

BEING A DARWINIAN BUT NOT IN POLITICS

From God Created Humanism: The Christian basis of secular values by Theo Hobson:

In the introduction to a collection of essays in 2003, he explains that he advocates Darwinism as a scientist only:

‘I am a passionate anti-Darwinian when it comes to politics and how we should conduct our human affairs.’ A contradiction? No, he insists: There is no inconsistency in favouring Darwinism as an academic scientist while opposing it as a human being . . . For good Darwinian reasons, evolution gave us a brain whose size increased to the point where it became capable of understanding its own provenance, of deploring the moral implications and of fighting against them. The first sentence is unobjectionable: one can affirm Darwinism as the key to biology but also insist that it is no guide to meaning and morality, which have other sources. But then, in the second sentence, he implies something else: that we have evolved to be able to see that defying natural selection is our moral duty. Soon he repeats the claim, telling us that evolution may not have made us the fastest or strongest creatures, but it has given humans the ‘biggest gifts of all: the gift of understanding the ruthlessly cruel process that gave us all existence; the gift of revulsion against its implications’. Here is a strong claim that the moral instinct is a product of evolution. To say that evolution has given us the ability to understand this ‘cruel process’ claims too much, for in reality evolution has no discernible role in our tendency to judge this process as cruel.

COMMENT: It should be that there is no inconsistency in saying Darwinism is right as a scientist while IGNORING it as a social being. Darwinism allows for this and demands it for the fittest are fitter the more they co-operate. Secular humanism sees evolution in realistic terms. We are not an evolution for we are bad for this world and have ruined it through climate change. Evolution does not mean things are getting better but only that complex things have organised and survived to this point. Evolution is not a force but a sum up of forces or evolutions. It is plural. Each person is part of it in their own way. There are as many evolutions as there are people or plants or animals or whatever.

The reality is that if politics gets too dog eat dog you can only be the fittest or hope to be if you bite back as hard as you can. So it makes sense to avoid being Darwinist as a social being but only if things are not that vicious.

