive probe of University of Chicago psychologist and historian of science Robert J. Richards in 1987.¹¹ Finally, in 1990 came recognition by theologian James Rachels in *Created From Animals* that “Darwin was correct in thinking that all his work,

from the theory of natural selection to the moral vision he articulates, is of one piece.”¹²

“It is one view, held together by a sense of how the elements of one’s thinking must be mutually supportive, and how they must fit together, if one’s outlook is to form a reasonable and satisfying whole.”¹³

But for almost everybody else throughout the 20th century, if they bothered with the book at all, *Descent* was seen as merely something into which it was felt Darwin had crammed everything about sexual selection he couldn’t get into *The Origin of Species*. That and a bit of warmed over, old hat moral philosophy best skipped over. Nothing so grand as a *completion of theory*, heavens no. Nor certainly nothing really important or new to say about *human* evolution beyond what he had already established in *Origin of Species*.

And so there transpired what lies ahead. As so many had before him— but now with the hope that science might at last tip the scales— he writes hoping to liberate our species from all that again and again has sucked us backward and downward rather than thrust us forward in evolution. And as in some nightmare rather than the waking world, where reason and caring and decency become readily available to us, what in page after page he writes of the liberating second half was shunted aside by those who, as we enter the 21st century, once again seek to seize over-riding power.

It is the story, only this time with the threat immensely greater, of those who throughout the 20th century used the Darwinian first half to steadily dig what I decided to call the “bog holes” of PseudoDarwinian Mind.

When I first came upon the “truth” about Darwin the recovery struck me as well as many others as big news scientifically as well as socially. But over a decade

I found that to most people, to the news media, to publishers, and even to the bulk of scientists and other scholars, by itself the recovery of the lost Darwin meant little to anyone except my closest scientific associates. It was “interesting,” “amazing,” “odd,” or too weird for belief. But so deeply are we entranced by the old paradigm that for most people it was just another one of many novelties that, as for the sleepwalker, either don’t connect or pass in and out of the mind within a few minutes or a day at most.

What slams across the connection of this loss to both the reality of our daily lives and the fate of our species, I found, are the “bog holes” and the “road blocks” of consequence.

Determined to break the spell, using the powerful tools that psychology and social and systems science have given us, year after year I kept digging until I had uncovered six destructive mindsets, or “bogholes,” for PseudoDarwinian Mind that derive from Neo and Super-Neo Darwinian science. But this still wasn’t enough to jolt the sleepwalkers of a century awake. So I pushed on to uncover how these mindsets, or bog holes, are causally linked to the seven cumulating global disasters I listed in opening the Prologue— or the “roadblocks” that bar our way to a better world.¹⁴

The bog holes, briefly listed, are the enslaving mindsets of the idea of *survival of the fittest*, which chapters eleven and twelve explore. *Selfishness above all, or selfishness uber alles*, explored in chapters nine and ten. The belief that *life has no meaning* (chapter fourteen). That *life has no direction* (chapters seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen). That *one must submit without question to higher authority* (chapter sixteen). And most difficult of all to break the spell and arouse people to, and yet most important of all to comprehend: the PseudoDarwinian belief that

amorality reigns.

Like the spread of the cloak, the whirlwind and the blinding fog of the popular dark wizards in the movies of our time, this is the contradictory mind-scrambling mixture of both the belief that might makes right and that there is no right or wrong, which rose to govern the mind of the 20th century and now rules the prevailing mind for both the most powerful and the weakest and most ignorant of our time. This we'll begin to look at in concluding this chapter and then explore in depth in chapters six, seven, and eight.

Chapter by chapter we will see how these bog holes in which modern mind is mired, via the link between mind and action, or how what we believe drives what we do, built the road blocks that now either check or drive us backward in evolution — that is, environmental devastation, the devastation of war, the widening of the gap between rich and poor, the persistent valuing of male over female, the escalation of population, the threat of terrorism, and the grim sleeping planetary presence of nuclear overkill.

But enough of this. Let's leave the grim world of today and go back over the years to rejoin Darwin in his study in Down house in 1868.

Outside perhaps the snow is pelting the windows. The chill seeps in under the door, but is checked by the warmth from the coals in the fireplace. Occasionally he hears the jingle of a horse with bells passing by on the road outside. Or once in a while it is the howl of the wind down the chimney. And here — contrary to what engaged almost all of his 20th century successors— he is laboring away on what to him is the single most important body of information for us to comprehend if we are understand who we really are, and where we're going; that is, for understanding *human* evolution.

What he is writing of is the seemingly strange idea to us today of a “moral world of animals.”

What follows hereafter within the “boxes” is Darwin himself speaking. I will interrupt only to break apart what often seems to go on forever in the original into paragraphs, add subheads, and provide an occasional explanation or comment.

Bold face without italics will be used to occasionally emphasize observations that are particularly important intellectual bricks or mortar for him in constructing the completion for his theory.

The Moral World of Animals—including Ourselves

I fully subscribe to the judgement of those writers who maintain that of all the differences between ourselves and the lower animals, the moral sense or conscience is by far the most important.¹⁵

This sense, as Mackintosh¹⁶ remarks, 'has a rightful supremacy over every other principle of human action.' It is summed up in that short but imperious word *ought*, so full of high significance.

It is the most noble of all the attributes of our species, leading us without a moment's hesitation to risk our lives for those of our fellow-creatures, or after due deliberation, impelled simply by the deep feeling of right or duty, to sacrifice our lives in some great cause.

Of this deep feeling of right or duty, Immanuel Kant exclaims, 'Duty! Wondrous thought, that worketh neither by fond insinuation, flattery, nor by any threat, but merely by holding up thy naked law in the soul, and so extorting

for thyself always reverence, if not always obedience.¹⁷

This great question has been discussed by many writers of consummate ability. My sole excuse for touching on it is the impossibility of here passing it over, and because, as far as I know, no one has approached it exclusively from the side of natural history. This investigation possesses, also, some independent interest as an attempt to see how far the study of the lower animals throws light on one of the highest psychical faculties of our species.

The following proposition seems to me in a high degree probable—namely, that any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, the parental and filial affections being here included, would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience, as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well, or nearly as well developed, as in our species.

This of course we can recognize as a restatement of our "old friend" from the private notebooks of thirty years earlier— Tenet I for his theory, which he sidles into so casually and poorly as to make one wonder at this diffidence.

Particularly notable is how this statement is minus so much as a hint of the forbidden connection to sex, which originally both sparked and initiated his historic insight.

And so without further ado, Darwin moves on to explore the similarities and differences in moral sensitivity both in its inbuilt nature and its reflection in learning and education in humans and prehumans.¹⁸