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## Pieces of Evolution's Puzzle: A Social-Philosophical Perspective

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**Аннотация.** В статье автор пытается обосновать положение о том, что теория эволюции, с точки зрения социально-гуманитарного знания, сегодня теряет эвристический смысл и морально устаревает. Автор признает, что в исторической ретроспективе теория имела прикладное значение. Развивая идеи С. Фуллера, автор утверждает: человек, с точки зрения интенциональности, свободы воли и принятия решения, исчезает из социально-гуманитарного эволюционного дискурса, что с необходимостью ведет к эффекту дегуманизации. Решение проблемы дегуманизации автор видит в создании "не-эволюционной" ("пост-эволюционной") концепции социальных изменений, которая смогла бы ответить на вызовы нынешней информационно-электронной эры.

**Abstract.** This paper tries to show that evolution is an outdated theory in human-social sciences; it has been applied in the past and is now set to become obsolete. This is because human agency, free-will, decision-making and intentionality are predominantly excluded from social-humanitarian evolutionary discourse, which leads to a dehumanizing effect. An updated, non-evolutionary (cf. post-evolutionary) view of human-social change(s) that suits the information-electronic age and ushers in a teleological perspective would offer a timely solution to this problem.

### 1. Introduction

The views you have acquired about Darwinism, evolution, and the struggle for existence won't explain to you the meaning of your life and won't give you guidance in your actions, and a life without an explanation of its meaning and importance, and without the unfailing guidance that stems from it is a pitiful existence. Think about it. I say it, probably on the eve of my death, because I love you<sup>1</sup>.

Lev N. Tolstoy

As a foreigner coming to the Russian Federation to do academic research, I was encouraged to find the best connection possible between ideas grown at home in Canada and those born in Russia. For me, one of the main reasons to study the Russian tradition was due to its perspectives regarding one of the most interdisciplinary<sup>2,3</sup> concepts in today's Academy, that of 'evolution'<sup>4</sup>. Russia's unique historical perspective on evolution and evolutionary theories<sup>5</sup> affords the non-Russian observer a treasure trove of ideas. Some of these ideas are suitable for counter-balancing the extreme positions that have taken hold as controversy over evolution erupts in universities, academies and in the public arena around the world.

In several major scientific centers evolution has a major public image<sup>6</sup> problem (statistics from the U.S.A., U.K., Turkey, etc.). Adding to this public image problem is a new movement of scholars, lawyers and public relations agents in the United States of America called the intelligent design movement<sup>7</sup>, that is

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, Nov. 1, 1910, to his children (Perepiska s russkimi pisateliami, 1978).

<sup>2</sup> "Evolution is at present more than a biological theory. Evolutionism has influenced the physical as well as the social sciences, and has become an integral part of the intellectual equipment of modern mankind." ... "[T]he idea of evolution has become applied much more widely than in the field of biology" (*Dobzhansky*, 1956).

<sup>3</sup> "Thus the Evolution-theory has shone its brilliant light on an ever more encompassing field. Time and again, new provinces of our cosmic life were brought under its scepter, and in each territory that it annexed it quickened a spirit of more profound investigation, elicited research that had not previously been considered, and wrought a unity in studies that earlier dealt with only details. Such splendid results bolstered the belief that in its inspired thought the true explanation of the universe had indeed been found."... "«Naturalistic scholars»...proceeded to the evolutionistic reformation of psychology, ethics and sociology, with the further goal to found all jurisprudence upon a changed basis, to change history into an action of mechanistic forces, to fit the economy together like a mechanistic jig-saw puzzle" (*Kuyper*, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> "[T]he grandest narrative of Western culture, the modern story of evolution" – Betty Smocovitis.

<sup>5</sup> In this composition, the terms 'evolution' and 'evolutionary theories' are often used interchangeably and simultaneously.

<sup>6</sup> "A public image is a product of a universe of discourse, that is, a process of sharing messages and experiences" (*Boulding*, 1973).

<sup>7</sup> The Discovery Institute is a think tank in Seattle, Washington that hosts almost all of the leading figures in the IDM as Fellows. See their website: [www.discovery.org/csc/](http://www.discovery.org/csc/)

questioning the limits of evolutionary theory in natural sciences, asking people to consider the 'edge of evolution'<sup>8</sup> and to 'explore evolution'<sup>9</sup> so that it is not accepted uncritically as ideology together with science. Often over-looked in discussions that centre on natural sciences, however, are the implications of evolutionary theories for human-social sciences. The social-humanitarian<sup>10</sup> fields where evolution is assumed, applied and consumed are the focus of this paper.

Alongside the public image problem of evolution is the burden carried by human-social scientists and scholars of forced conformity to natural scientific standards. In order to qualify as having legitimate results or as creating knowledge upon which their authority can rest, social-humanitarian scholars are expected to be positivistic, empirical and quantitative. The notion of reflexive science in contrast to positive science (Burawoy, 2005) has not yet entered the lexicon of natural scientific standards. Of central concern, then, is the sovereignty of social-humanitarian thought as distinguished from natural scientific methods and the limits of natural scientific thought.

For example, the field of sociology has allowed 'natural selection'<sup>11</sup> to hold a dominant role, which has led to erasing (i.e. making indeterminate) the distinction between humans and non-humans (Fuller, 2006). The challenge of biology to human-social sciences is presented in Steve Fuller's *The New Sociological Imagination*, which is discussed here as an integrative, contemporary approach, bridging the biology of Theodosius Dobzhansky with the sociology of Pitirim Sorokin. By turning away from the fuzzy concept-duo of 'natural selection'<sup>12</sup> toward the concept of 'human selection' (A.R. Wallace), a new vision of human-social change that does not rely upon a mysterious, perhaps even incoherent mechanism such as 'natural selection' can be realized.

One source for promoting a non-evolutionary point of view is the work of the Russia-American sociologist Pitirim A. Sorokin. His conceptualization of civilizational types: 'ideational', 'idealistic' and 'sensate' appear especially relevant for our contemporary globalising sociology<sup>13</sup>. This framework helps us to understand evolutionary theory within a context of materialist ideology that is dominant for sensate culture<sup>14</sup>. Evolution over-emphasises dynamics at the cost of statics, stability and spirituality. Evolutionary theory in social sciences is the furthest extreme of sensate human-social philosophy. Sorokin's model of human-social thought challenges universalistic evolution as it exemplifies a sensate worldview<sup>15</sup> and seeks to build alternatives that open humanity up to more ideational modes of life.

This paper also touches upon the work of Ukrainian-born Theodosius Dobzhansky, specifically visiting his vision of cultural evolution, which unfortunately under-acknowledges the sovereignty of human-social sciences. Dobzhansky, one of the founders of the 'modern synthesis'<sup>16</sup> of neo-evolutionary thought, spoke outside of his areas of expertise<sup>17</sup> with the presupposition that human culture should be said to 'evolve' just as biological phenomena

<sup>8</sup> Michael Behe's book *The Edge of Evolution*, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> The Discovery Institute's book *Explore Evolution*, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> In this composition, the terms 'human-social' and 'social-humanitarian' are often used interchangeably and simultaneously.

<sup>11</sup> "Every one knows what is meant and is implied by such metaphorical expressions, and they are almost necessary for brevity" – C. Darwin (*On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*).

<sup>12</sup> "More than a century after Darwin, the concept of natural selection is still in need of clarification" (Dobzhansky, 1963).

<sup>13</sup> Sandstrom, Gregory. "Global Sociology: Russian Style". *The Canadian Journal of Sociology*. Special Issue on the Globalisation of Sociology. Vol. 3, No. 3, 2008

(URL: <http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/CJS/article/view/4156/3400>).

<sup>14</sup> "The sensory world is in a state of incessant flux and becoming. There is nothing unchangeable in it – not even an eternal Supreme Being. Mind dominated by the truth of the senses simply cannot perceive any permanency, but apprehends all values in terms of shift and transformation. Sensate mentality views everything from the standpoint of evolution and progress. This leads to an increasing neglect of the eternal values, which come to be replaced by temporary, or short-time, considerations" (Sorokin, 1941).

<sup>15</sup> "[I]n the predominantly Sensate cultures similar to the culture in the West for the last four centuries, the progressively linear theories of the evolution of humanity tend to dominate. In such a culture the whole historical process is viewed as a sort of progressive advance along the highway, with some deviations and little detours, from 'the caveman to superman', from 'barbarism to civilization', from 'stupidity to wisdom and genius', from 'bestiality to semi-divinity', from war and struggle for existence to peace, harmony and mutual aid – and so on." ... "The theories of progress-evolution by Kant and Fichte, Herder and Lessing, Hegel and Adam Smith, August Comte and Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx and John Fiske, the Darwinian and biological theories of evolution – these are the typical representations of historical processes, trends, laws of evolution of that Sensate period of Western culture" (Sorokin, 1963).

<sup>16</sup> "The modern synthetic theory as a generally accepted way of approaching problems of evolution was born in 1937 with the publication of Dobzhansky's *Genetics and the Origin of Species*" (Dobzhansky et al., 1977).

<sup>17</sup> "Whatever expertness I may possess is in biology, more precisely in evolutionary genetics. This is no warrant for embarking on speculations in the realms of philosophy and religion...This is not an attempt to derive a philosophy from biology, but rather to include biology in a Weltanschauung" (Dobzhansky, 1967).

and the cosmos do<sup>18</sup>. Dobzhansky's supposition that biological evolution was in fact behind (i.e. post-dating) the other two (i.e. cosmological and cultural) types of evolution in terms of historical articulation as science<sup>19</sup> is significant as a marker against the supposed universalism of biological evolutionary theories as a science of life.

The main thesis of the paper is to show that evolution is an outdated theory in human-social sciences; it has worked and must now become obsolete. This is because human agency, free-will, decision-making and intentionality are predominantly excluded from social-humanitarian evolutionary discourse, which leads to a dehumanizing effect (Fuller, 2006). An updated, non-evolutionary view of human-social change(s) that suits the information-electronic age and ushers in a teleological perspective would offer a timely solution to this humanitarian problem. The other option is to return to evolutionary biology as an aid for contemporary human-social understanding (Lopreato, Timothy, 1999), thus justifying the conclusions of socio-biology (Wilson, 1975) and evolutionary psychology (Pinker, 2002) and their nihilistic view of human nature and ultimate existence.

What follows is a brief report on several varieties of ideological evolutionism, i.e. linguistic, philosophical, sociological, pedagogical and psychological, that make up evolution's contemporary puzzle. In each of the sections I include the views of Dobzhansky, Fuller or Sorokin as related to the particular field. The paper concludes by discussing a great riddle<sup>20</sup> that can be tackled using non-evolutionary terms, along the way discarding the belief that altruism is a natural extension of egoism.

The conclusion here is a simple one that naturalistic explanations and the natural scientists that endorse them simply have no authority to speak of altruism. A. Comte, who coined the term 'altruism', considered sociology as the new 'queen of the sciences' while psychology gained no place at the table of human-social respectability. Yet today, at least in the Russian situation, psychology and not sociology has flooded the shelves of bookstores with popular manuscripts meant both for individual altruistic and egoistic growth. A tug-of-war between what counts as socially and individually important knowledge is thus illustrated by the Russian situation.

## 2. Linguistic

The linguistic meaning of 'evolution' has become so grand that it includes almost everything. When evolution is defined simply in terms of Heraclitian flux (i.e. 'everything changes'<sup>21</sup>), then it comes to refer only to 'change-over-time' and so, by definition 'everything evolves' because 'everything changes'. This view is taken by Daniel Dennett<sup>22</sup>, as also by Noam Chomsky in his notion of 'universal grammar'. Evolution has however, unfortunately, now become too broad to be handled by any one thinker<sup>23,24</sup>. The signifier 'evolution' now signifies and symbolizes<sup>25</sup> more than any single specialized scientific community can comprehend. In consequence, the notion of evolution has unfortunately become too broad...

The semantics of evolutionary language is particularly problematic when its users suppose (or even simply imply) that human beings are somehow NOT 'special'<sup>26</sup> or 'unique'<sup>27</sup> creatures. The meaning of 'humanity'

<sup>18</sup> "Man is a most extraordinary product of evolution; he is so much unlike any other biological species that his evolution cannot be adequately understood in terms of only those causative factors which are operating in the biological world outside the human kind. The singularity of human evolution lies in the fact that the human species has evolved culture. Culture is the exclusive property of man" (Dobzhansky, 1956).

<sup>19</sup> "Biological evolution is the middle term of the evolutionary triad – cosmic, biological, and human. Reference has already been made above to the fact that biological evolution was discovered after the other two" (Dobzhansky, 1967).

<sup>20</sup> "However, it is in error when, intoxicated with the joy of this discovery [evolutionary theory], it fancies that it has found the solution to the riddle of the universe and suggests in popular writings that the architectonics of a 'cosmos without blueprint' has been disclosed to us. There is no satisfactory proof that the cosmos is thus mechanistically self-formed, and the proof cannot be supplied, even experimentally, in step-by-step detail" (Kuyper, 1998).

<sup>21</sup> "Everything flows and nothing abides; everything gives way and nothing stays the same" – Heraclitus (In: Danielson, 2000).

<sup>22</sup> "If I were to give an award for the single best idea anyone has ever had, I'd give it to Darwin, ahead of Newton and Einstein and everyone else. In a single stroke, the idea of evolution by natural selection unifies the realm of life, meaning, and purpose with the realm of space and time, cause and effect, mechanism and physical law" – Daniel Dennett (1991, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*).

<sup>23</sup> "The constant expansion of the evolutionary paradigm has reached the point that no one author can feel competent to deal authoritatively with all its aspects" (Dobzhansky et al., 1977).

<sup>24</sup> "Evolution shows so many facets that it looks alike to no two persons" – E. Mayr (1970).

<sup>25</sup> "[M]ankind's paramount distinctive attribute is culture. Culture is a store of information and behavior patterns, transmitted by instruction and learning, by example and imitation. The central role in the transmission of culture belongs not to genes but to human symbol systems" (Dobzhansky et al., 1977).

<sup>26</sup> "The two implied theological traits – the separateness of humans from other animals and the equality of all humans in the eyes of God – have anchored subsequent discussion about the distinctiveness of the social sciences from the other two great bodies of academic knowledge, the natural sciences and the humanities" (Fuller, 2006).

<sup>27</sup> "Human self-awareness obviously differs greatly from any rudiments of mind that may be present in nonhuman animals. The magnitude of the difference makes it a difference in kind, and not one of degree. Owing primarily to this difference, mankind became an extraordinary and unique product of biological evolution" (Dobzhansky et al., 1977).

as a kind of sovereign species is as such disallowed. This perspective is espoused not only by linguists, but also by communication theorists such as Jurgen Habermas, who writes, "The fixation of speech in writing was an evolutionarily significant step"<sup>28</sup>. Nothing is added to the meaning of Habermas' sentence by using the word 'evolutionary', other than perhaps gaining the appearance of scientific legitimacy. At the same time, his view suggests a kind of gradualism<sup>29</sup> that points to a difference of degree rather than of kind between humans and other species. Such a position is antithetical to the classical view that human beings are special and unique among creatures in and upon the Earth.

In this vein, a blatantly obvious strong-handed use of evolutionary language is by one of the founders of the modern synthesis, Dobzhansky. Dobzhansky (1963) writes that "mankind is simultaneously engaged in two kinds of evolutionary developments – the biological and the cultural". Since Dobzhansky's synthesis, it has become much easier to posit the reality of cultural evolution<sup>30,31</sup>, which Darwin himself did not propose, not being a social-cultural scholar. Yet on what basis does Dobzhansky claim to speak the language of culture since he was not a culturologist or human-social scientist? It is one thing to make suggestions outside of one's field of knowledge and expertise and another to make proclamations and sounds of certainty that in fact have no theoretical or evidential basis. Dobzhansky can be said to be guilty of academic transferability fraud, even if his intention was innocent. That is, Dobzhansky's broad definition of evolution as 'change over time' led to his inevitable over-use of evolution in the social and cultural realms.

In consequence of the above, it can be acknowledged that linguistically speaking evolution is a kind of change, however the inverse is not true: change is categorically not a kind of evolution. One can have change without something evolving<sup>32</sup>. If this contemporary linguistic meaning can be accepted and credited as communicatively legitimate, then the definition of evolution as 'change-over-time' can be duly erased from the dictionaries and from acceptable scientific language. Evolution is simply *not* synonymous with change! Evolution means a certain *type* of change, which differs according to the evolutionary theorist by place and time and is by no means explained fully by the ideology of Darwinism.

What then does evolution actually mean? Is it a biological term, a cosmological term or a human-social term, or all three and more at once<sup>33</sup>? Linguistic evolution can be considered as a misnomer in social-humanitarian thought if a contemporary re-definition of human-social change is allowed. Language changes, however, it does not 'evolve', as biological or other natural sciences may suggest from beyond their areas of expertise. This is because human beings are involved in creating language and because language is a human-made thing. The concept of evolutionary linguistics is a human-social construct that relies upon culture as much as or more than it relies on mere biology<sup>34</sup>. The origins of language are likewise not provable<sup>35</sup> by using natural scientific methods, which differ fundamentally from historical methods.

The linguistic diffusion of evolutionary grammar across a range of academic fields reveals its misuses, the overreaching and aspiration for a grand unified theory (GUT) to justify atheism<sup>36</sup>. Likewise, the Soviet party-line held that no other views were officially allowed other than evolutionary atheism. The drawback is that a linguistic relativism<sup>37</sup> can result from evolutionary linguistics, which justifies neither the truth nor scientific accuracy. Evolutionary scientific atheism eventually misleads scholars more than it allows them to follow the evidence where it leads. This is a paradox of communication for human understanding that perhaps only post-modern philosophy can untangle.

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<sup>28</sup> *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy, 1984.

<sup>29</sup> Philosophical issue of boundaries of definition human and non-human.

<sup>30</sup> "[C]ultural evolution leads to the invention of wheels and legal codes and microchips and so on. Humans use the fruits of cultural evolution to organize themselves on a larger and larger scale" – Robert Wright ("Planet with a Purpose," 2004).

<sup>31</sup> "Evolution still continues, if anything more rapidly than ever, but now it has passed from the biologic to the social, out of the individual into the culture" – Paul Maslow (Chapter – "Social Evolution," in *Intuition Versus Intellect*, 1957).

<sup>32</sup> E.g. cyclical views of history.

<sup>33</sup> "The question which presents itself is whether the cosmic, the biological, and the human evolutions are three unrelated processes, or are parts, perhaps chapters or stages, of a single universal evolution" (*Dobzhansky*, 1967).

<sup>34</sup> "A language's syntax and vocabulary are not determined by our biological nature, but are products of human culture. Likewise, moral norms are not determined by biological processes, but by cultural traditions and principles including religious beliefs, that are products of human history" – Francisco Ayala ("Human Nature: One Evolutionist's View" in *Whatever Happened to the Soul*, 1998).

<sup>35</sup> "The beginning of language can not be dated, even approximately. The fact that without exception all human populations have language suggests (but does not prove) great antiquity for this form of communication" (*Dobzhansky et al.*, 1977).

<sup>36</sup> R. Dawkins, S. Pinker, S. Blackmore, S. Harris, et al.

<sup>37</sup> "«When I use a word», Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, «it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less»" – Lewis Carroll (*Alice in Wonderland*).

### 3. Philosophical

In evolutionary philosophy, original moments of (radical) change are lost to meaningful interpretation. They seem somehow to have been replaced by sophisticated rhetoric that in the end no natural science can claim as valid because they involve extra-scientific meanings. The presence of a fixed standard (Parmenides<sup>38</sup>) is ultimately obscured by evolutionary philosophy.

Take for example the notion of 'unanticipated consequences' (Merton, 1936) of human action and intentions. Even if the consequences of human-social action are sometimes unpredictable, they are still open to empirical consideration, research and thought experiments, due to the reflexive nature of philosophical thought. The moment(s) of change, from intention to action and human-social consequence is lost in the evolutionary perspective; it just happens, randomly, statistically. It should instead be concluded that contemporary philosophy enables the seeker of wisdom in action and experience, not merely in pragmatism. There is then a deeper sense of holistic human existence with an integrative spirit that evolution leaves empty.

The gaining of a fixed standpoint is based principally on our intended consequences. Human beings are intentional creatures, who seek meaning and purpose<sup>39,40</sup> in the world, on Earth and in the universe. Human-social science cannot avoid these realities. A non-evolutionary philosophy would highlight rather than downplay such things as choice, agency, meaning and purpose.

If our philosophy of life depends mainly on our biology, then according to evolutionary theory 'reproductive fitness' and 'survival' are the main goals<sup>41</sup>. But life is not only about reproduction. If it were then suicide bombers, who are a real phenomena of our age, would be a contradiction in terms; suicide bombers are evolutionarily counter-productive, attempts to construct evolutionary arguments to the contrary notwithstanding. The notion that reproduction and survival value are the primary goal of human existence runs into a problem in the age of terrorism and suicide bombers. It is thus rather easy to conclude that Darwinian evolution makes for a very poor paradigm when applied in the philosophical sphere (Fuller, 2006). Darwin was, after all, by his own admission, not a philosophically-oriented<sup>42,43</sup> person. There is thus no reason to trust Darwinian evolutionary philosophy.

In the course of human life there are anomalies and unpredictable occurrences that no natural science can foresee. Human life is not a unilinear phenomenon with the ends simply following the means; cause and effect, following physics. More often than not the causes follow from the effects. Human life sometimes follows a discontinuous and jagged path rather than a smooth, continuous process. There are gaps, times of relief, periods of calm and then revolutions, revelations and explosions. This reality does not fit into the box of a western evolutionary rational-scientism based upon inevitable progress. There is likewise admissible something discontinuous between human beings and the rest of nature, though saying exactly what that discontinuity is poses a great challenge to human understanding, both north and south, east and west.

Only in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century did the academic philosophy of science discover that natural science sometimes becomes ideologically scientific<sup>44</sup> with aspirations to universalism<sup>45</sup>. On the other hand, we must be careful not to become anti-science just because we are not natural scientists<sup>46</sup>, but human-social thinkers who always keep in mind the human factor.

### 4. Sociological

The goal of science is to humanize man and to direct his powers to useful activity<sup>47</sup>  
Karl F. Kessler's Credo

<sup>38</sup> "One path only is left for us to speak of, namely that *It is*. In this path are very many tokens that what is is uncreated and indestructible; for it is complete, immovable, and without end" – Parmenides.

<sup>39</sup> "Evolution has no purpose; man must supply this for himself" (Dobzhansky, 1956).

<sup>40</sup> "Natural selection is automatic, mechanical, blind. It has brought about the evolution of the living world and the emergence of man with his capacity for culture, but it has no purpose because purposes are human prerogatives" (Dobzhansky, 1963).

<sup>41</sup> "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" – Charles Darwin (*On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, 1964).

<sup>42</sup> "I am not at all accustomed to metaphysical trains of thought" – C. Darwin (11 July 1861).

<sup>43</sup> "[P]roblems relating to the *raison d'être* or the philosophy of life did not trouble him and were unimportant." – Gerhard Wichler (*Charles Darwin*, 1961).

<sup>44</sup> I.e. when what it is claimed that science can answer is pushed too far.

<sup>45</sup> "A very slight logical pressure is sufficient to transform this [evolution] into the doctrine that we must 'explain the total universe' before we can 'really' explain any part or aspect of it. But this doctrine empties the idea of explanation of both its scientific and its common sense understanding" – Goudge (1970).

<sup>46</sup> Cf. the Germanic-Russian tradition and the meaning of the word *uchyeoni*.

<sup>47</sup> Cited in M.N. Bogdanov's "Karl Fedorovich Kessler." *Trudy Sankt-Peterburgskogo Obshchestva Estestvoispytatelei*, 1882.

Sociology, despite what its founder August Comte foretold, is not universalistic. It is rather a field with aspirations<sup>48</sup> not only to understand, but also to change human societies for the better. The spur to positive, direct action is not only the perspective of Karl Marx<sup>49</sup>, but of many, if not all human-social scientists. This constitutes the vocation of social-humanitarian scholars to not only study, but also to try to improve the world, which leads them back to basic ideological presuppositions.

This was precisely the meaning that Max Weber attributed to human-social science in his seminal text "Science as a Vocation" (1919). Weber acknowledged the reality of presuppositions for both science and theology<sup>50</sup>. Weber is, according to Fuller (2006), "Notable for having anticipated the de-humanizing effects of the spread of natural scientific thought, in the wider culture, though without succumbing to anti-scientism." The realm of human-made things and human choices to make things is full of tension and uncertainty. If the concept of 'evolution' is philosophically over-burdened, it is correct to uncover its ideological presuppositions. We might then rightfully ask: Is evolution a basic ideological presupposition that human-social sciences should be based upon? While remaining within the realm of science, a non-evolutionary sociological methodology could instead offer hope to those seeking a vocation in human-social science, with fundamental relevance for human culture and civilization.

Notable in contemporary academic discourse is the emergence of history, philosophy and sociology of science (HPSS) as a more or less unified scientific discipline. In Russia, 'science studies' (*naukovedeniye*) were practiced as early as the 1920's, with P. Sorokin playing a crucial role in bringing the sociology of science to the U.S.A. through his student Robert Merton. Of crucial importance is the notion that social history does not equate with natural history and that social conditions and planning can and do lead to changes in the scientific landscape. In this sense one of the first priorities for social-humanitarian thinkers is to distinguish what is particularly 'human' from what is simply 'natural', in a bid to establish disciplinary sovereignty for the human-social sciences over against the natural sciences.

What could present a balanced opportunity for contemporary scholarship is a sociological-philosophical approach that seeks autonomy from biology<sup>51</sup> while still remaining admittedly intertwined<sup>52</sup> (*enkaptic*) with it. When Steve Fuller (2006) says that "sociologists should stop deferring to the authority of biologists," for example, it is both a warning to maintain disciplinary sovereignty and an even-handed recognition that biology and sociology are intertwined in the existence of humanity. By seeking a balance, biological thought is openly acknowledged as influential but nevertheless disallowed any sense of hierarchical dominance over sociology and other human-social sciences. This is where the centrality of 'evolution' as an interdisciplinary concept is both helpful and misleading at the same time. In sociology, a new concept, methodology or paradigm to augment biological evolution would be a significant contribution to future dialogue.

If 'natural selection' is the key concept in all of biology (Trivers, 1985) then 'human selection' should be one of the key concepts in sociology and/or social anthropology. Anything else is to give up sovereignty over the field of sociology to a naturalistic (or biologicistic) conception of the world. The biosphere and the noosphere are certainly not reducible to each other, despite what hard core natural scientists may presuppose. Natural selection, just because it is a significant cause of organic change, does not apply equally to super-organic change (E. de Roberty, 1909). To credit natural selection with super-organic change is to discredit the realm of human agency and decision-making to the exaggerated whim of physical science.

The result of an imbalanced credibility in favour of natural sciences is the dehumanization of humanity<sup>53</sup>. This point cannot be emphasized enough! Population genetics and ecology, which are irreducibly statistical sciences (Fuller, 2006) are afforded privileged positions that they do not deserve when it comes to understanding human-social activities. Thus, a perverted perspective of human-social change is perpetrated by contemporary evolutionists who insist upon a 'selfish gene' ideology (Dawkins, 1976), as if genes use people to reproduce themselves. This is a classic misattribution of 'agency' to something that does not possess it.

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<sup>48</sup> "the distinctly *aspirational* character of social scientific knowledge" (Fuller, 2006).

<sup>49</sup> "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it" – K. Marx (*Theses on Feuerbach*, 1977).

<sup>50</sup> "[N]o science is absolutely free from presuppositions, and no science can prove its fundamental value to the man who rejects those presuppositions. Every theology, however, adds a few specific presuppositions for its work and thus for the justification of its existence" – Max Weber (1919).

<sup>51</sup> "Now, I would be among the last to doubt that biology sheds some light on human nature; but to plan even the biological evolution of mankind, let alone its cultural evolution, biology is palpably insufficient" (Dobzhansky, 1963).

<sup>52</sup> "[I]t is just as wrong to explain human affairs entirely by biology as it is to suppose that biology has no bearing on human affairs." ... "There is every reason, indeed, to study humans as well as animals, but not to ascribe hastily to man anything or everything that we find in animals" (Dobzhansky, 1956).

<sup>53</sup> Humanity: "the 'human' as a collective project undertaken by *Homo sapiens* to transcend its animal nature (a.k.a. human nature)" (Fuller, 2006).

Imagining a type of consciously-human, non-biological evolution that involves human will, can make little sense to those who would reduce the world to only physical and material components. Likewise, thinking that human-social change evolves just like biological things, as if human societies are organisms that inevitably must compete, struggle and conflict with each other and engage in war for power, makes no sense. This is especially so during the nuclear age where peaceful cooperation is paramount, but ruled 'unnatural' for humans by virtue of a false evolutionary social paradigm. Instead, the continual talk of biotechnology as an evolving phenomenon, simply because it is changing, growing and adapting, is misleading to the point of deception.

A peaceful, cooperative model is more welcoming and positive and it need not avoid reality for a kind of unrealistic evolutionary idealism. Such a model should be possible to construct in today's era, with integrative and synthetic thinking; a positive human-social theory that improves upon the negativism inherent in the evolutionary struggle-war motive. Faith in evolutionary human-social thought should thus finally be abandoned as it makes no sense to maintain a contradiction, to support the social-evolutionary illusion.

## 5. Pedagogical

The consequences for academic pedagogy of presenting an imbalanced perspective about evolution are potentially disastrous. The sovereignty of human-social science is compromised when evolution is elevated into a universal theory, a grand unified theory that explains everything and yet avoids all non-material and/or non-natural things. By treating students, our children, as material objects and as machines instead of as human subjects and persons, the cooperative task of education is placed in jeopardy.

One of the main questions that distinguishes pedagogy from an evolutionary point of view is actually rather obvious, yet under-highlighted due to natural scientific standards. Is pedagogy a field that requires a teleological perspective in order to function? Yes, it is! Can it operate without a goal of any sort in mind? No, it cannot! If one educates today's youth using evolutionary theory in social-humanitarian thought when the theory's teleological component is questionable, certain misunderstandings are bound to occur.

In acknowledging this, we contend it is counter-productive to depend on outdated evolutionary philosophies and evolutionary human-social theories when a view to the future is more appropriate. Why return to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to address 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century problems<sup>54</sup>? Education cannot survive solely on backward thinking.

To highlight the pedagogical danger for students, we can acknowledge that in Russia the Malthusian influence on evolutionary thought was immediately called into question. "Malthus is the last absurdity in mankind; one cannot go any further in that direction<sup>55</sup>," wrote Prince V.F. Odoevskii. Likewise, *Daniel Todes* (1989) writes that, "Malthusianism reflected an atomistic and soulless ideology, rooted in British political economy and culture that violated Russians' vision of a cohesive society in which all of its members were valued parts of the whole". If today we can safely separate Darwin's scientific contribution from Malthus' political economy, a new pathway forward for the human-social sciences, independent of Darwinian evolution, can be found.

If, on the other hand, social-humanitarian evolutionism is not abandoned, then real consequences are likely to result. Human beings will become an endangered species (*Fuller*, 2006), since Darwinian evolution effectively erases the distinction between non-human animals and human beings as a special kind of animal. The human-social sciences would lose the central reference point of their academic fields if human and non-human were to merge or converge. Evolution is thus viewed as the greatest misanthropic social theory of our age, used for de-centering humanity<sup>56</sup>, a process which is offensive to the proper upbringing of our children.

Sorokin clearly recognized the problem of evolution when it is presented as scientific, but in reality when it represents an ideology. "The factual evidence openly contradicts the assumption," he (1950) writes, "that there exists any universal and perpetual linear trend or any universal stages of evolution applicable to the whole of mankind and to all groups and individuals". Sorokin rejected evolutionary theory as a basis for his philosophy of history. Likewise, he rejected teaching evolution as an indicator of scientific progress in social-humanitarian thought to children.

From a pedagogical point of view, it is thus entirely reasonable to guard against naturalistic-materialistic evolutionism in social-humanitarian thought. Not doing so is to sell-out the disciplines to natural scientific methodology, as if it sets the legitimating standard for human-social science, when it cannot.

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<sup>54</sup> "[T]he main ambition and central preoccupation of scientific, philosophical, social, and humanistic thinkers in these centuries [18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>] consisted in the discovery and formulation of these 'eternal laws of progress and evolution', and in an elaboration of the main stages or phases through which the trend passes as it comes to fuller realization in the course of time. Discovery, formulation, and corroboration of the existence of such trends and their stages was the focal point of biology and sociology, of the philosophy of history and social philosophy, and of the other nineteenth-century social and humanistic sciences" (*Sorokin*, 1963).

<sup>55</sup> *Russian Nights*, 1844.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Max Weber's 'disenchantment of the world'.

## 6. Psychological

American psychology today owes its form and substance as much to the influence of evolutionary theory as to any other idea or individual.

*Duane and Sydney Schultz (1975)*

If I am not the same person I was before writing this composition, then how can I maintain a consistent identity of/with myself? What constitutes the eternal 'self' when the temporal pressures of the environment suggest evolution affects individuals and not only groups? There is a psychological contradiction in thinking of ourselves as evolving biologically, as being merely melted together<sup>57</sup> with all of nature and that our lives have no consequence after death, yet that our human-social choices somehow have meaning on a daily basis, in every moment of decision. Since we do make choices that shape the person we are and who we become, our character formation cannot qualify as being evolutionary in an ateleological sense. It is thus a major simplifying assumption of psychological evolution, which we believe to be unfounded, to undervalue the significance of human choice, a phenomenon which necessarily involves teleology.

Humanistic and interpersonal understanding is thus fundamentally repressed by holding onto an obsession with ateleological natural scientific explanations<sup>58</sup> and evolutionism. The cost is a form of icon-worship, wherein C. Darwin is turned into a sort of secular saint or a rallying point for atheists of the world to unite. Evolution is indeed the primary icon of academic atheists and evolutionary psychology is allied with many who proclaim scientific atheism<sup>59</sup>. Thus, in evolutionary psychology we witness the incoherent mixture of ideology with science and world-view, rather than a definitive contribution to science. This is a great threat to the sovereignty of human-social sciences<sup>60</sup>, which follows upon the reductionism of socio-biology.

For the synthesizer Sorokin, evolution is 'a dominant category of Sensate mentality'. For a culture that has passed the extremes of Sensate mentality, evolution has become an outdated concept, one that represents an extreme form of matter-worship, in place of reverence for the non-material, the supra-rational or the divine. "There is no uniform law," writes *Sorokin (1941)*, "requiring that every culture and society should pass through the stages of childhood, maturity, senility and death". For Sorokin, the psychological pathway proposed by evolutionary theory leads to a dead-end as we transition from a Sensate to an Ideational cultural super-system.

When we investigate the evolutionary paradigm as defined by evolutionary psychology, we discover that a significant compromise is smuggled into the equation. By studying human nature in the light of animal behaviours, the type of 'social' science performed is not the traditional human-social science of the Comtean variety. Yet one learns about human beings by studying human populations, not by studying other species and assuming, on the basis of evolutionary theory, that such results are transferable. In erasing or blurring the distinction in kind between humans and other animals, evolutionary psychologists are no longer speaking about 'human' nature, but rather about human 'nature' (*Fuller, 2006*), the 'nature' of humans as represented by 'the nature of things' (*David Suzuki, CBC, 1973*). In such a scenario, concepts such as character, personality and culture are all marginalized and the non-human is sometimes accorded typically human features using anthropomorphic language.

As a human-social *uchyeoni*, I am trained to think of humans as 'special'<sup>61</sup>, that we are somehow distinct (but of course not entirely separate) from the rest of creation, that we are not highly evolved apes, with complexity used to explain everything (i.e. complexity theory cannot explain everything in human-social thought). Instead, we are humans as humans are human and nothing else<sup>62</sup>. Removing this distinction would leave me without a scientific vocation.

*Steven Gaulin and Donald McBurney* write (2004) that "Evolutionary psychology (EP) is an approach to all of psychology, not simply another specialty within psychology, such as learning or perception." Thus, EP is not a humble sub-discipline within psychology, but a claim to encompass all psychological knowledge as a whole. Such a universalistic approach within a single sphere of knowledge either suggests a paradigm-shift of significant proportion is needed or that a hoax based on inflated views of the evidence is being proposed that has

<sup>57</sup> "We may all be melted together" – C. Darwin.

<sup>58</sup> E.g. E.O. Wilson, R. Dawkins, D. Dennett, S. Blackmore, S. Pinker.

<sup>59</sup> Often this is done without using the label 'scientific atheism', though the implied meaning is a belief that evolutionary science either proves the non-existence of a creator God or that evolutionary science allows one to be an "intellectually fulfilled atheist" (*Dawkins*).

<sup>60</sup> "Sociologists have been blindsided by evolutionary psychologists who invoke concepts like 'kin selection', 'reciprocal altruism', and 'indirect reciprocity' to capture what they allege to be the biological bases of all social behaviour" (*Fuller, 2006*).

<sup>61</sup> "[M]an is an extraordinary creature" (*Dobzhansky, 1963*).

<sup>62</sup> "These views give us an argument to place man in a special category, a new order of organisms" – A.R. Wallace (1864) / Charles Darwin wrote No!!! (three times underlined) on the margin of Wallace's essay.



favoured one's own invested theory. To demonstrate the failure of EP, one may simply note that some of our actions are purposeful, including for example, the choice to sexually reproduce.

Evolutionary psychology has allowed the notion of 'reproductive fitness' to dominate its theoretical consciousness. "Men literally live fast and die young in a gamble to leave more offspring," write *Gaulin* and *McBurney* (2004) in their college textbook. The irony is that the same *Gaulin* and *McBurney* misunderstand *Emile Durkheim* as the "French social philosopher who believed that social phenomena could not have biological explanations"<sup>63</sup>. Their language betrays *Durkheim's* heightened sensitivities to biological science, in that his concern was that biology should not come to dominate the sphere of sociological interest. Such a misunderstanding that life is solely about offspring and that society has no biological analogues is a case of taking things to the extremes.

Psychology, when based on an evolutionary paradigm that is self-centred leads to a kind of relativism<sup>64</sup> verging on anarchistic thought. Once the linguistic usage of evolution is disclosed, when taking into account its philosophical underpinnings, contextualizing the sociological consequences and acknowledging the potentially involved pedagogical seriousness of propaganda, it makes sense for psychology to drop its pretensions to evolutionary theory as a theory<sup>65</sup> that provides a guiding light for the discipline. Evolutionary theory is potentially more destructive in psychology than in any other discipline in the academy because it would have us as humans think ourselves like animals and nothing more.

## 7. Conclusion

Evolutionary theory is puzzling because it takes so many shapes and forms in multiple academic fields. If an improvement could be made to neo-evolutionary human-social theories and sociologies<sup>66</sup>, a trickle-down effect to all human-social sciences would (according to neo-classical economics) be forthcoming. This would prepare the ground for a reconfiguration of the important discourse of human-social change and dynamics. In the fields of social-humanitarian thought, a legitimate alternative perspective to evolution is more attractive than a return to an outdated paradigm.

If we acknowledge the contributions of *T. Dobzhansky*, *S. Fuller* and *P. Sorokin* together in a multi-logue with each other, a way forward to solve the evolutionary controversy seems possible to achieve. Equilibrium can be found in the project of protecting the realm of humanity, which ensures an escape from naturalism via the hijacked discourse of 'human nature' by natural scientists. Dignity can be re-invested in human-social thought and a sense of renewed purpose (if it was ever absent) can be secured.

What has made it possible up until now to get away with ideological heavy-handedness is that evolution appears to be a Euro-centric and an Americo-centric theory. The struggle motive in the U.K. and the laissez-faire neo-liberal capitalism in America (e.g. exported to S. Korea) have generated hegemony<sup>67</sup> over what counts as scientifically important knowledge. This evolutionary hegemony can now safely be rejected by the rest of the world. The notion of Western (and perhaps also Northern) superiority was epitomized in the views of *T. Parsons*, who insisted that the United States of America was the best, most 'evolved' country in the world, a point of view previously held by the British and Romans (and others) at the height of their empires. Such a fallacy can no longer be easily maintained<sup>68</sup>; after all, which came first, Darwinism or the western assumption of societal supremacy?

The fact that western culture has, along with those global networks that use its science and philosophy, been permeated by Darwinism, evolutionism and by biologism<sup>69</sup> has enabled achievements in biology, genetics, geo-physics and bio-technology, to name just a few spheres implicated by Darwin's revolutionary idea. Darwinism is, however, excusable in the sense that, as *Dobzhansky* (1956) notes, "Darwin's theory was good biology which was perverted by others to support bad sociology." Biologism<sup>70</sup> on the other hand epitomizes today what *Jeremy Rifkin* calls the 'age of biology' (2001), which is much more difficult to contextualize and control.

In order to avoid the pervasive influence of biologism, sociology and other social-humanitarian fields must seek an alternative to the evolutionary meta-narrative, which has gained the allegiance of naturalists and

<sup>63</sup> Ibid: 376.

<sup>64</sup> "Fitness is relative; it is comparative by its very nature." (Ibid: 367)

<sup>65</sup> "My experience has been, that the science 'psychology' is resistive to the consideration and assessment of general theory; the science does not have a mode for what a general theory is. A general theory seems to be equated with a textbook survey, such as would be found in a book in introductory psychology" – *Arthur Staats* (*Psychology's Crisis of Disunity: Philosophy and Method for a Unified Science*, 1983).

<sup>66</sup> E.g. something *A. Giddens* and *P. Sztompka* have hinted at.

<sup>67</sup> Hegemony: "whereby one perspective dominates and reduces all others" (*Fuller*, 2006).

<sup>68</sup> E.g. the U.N. Human Development Index consistently places the U.S.A. not in the top five countries in the world.

<sup>69</sup> A world-view popularized and promoted by *E.O. Wilson*, *Richard Dawkins* and *Steven Pinker*.

<sup>70</sup> "In order to understand ourselves and our place in the economy of things, we need much more than biological knowledge. We need psychology and sociology, as well as history, aesthetics, and philosophy; and if we seek religious understanding, we will profit from theology" – *Francisco Ayala* ("Human Nature: One Evolutionist's View," 1998).

theists alike. By separating, or better, more clearly distinguishing the science, the philosophy and also the (vast majority who invoke a) theology, a balanced conversation can emerge wherein due respect is accorded to these sovereign spheres that may coexist in harmony rather than as necessarily competing areas of knowledge. The synthetic perspective of Dobzhansky and the integrative viewpoint of Sorokin can only help rather than hinder discourse on this topic.

One thing at least should be absolutely clear. Progressivistic evolutionary thought, i.e. the idea that all human-social change is for the better, can no longer be maintained after the violent wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, if it ever could be maintained in the first place. To claim that human society is improving gradually, based on ever greater complexification is to deny the incontrovertible evils that human beings are capable of committing in the name of various ideologies and religions, which likewise cannot be said to have 'evolved' solely for the better in the minds of men, women and children. Although such a naïve view of progressive evolutionism could perhaps be suggested during the so-called 'age of Enlightenment', it simply cannot faithfully be subscribed to any longer.

The fact that Russia didn't undergo the 'age of Enlightenment' directly, but rather indirectly through imported works of art and science makes a suitable parallel with which to end this article. Russia was still scientifically immature at the time Darwin published his works and when *H. Spencer* (1967) promoted his doctrine of universal evolutionism. Since it did not suffer through the trials and tribulations of the conquerors and the vanquished in this evolutionary academic-culture war, it may potentially be in a unique position to interpret and perhaps to overcome the controversy over evolution that exists today.

The over-generalization<sup>71</sup> of biological evolution to human-social affairs is quite obviously unfounded. On the other hand, it appears accurate to say that the extension of evolution has gone too far, that its theoretical reach exceeds its grasp of the scientific evidence, that it cannot lay claims to those academic fields that lie beyond the constraints of natural science and which involve human choices, meaning, purpose and the feeling and intentions of human consciousness. Evolution's hegemony thus comes to an end in the human-social sciences rather than in the natural sciences.

By throwing off the burden placed by biological reductionism on sociology, a renewed approach to social-humanitarian thought may be set to dawn upon the great conversation in today's global academy. If it is not inevitable that something like it could happen, perhaps it is something that can be hoped for to break the chains of academic dogmatism and thus to usher in an era of new discoveries, free from evolutionary control.

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<sup>71</sup> "Let us admit...that in the 1860's there were made overly courageous generalizations and conclusions from Darwin; let us agree that we were mistaken [to think] that the [physiologist's] frog would save the world – all this was unfounded and laughable" – N.V. Shelgunov ("Progressivnaya Reaktsiia", 1879).