



COUNTERPOINT

WYNHAUSEN DEFENDS

Dear Sir,

I am writing this letter in reply to the criticism (Vol 1, (5) Letters to Editor) of my article "Head at the End of Its Tether" (DIRECTION Vol 1, (4) pp. 138-140).

Kathleen Ballard is polite and direct in her criticism, but she gets a low mark in reading comprehension. She bases her remarks on the idea that I performed experiments on a preserved human skull. I would like to take credit for that but the credit goes to William Hunter, II.

Most of her letter, mercifully much shorter than Kroll and Weed's, has little to say about my article and offers only one fundamental criticism. I will address that shortly.

Kroll and Weed, on the other hand, go for the jugular. While they complain about the clarity of my writing - with their purpose being to preserve and promote the professional status of the Alexander Technique - their rabid attack on my article serves only to undermine their own ends by calling more attention to it.

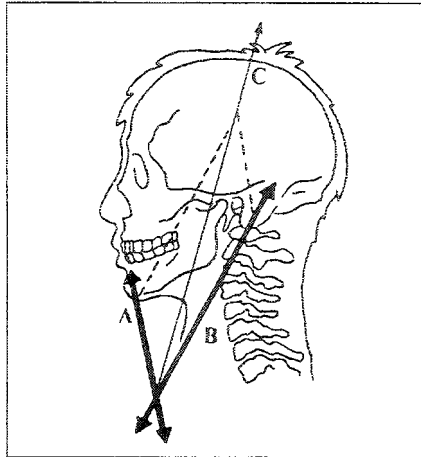
After twelve paragraphs of mostly ranting, they finally give us some clearly composed criticism and I quote:

"In a human being, the centre of mass of the head lies in front of the atlanto-occipital joint. Consequently, in an upright posture, no activity in the flexors is necessary to achieve forward rotation. All that is required is a decrease in the activity of the head and neck extensors whose action prevents the head from toppling forward."

Kathleen Ballard offers similar criticism and I quote:

"The living head tends to topple forward when the balancing mechanism switches off as we fall asleep in a sitting position. This is because the centre of mass lies in front of the pivot point."

Based on these arguments it seems reasonable to assume that the platysma would have no role in F.M. Alexander's theory of primary control. From a purely mechanistic perspective all that needs to happen for a head to go "forward and up" as our writers tell us is for the muscle



This illustration first appeared in DIRECTION Vol 1 (4) p.138 with the following caption: "Figure 1: Vector A is the resultant of the horizontal and vertical components of the platysma. Vector B represents the force of the sternocleidomastoid. Vector C represents the resultant of the two working together." The article itself was written by Dr John Wynhausen.

tension of the neck extensors to release. Because this involves mainly the trapezius, a widening across the shoulders and back ought to occur as well. But if things were that simple, we could find psycho-physical freedom with the regular use of gentle neck traction and cervical collars. This is enough to induce a release of the neck extensors.

Since we know neck extensor tone changes in relation to other activities going on in the nervous system, as Kathleen Ballard states in the later part of her letter, should we not begin to try to identify those things?

The ideas I offer in my article may have something to offer such a project and for that reason deserve to be published and discussed. Some may quibble with the style of my presentation, but within the article is the kernel of an idea that I had never read in Alexandrian writings.

John Wynhausen, D.C.
Lincoln, U.S.A.

ALEXANDER APOLOGIA

Dear Sir,

In the latest issue of *Direction* a Mr. Rickover is accusing FM of being "ignorant and bigoted" and is thereby repeating FM's mistake. Both Mr. Rickover and FM are anthropocentric, which means they judge other people's norms and way of life according to their own. It is the most derogatory term within the field of anthropology (in Europe, ethnology). Furthermore, Mr. Rickover is implying that FM thoughtlessly adopted the racist views which were common at his time. As I pointed out in my article "F. M. Alexander and Evolution", (Vol 1 (6 pp 239 - 244) FM relied on the most accepted studies of his day when he wrote the MSI edition of 1918. It is not FM's fault that anthropological knowledge in 1918 was - to say the least - inadequate.

People who studied the 'primitive' were anthropocentric and their study rarely went beyond comparing the life of the 'primitives' to their own Victorian lounge. So they concluded - as Hobbes described it long before - their life to be "nasty, brutish, and short", and sent in missionaries and civilisation to bash them up and save them. Today, we have accumulated more knowledge and know that many 'savages' have a quality of life exceeding our own. So today we tend to idealise the simple life in a hut just as they did in Rousseau's time, when they spoke of the 'Noble Savage'. Tomorrow, with new knowledge and other fashions, we will have yet other views, and other dinner-table conversationalists like Mr. Rickover will no doubt call our opinions "ignorant and bigoted".

To produce opinions without evidence is to make judgements without trial. It is easy and looks good but does not help towards understanding FM and his writings.

It is a shame that *DIRECTION* is wasted on opinions rather than providing the information necessary for a reader to make up her own mind.

Jean M. O. Fischer
London, England

WAS ALEXANDER A RACIST?

ROBERT RICKOVER REPLIES

It often comes as a shock, even for Americans, to learn that lynchings of blacks were commonplace in the American South well into the 1930's, and indeed that they persist to this day. During the 1920's the Klu Klux Klan ran the state of Indiana (a large northern, industrial state) and massive Klan marches were routinely held in the shadow of the capitol building in Washington, D.C. Attempts to pass a federal anti-lynching law were continually frustrated by the leaders of both parties in Congress.

Against that background, it is hardly surprising that negroes "quaked like cowards" (Alexander's words) when the night riders of the Klan invaded their neighbourhoods. Clearly their "quaking" in no way reflected on their level of development, a fact that was understood by most people at the time.

Alexander may well have been ignorant of the facts before he visited America. But there is no possible way he could have failed to know about them after having spent time there, particularly as most of his teaching was done in New York City and in New England, areas where support for the civil rights of black Americans was particularly strong, and where atrocities against blacks were widely reported and discussed.

And yet, Alexander's statement about

the behaviour of blacks in America, quoted in full in my column, was left in all the later European and American editions of MSI. It seems to me, therefore, that we are forced to conclude that Alexander was indeed a racist and/or that he was prepared to distort the facts in order to buttress his arguments. Either way, it is important that we continue to examine this troubling question in a constructive manner.

Robert M. Rickover

OBJECTIONABLE REMARKS

Dear Sir,

After reading the ViewPoint by Mr. Robert M. Rickover (Vol 1 (5) p.198) it is my impression that an honest and open discussion about the racist remarks of Mr. Alexander should be opened, and I hope that such a discussion has already been opened by Mr. Rickover's ViewPoint. Just for the record: let me first give some quotations from the text of Man's Supreme Inheritance, to give an idea of the direct and outrageous racist remarks that appear in this book:

i) "The controlling and guiding forces in savage fourfooted animals and in the savage black races are practically the same; and this serves to show that from the evolutionary standpoint the mental progress of these races has not

kept pace with their physical evolution from the plane of the savage animal to that of the savage human."

ii) "The inadequate relative progress of the mental evolution of the black races, as compared with that of their physical evolution, when considered in relation to their approximation to the savage animals, cannot be considered other than a most disappointing result. It surely does not furnish any convincing evidence that mankind is likely to advance adequately on the evolutionary plane in civilization by continuing to rely upon the original subconscious guidance and control."

iii) "Even the spheres of courage were limited, and when confronted with the unusual these peoples quaked like cowards, and fled panic-stricken from the unaccustomed, as in the case of the negroes in the Southern States of America when the men of the Ku-Klux Klan pursued them on horseback dressed in white." (This passage was incorrectly quoted by Mr Rickover in ViewPoint.)

In the later quote (iii) Alexander is not just blaming the victims, but blaming them because they were "negroes"! This is racism of the worst kind, let nobody be mistaken about it!

Readers of this issue of DIRECTION who have acquired the latest edition of Man's Supreme Inheritance (MSI), that is the 1988 edition published by Centerline Press, will not come across these quotes. This latest edition of the book gives a reprint of the original edition that appeared in London in the year 1910, and it does not contain any of these racist remarks' of Mr. Alexander.

These quotations can be found in the first American edition of MSI (1918), and in all the later editions of the book up until the 1957 edition from Integral Press in Bexley, Kent. In the 1918 edition the reader can find the texts on p.72 (i & ii), p.161 (iii), and in the 1957 edition on p.43 (i & ii) & p.97 (iii).

When we want an honest and open discussion on the racism of Mr. Alexander then we can agree with Mr. Rickover that "...the first step is to carefully re-read all four of Alexander's books so that you know exactly what he wrote".

Mr Rickover suggests we read the

' "Now music and dancing are... excitements which make a stronger appeal to the primitive..." '



"uncensored version" of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*. Is there a censored version of MSI? No, there is not! Let us analyse the history of *Man's Supreme Inheritance* (MSI) carefully.

The first edition of the book appeared in London in 1910. It was (partly or mostly?) ghost-written for Mr. Alexander, and not written by his hands alone! On July 25th, 1989 I had a very open discussion with Mr. Walter Carrington at his home in Holland Park, London. In our discussion of the topic of this letter, Mr. Carrington made this public: "First of all: Alexander, when he decided that he ought to produce a book,... he was very doubtful of his own capabilities as a writer and so on. And so he took advice, and tried to find a professional writer to ghost-write it for him. Various people were approached, but the man who he finally got hold of was a man called..." Mr Carrington did not remember his name - it was John Davys Beresford. Mr Carrington continued: "What happened was that Alexander roughed out a chapter ... then sent it to this man, who ... rewrote it, and sent it back... (Alexander) wrote back and said: 'Well. This is very nice and reads very well. But that is not really what I meant or what I wanted to say' ... A greater part of the original book, the 1910 edition of *Man's Supreme Inheritance*, was produced in that way."

So a large part of the original text of MSI was ghost-written by the writer Mr. J. D. Beresford (1873-1947). This 1910 ghost-written edition (1988 edition by Centerline Press is a reprint of this edition) of Alexander's first book *does not* contain the passages in which the racist remarks (like quotations i & iii) are made.

Next in the history of MSI there appeared in 1912 a small booklet in London which was eventually incorporated into the 1918 edition under the name: *Conscious Guidance and Control*. However, in the 1988 Centerline Edition it has been renamed: *Conscious Control in Relation to Human Evolution in Civilization* (pp.69-95). It was a small, not very well written book. (Ed - for clarity this booklet hereinafter will be referred to by its original name).

When Alexander was in the United States of America in 1917 he was working on the publication of this American version of MSI. The book had already

had its second printing by May 1918!

This 1918 edition of MSI consists of three parts *Man's Supreme Inheritance* (part I), *Conscious Guidance and Control* (part II), and *The Theory and Practice of a New Method of Respiratory Re-education* (part III). Only the text of part III isn't a transformation of an original text. According to Frank Pierce Jones: "[The] original text of both books remained largely unchanged, but some new material was added" (*Body Awareness in Action*, Schocken Books, 1979, p.32).

This is untrue! The 1918 edition contained an extended version of the 1910 text, and the *totally rewritten* version of the booklet *Conscious Guidance and Control*.

When we compare the 1910 text (as printed in the 1988 edition) with the 1918 edition, we see that in the *first part* of the 1918 edition nothing has been changed or altered from the original 1910 text, but *there have been additions*: lines, paragraphs and a whole new Chapter called: *Evolutionary Standards and Their Influence on the Crisis of 1914..*

It was in this new chapter that Mr. Alexander called the victims of the Ku-Klux Klan cowards! (quotation iii). Quotations i & ii come from the addition to a chapter called *Applied Conscious Control*. All these quotations appear in the later editions of MSI, and *nobody* has ever said anything about these racist remarks!

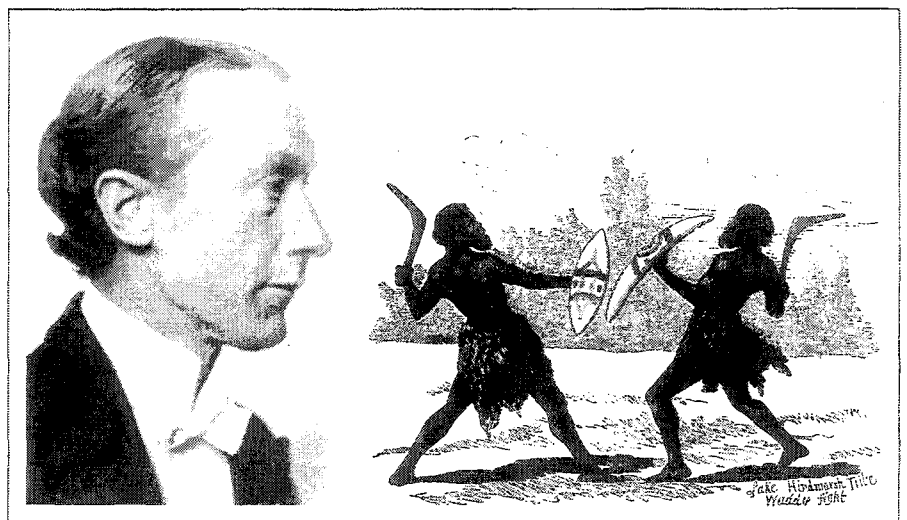
The 1910 edition of MSI also contains a rather strange footnote that is reprinted in all later editions:

"It should, however, be clearly understood in this connection that certain laws of natural selection must, so far as we can see, always hold good; and it would not be advisable to alter them even if it were possible. For example, that curious law may be cited which ordains the attraction of opposites in mating and so maintains nature's average. The attraction which a certain type of woman has for a certain type of man, and vice versa, is, in my opinion, a fundamental law, and any attempt to regulate it would be harmful to the race. This, however, is no argument against the regulation or prevention of marriages between the physically and mentally unfit." (1918 edition, p.6; 1957 edition, p.3; 1988 edition, p.2).

In this note, which is a biologicistic note to his evolutionist viewpoint, Alexander very insufficiently discussed a topic that was rather widely commented upon in the first years of this century: eugenics. And he also took a standpoint: "This, however, is no argument against the regulation or prevention of marriages between the physically and mentally unfit." This is written in the very words that the founding-father of eugenics, Francis Galton (1822-1911) would have used in his description of what would be genetically right or wrong.

So Alexander's last sentence in the above quotation contains a rather dangerous standpoint, certainly when no

"The racist remarks date from 1917/19, when Alexander was in the United States."





further explanation is offered. Of course I am not saying that Mr. Alexander had a (very) wrong attitude in these matters. All that I want to indicate here is the fact that in one way or another, because he worked with the (psycho) biological side of human beings, he liked to discuss all related disciplines, including eugenics. But, this way of thinking about the "physically and mentally unfit", while delivering no further arguments or explanations for it, is dangerous.

Also, in the 1918 edition, Alexander published a further comment along these lines (his comment appears along with other changes of the completely reworked 1912 booklet *-Conscious Guidance and Control-*) when he remarks:

"The solution of the problem which is commonly put forward, and which has found support in the body calling themselves in England and in the United States 'Eugenicists,' I cannot accept as universal ... Though I am in sympathy with many principles of Eugenics I reject this theory as a universal one. It is inconsistent with the great and inspiring ideal of the progress of the human race toward a mental and bodily perfection." (Dutton, 1918, pp.194-195). This remark is, in my opinion, inconsistent with the remark in the footnote I have just discussed. This must have an explanation?

In my view there must have existed some kind of contract between Mr. Beresford and Mr. Alexander not to alter one syllable of the text (partly or mostly, or wholly) written by Mr. Beresford. This explains why there have not been changes made to the original text of MSI, but instead additions to the original 1910 text have been inserted or added into it.

Mr. Carrington does not agree with this opinion, but I think I have a strong case as long as Mr. Carrington does not

deliver proof for his view. My arguments are clear. The original text is not violated by simply adding new text. In the case of the 1912 booklet: the text had to be rewritten for the 1918 edition of MSI because it was chaos. It could be rewritten, because no copyrights would be violated. The contradicting remark in the 1918 MSI to the eugenic footnote that first appeared in the 1910 MSI, feeds my argument that there must have been some kind of prohibition (contract?) to rewrite the 1910 text of MSI. Alexander would certainly have rewritten it had he been able, if only because of its bad quality.

How many editions there were in the U.S. I do not know. In the U.K. the second edition appeared in 1941. It was an exact copy of the American 1918 edition. In 1946 the third edition came out, with a new preface, and a postscript to the "Evolutionary Standards" chapter. The fourth edition came in 1957 after Alexander's death. According to Mr. Carrington, the old plates of the third edition had been used to make the this edition. So, the fourth edition is an exact copy of the third, and not really a new edition, but a reprint. However, it did contain extra photographs from Beaumont Alexander, F.M.'s youngest brother.

This is the history of Man's Supreme Inheritance as I am able to recollect. The racist remarks date from 1917/1918, when Alexander was in the United States. The obvious question should be: Why did Alexander add the racism to his original non-racist text? What, or who, changed his mind? Or was F.M. a racist anyway? Is there any proof of his racism in his daily life? Mr. Walter Carrington said to me: "...I mean, the fact of the matter was that, of course, by the time he was born in Tasmania, the Europeans had practically exterminated the indigenous inhabitants in Tasmania. And certainly he, in common with so many of the

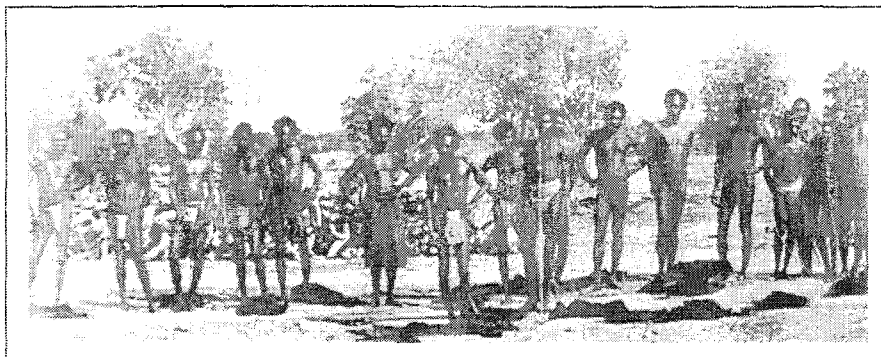
others, used to speak very disparagingly about the capabilities of 'the black'. So I would say: without any question you could make out a case that, yes, in our perception these days, he was certainly a racist."

Then: did he change his views? I do not think so. He did not take out his racist remarks after World War II. So was he a racist all his life? Mr. Carrington's answer to this question:

"That was about it, but also, of course, the other practical consideration was that when he came to republish the books he said he was not going to revise them.... His idea was that people should be able to see what he had originally written... I certainly think that his attitude was: 'Well, you know, if another edition of the books is called for, well, they can get on and print it.'". So, my concluding question to Mr. Carrington was: "He was rather lazy?" And, of course, Mr. Carrington's view could be nothing else but: "Well, that's right!"

What should we learn? In my opinion: F.M. was a eugenicist and a racist. It is very strange that neither Dewey nor Huxley, nor anybody else has ever commented upon the racism of Alexander. F.M. did not loose his racist views after World War II. Nobody reminded him! Has F.M.'s racism anything in common with the mind-body problem? No! And with the Alexander Technique? No! In Mr. Carrington's words: "It is the language of the time, and it is the thinking of the time and the perception of the time." Did F.M. have time and opportunities to alter his racist views? Yes, but he was rather lazy. But racism is racism, and should be condemned for that. The same holds true for eugenics. This is my research, and my opinion and standpoint. If you not agree: please comment!

Mr J. Staring
Nijmegen, The Netherlands.



F.M. AND EVOLUTION

by Jean M. O. Fischer



Was Alexander a racist, or is it a mistake to judge yesterday's hero with to-day's expectations. In the first of a two part essay, the climate and origin of Alexander's controversial view of the development of our species.

According to F.M. Alexander (FM) his Technique is a method for reaching that plan of conscious guidance and control, which he advocated as the solution to the human problem. He saw the solution in an evolutionary perspective, arguing that evolution had developed human consciousness and that it was just a matter of people using that potential, which constituted "man's supreme inheritance".

In his first two books *Man's Supreme Inheritance* (MSI) and *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual* (CCC) he uses the theory of evolution in his own theory of the evolution of conscious guidance and control, which he deems necessary if our civilisation is to progress and if we do not progress, he implies that we shall perish like past civilisations. This influence makes itself seen in

the subtitle of MSI: *Conscious Guidance and Control in Relation to Human Evolution in Civilization*. And the first sentence of the first chapter in MSI is: "The long process of evolution still moves quietly to its unknown accomplishment."

Although it is not in vogue nowadays to use FM's theory either as an argument for the Technique itself or as an explanation for it, his books - and thereby his theory - might be read more as an outcome of the rapid spread of the Technique. The purpose of this essay is to point out and explain the different conceptions FM had of evolution and the role it plays in the Technique. I shall go through his use of the term evolution within the context of biology and through his conception of evolution regarding races and civilisations.

EVOLUTION AS NATURAL SELECTION

In MSI he gives the following definition: "Evolution - a term we use here and elsewhere in this connection as that which is best understood to indicate the whole operation of natural selection and all that it connotes - has two clearly defined functions; by one of these it develops, by the other it destroys." (p.5).

This and other sentences give an impression of how evolution works, an impression which Darwin probably would not have shared and which most naturalists today would consider somewhat misleading. I shall deal with the misconceptions in MSI, but first: what is evolution and natural selection?

In 1859 Darwin published *The Origin of Species*, which contained his theory on natural selection. He did not use the word "evolution" in the original edition which contained the word "evolve" only twice in its 400 pages, but maintained the formulation of "natural selection" or "descent with modification" which best described his observations in nature (points 1 and 2 below) and which he saw as an inevitable conclusion (point 3):

- (1) Organisms vary, and these variations are inherited (at least in part) by their offspring.
- (2) Organisms produce more offspring than can possibly survive.
- (3) On average, offspring that vary most strongly in directions favoured by the environment will survive and propagate. Favourable variation will therefore accumulate in populations by natural selection.

On average, favourable variation means an increase in adaptation to the local environment (this includes other members of the same species). The evolution of species can be viewed as a record of adaptations to new environments. Environments may change for geological or climatic reasons or in the search for new food sources. Point 3 is how natural selection works. However, natural selection does not account for all the changes which species and individual members of species undergo. All the changes - inclusive of those brought about by natural selection - are called evolution.

I hope this shall be more clear as I go through some statements in MSI:

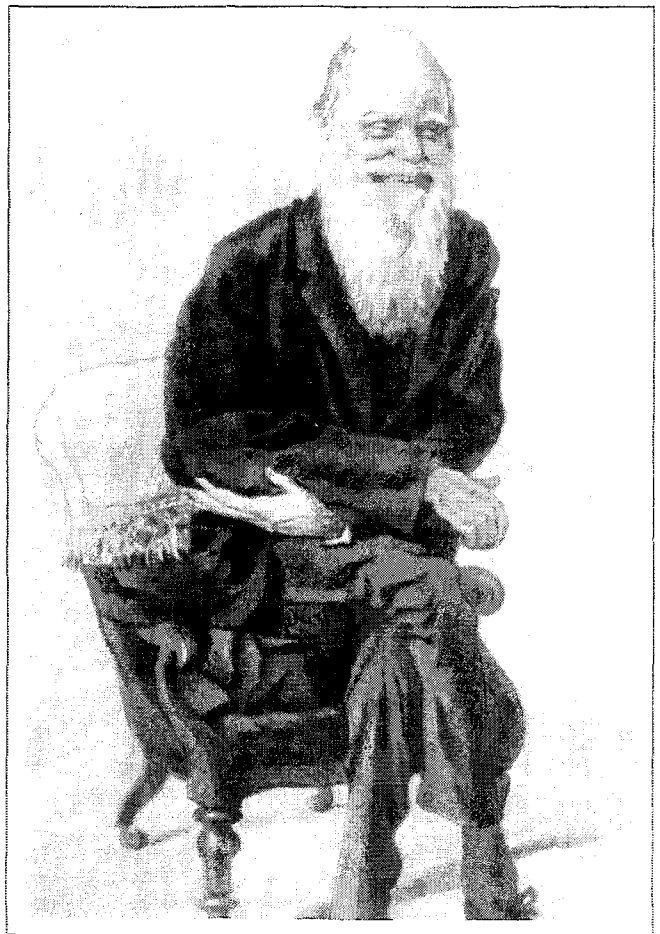
(i) "Evolution...has two clearly defined functions; by one of these it develops, by the other it destroys." (MSI, p.5).

It is a common notion that evolution works as the executioner of the 'unfit', but in many cases the 'unfit' will just produce no offspring or less than the more 'fit' and the genes of the 'unfit' will therefore diminish slowly until they become extinct. The use of the word 'development' is correct as long as it means change. But then it is a tautology as evolution means change occurred

regardless of its direction. Change does not mean progress and not all species undergo change.

(ii) "The long process of evolution still moves quietly to its unknown accomplishment." (MSI, p.3), "...and thus life fighting for life improves towards a sublimation we cannot foresee." (MSI, p.3).

Evolution does not contain any ends, it does not move towards anything, it does not try to accomplish anything and certainly nothing which is higher. These anthropomorphic notions (like 'fighting' and 'sublimation') reveal more about the author's cultural



Darwin as he appeared in *Variety* in 1857

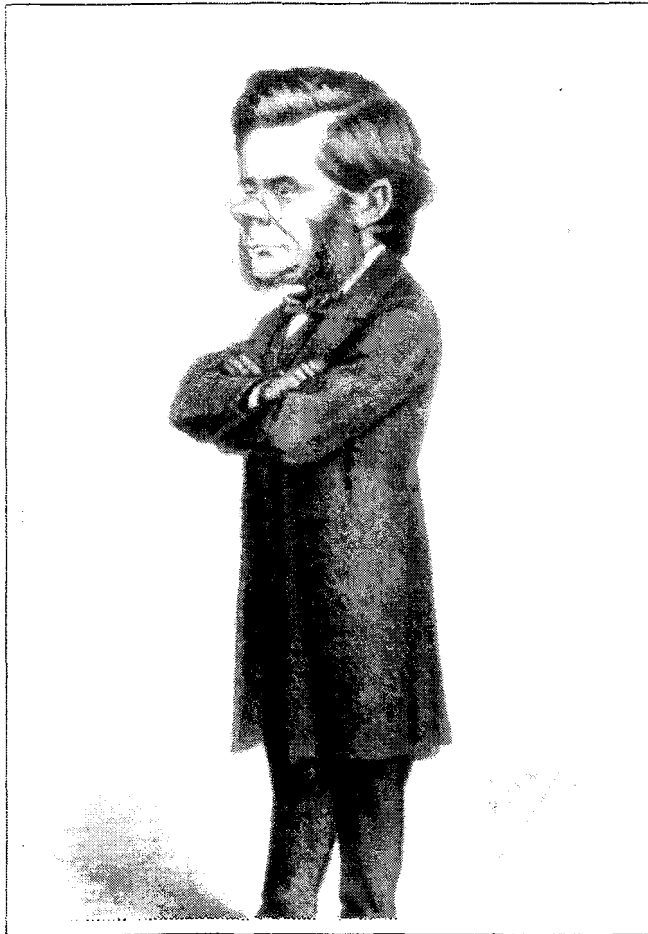
background and cherished ideals than about the nature of evolution. Species will survive and propagate if they adapt to new environments and that is all there is to it. Take the example of language. Words and the use of language change, expressions become extinct, new ones are invented, but although modern English has evolved from Chaucerian English, I doubt that many people would wish to claim that modern English is an improvement on Chaucerian English or that modern English is moving towards a sublimation. Rather, there is a tendency to see such changes as deteriorations.

Furthermore these notions imply that there is a goal, and when reached, nothing more shall happen. The last few words of *The Origin of Species* (D) are: "...endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being evolved." (D, p. 429). Evolution does not stop just because a conscious being has been evolved.

(iii) "...striven against the mighty force of evolution." (MSI, p.4).

"..., the potentiality to counteract the force of evolution itself." (MSI, p.4).

Evolution is not a force like the weather or gravity.



Thomas Huxley as he appeared in *Variety* in 1857

It is more a way of adapting to those two forces which in the end are responsible for the climate and thereby the environment. Evolution is those changes that occur (and the consequences of those changes) when the environment changes. What happens is dependent on the genetic make-up and the laws that determine mutation rates and molecular structures.

However, evolution does not necessarily force every organism to evolve. If an organism is well-adapted to an environment, which does not change, mutational changes will not be encouraged by natural selection, and

so the organism will stay the same.¹

(iv) "...the child of to-day is not born with the same development of instinct that was the congenital heritage of its ancestors a hundred or even fifty years ago. Many modern children, for example, are born with recognisable physical disadvantages that are the direct result of the gradually deteriorating respiratory and vital functioning of their forbears." (MSI, p.108)

I take this and similar remarks² as evidence of FM's fondness for the theory that acquired characteristics are inherited. He says for example: "For our purpose the argument remains good whether we admit or deny the inheritability of acquired characteristics, our point being that in either case the process is necessarily a slow one, though it is plainly more rapid if the hypothesis is true" (MSI, p. 9), and FM believes it to be rapid. He rails against the assumption that "a baby is born with the same potentialities, the same mental abilities and assuredly the same physical organism whether he be born in the 16th or the 20th century" (MSI, p.118). As far as he is referring to innate potentials (leaving out the possibility that he attributes the changes to the change of the quality of the the embryo's life in the womb) this is not correct. The genetic change in 400 years is so close to nil that it is negligible and he is talking about gross differences: "It seems incredible to me that any one of my generation could fail to realise the extraordinary differences between the contemporaries of his own growth and the children of our present civilisation" (MSI, p.121). He may, of course, mistakenly have attributed various physical changes which were a result of changes in diets or other cultural changes to genetic changes.

The idea of acquired characteristics being inherited is known as 'Lamarckism'. It is the notion that an organism adapts to its environment by first perceiving the need for change and secondly responding to it by changing its habits, and since habits affect use it was believed that the use of an organ or structure strengthens it and that disuse would lead to its obliteration. The characteristics acquired by use and disuse would be inherited. Thus the giraffe got its long neck by every day reaching a little higher... This is directed variation and a one-step process. Natural selection is a two-step process with different forces responsible for variation and direction. The variations occur with no preferred orientation in adaptive directions. Natural selection works upon unorientated variation and changes a population by conferring greater reproductive success upon advantageous variants.

Both the idea of use and disuse and evolution as a creative response to a felt need had been abandoned by the late 19th century. However, the idea of acquired characteristics being inherited was still in vogue among

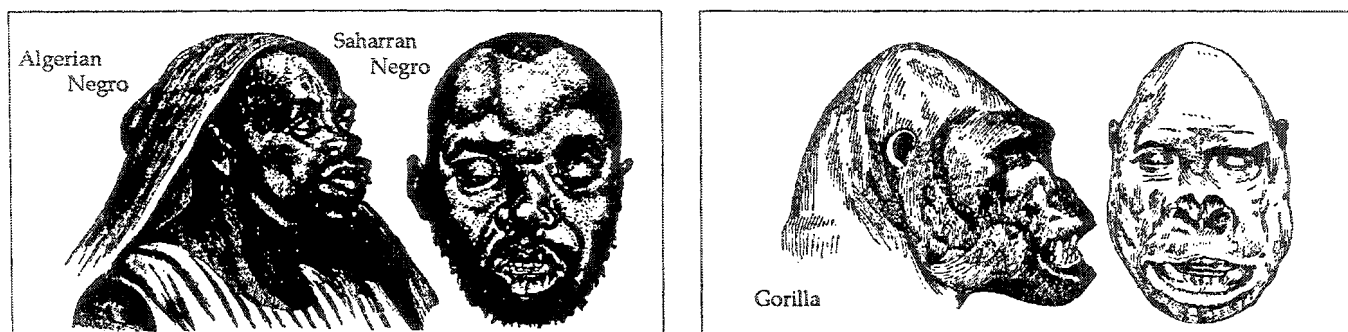


Fig 1-4. Originally appearing in, *Types of Mankind*, Nott and Gliddon, 1854, these four diagrams are an unsubtle attempt to suggest an affinity between blacks and gorillas.

some scientists who were unhappy with natural selection. I suppose it was an attractive idea to FM because his experiences showed so clearly how use and disuse affects our living organism and how change can only take place after perceiving the need. However, there is no evidence that an organism's response to a 'felt' need can result in changes in its genetic make-up.

Before we judge FM's representation of evolution according to our present understanding of evolution we have to make allowance for the fact that FM was influenced by his time.³

As mentioned, Darwin would hardly have agreed to these formulations of FM, but Darwin was not the sole exponent of the workings of evolution. In fact, Darwin was in the minority with regard to how evolution was to be understood, even though most naturalists accepted his theory within ten years. The misinterpretation arose partly because the deposing of man as a favorite creation of God was too great a blow to many a devout and God-fearing Victorian, and although it was an inevitable consequence of natural selection, people minimized the implications of the blow by accommodating the theory to their culture and social prejudices.

To put FM and his writings into a broader perspective, I want to elaborate how this happened by citing some excerpts from the history of Darwin, his concept of evolution and the ensuing reactions.

In 1842 and again in 1844 Darwin wrote preliminary sketches of his theory of natural selection and its implications. Fifteen years later he published *The Origin of Species* and the long delay has recently been attributed to fear of publishing a theory with such implications. Therefore he gathered enormous amounts of information to substantiate his theory. It was not only the idea of evolution which proved a problem - although it was considered heretical. The concept of evolution was debated but no substantial theory had been suggested as to how it could work. (Darwin's grandfather cherished the idea of evolution). Most likely it was the materialistic outlook on life contained in any idea of evolution that was most dangerous. In his commentary

on Darwin's notebooks, Gruber labels materialism as "at that time more outrageous than evolution." He documents the persecution of materialistic beliefs during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and concludes:

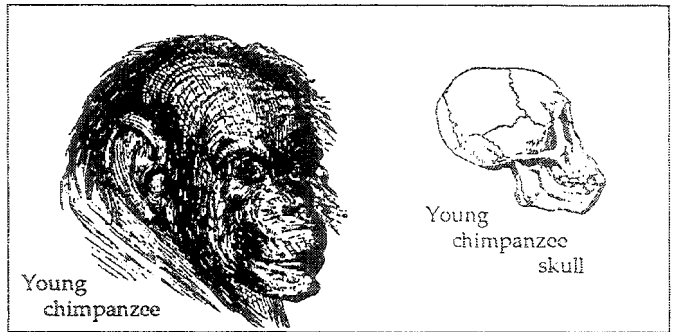
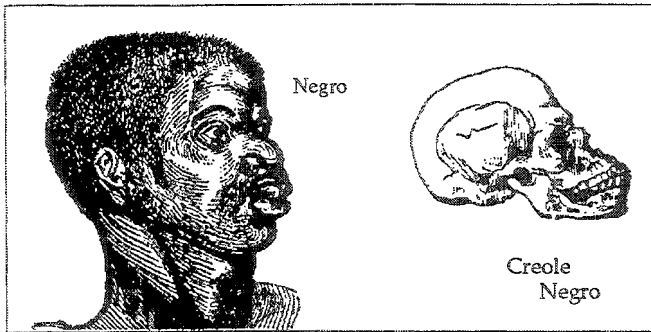
In virtually every branch of knowledge, repressive methods were used; lectures were proscribed, publication was hampered, professorships were denied, fierce invective and ridicule appeared in the press. Scholars and scientists learned the lesson and responded to the pressures on them. The ones with unpopular ideas sometimes recanted, published anonymously, presented their ideas in weakened forms, or delayed publication for many years. (G, p.25)

Darwin had experienced a direct example of this as an undergraduate at the University of Edinburgh in 1827. A friend read a paper on life and mind with a materialistic perspective before the Plinian Society. After much debate, all references to his friend's paper, including the record of his intention to deliver it, were expunged from the minutes.

As Darwin wrote to his friend and colleague, Hooker, early in 1844, to assert that species are not immutable is "like confessing a murder" (H, p.12).

Darwin had sufficient reasons to delay any announcement of publication and he used the years to collect more evidence, but never thought he had enough. However, in 1858 he received a letter and a manuscript from a young naturalist, A. R. Wallace, who had independently constructed the theory of natural selection. Although Darwin made a gesture of magnanimity, accepted Wallace as an independent co-discoverer of natural selection, and a joint paper was presented at the Linnaean Society containing excerpts from their manuscripts, he hoped that some way might be found to preserve his legitimate priority. This was achieved by the publication a year later of *The Origin of Species*, which he feverishly compiled from all his notes.

In the book he describes his theory of descent with modification as the explanation of the 'transmutation of specie'. Both 'survival of the fittest' and 'evolution' were terms adopted by other people, who unfortunately mixed



In their book Nott and Gliddon commented on this figures: "The palpable analogies and dissimilitudes between an inferior type of mankind and a superior type of monkey require no comment."

them up with Victorian ideals of progress through complexity. Darwin abstained from using the word 'evolution', because it was firmly tied to a concept of progress in the popular usage. (He did, however, in later editions use 'survival of the fittest'). Ironically, the father of evolutionary theory stood almost alone in insisting that organic change led only to increasing adaptation between organisms and their own environment and not to an abstract ideal of progress defined by structural complexity or increasing heterogeneity.

'Evolution' entered the English language as a synonym for 'descent with modification' through the propaganda of Herbert Spencer, that indefatigable Victorian pundit of nearly everything. Spencer (1820-1903) propagated in his philosophy evolution as a scientific conceptual framework containing universal laws explaining the motion or behaviour of everything from stars and embryos to civilisations. His optimistic view of progress had popular appeal and his work had an immense influence in America and Britain. Evolution, to Spencer, was the overarching law of all development. And, to a smug Victorian, what principle other than progress could rule the developmental processes of the universe? Thus, Spencer defined the universal law in his "First Principles" of 1862: "Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity", (G, p.36).⁴ In his *Principles of Biology* (1864-67), Spencer constantly used evolution as a description of organic change, and since most evolutionists saw organic change as a process directed toward increasing complexity (that is, to us), their appropriation of Spencer's general term did no violence to his definition. Spencer also introduced the phrase 'survival of the fittest', which together with the idea of progress became the most important expression of the advocates of social Darwinism.

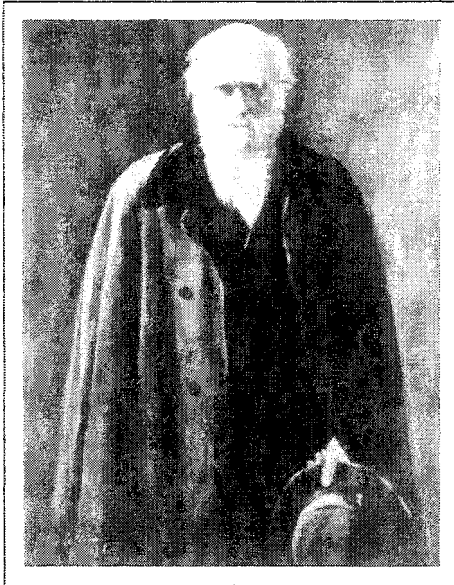
These terms fitted very well the nature of industrial capitalism. Firstly because every change was regarded as progress. Secondly because it provided for the middle and upperclasses, who were the only ones who had the

time and money (and education) to read a handy, 'scientific' explanation for their wealth, viz. their success. Thirdly it provided a good excuse for doing nothing about the masses of poor, undernourished and ill people, the first victims of industrialisation. "It is the law of nature that those who are weak must perish". Finally it explained why the Caucasian race was superior to other races.

Science could thus provide a biological justification for the order of society: all occupy their appointed places. If the order of society could not be ordained by God, it could at least be a law of nature.

These ideas also complemented peoples' world view. Events such as the earthquake in Lisbon in 1755, the French revolution in 1789 and subsequent uprisings, as well as the industrial revolution with its nouveau riche who disturbed the inherited nobility, meant that the idea of everything being fixed gave way to the idea of change as being a normal part of the universal order.

Some of the inspirations that enabled Darwin to formulate his theory came from Malthus's *Essay on Population* and Adam Smith's theory of *laissez-faire*, which can briefly be formulated as: in order to have an ordered economy providing maximal benefits to all, the individuals must compete and struggle for their own advantages. The result, after sorting out and elimination of the inefficient, will be a stable and harmonious polity. The theory of natural selection is a creative transfer to biology of Adam Smith's basic argument for a rational economy; the balance and order of nature does not arise from a higher, external (divine) control, or from the existence of laws operating directly upon the whole, but from struggle among individuals for their own benefits (in modern terms, for the transmission of their genes to future generations through differential success in reproduction). So the analogy was carried from a theory of economics to biology and from there to society and human behavior. Marx and Engels' writing provide an example of the exploitation of Darwin's theory - the extrapolation of natural selection to human society in what is called 'social Darwinism'. Darwin lived to see



Darwin in old age, portrait by John Collier

his name appropriated for an extreme view that he never held - for 'Darwinism' has often been defined, both in his day and in our own, as the belief that virtually all evolutionary change is the product of natural selection. Darwin often complained, with uncharacteristic bitterness, about this misappropriation of his name.⁵

My guess is that FM did not read *The Origin of Species*, but probably did read Herbert Spencer's version of evolution, which was very popular at that time, and Spencer's views were shared by many scientists. FM cites Spencer on p.95, p.108, p.332 and mentions him on p.103 ("Could Spencer have written his *First Principles*,..."), and many ideas in MSI are similar to those of Spencer in his "Essays on Education" (S, 1911). Furthermore it is likely that FM was influenced by his time's propensity to view all change as progress towards something higher in every sphere: civilisations, religions and races evolved, and there were primitive and advanced stages, higher and lower. There was a constant ranking of everything which could be ranked, and needless to say, the ranker always happened to belong to the highest evolved or most advanced. I will return to this kind of world view in the next part. I have reason to believe that it was pointed out to FM that his appreciation of the nature of evolution was perhaps a bit outdated, because of the change of definition of evolution between MSI and CCC. He does have a tendency in his books to quote definitions from previous books. In his next book, CCC, he quotes from MSI three times and refers to it 16 times, but gives a new definition of evolution:

"In this book (CCC, p.6) the word evolution is used to indicate all processes which are involved in the quickening of the potentialities of the creature at the different stages of growth and development, and which

are necessary to the success of his attempts to satisfy the varying needs of an ever-changing environment, and to reach a plane of constructive conscious control of the individual organism."

This definition is - as pointed out - different from the idea and theory of evolution which Darwin proposed and which is the most widely accepted today. However, this definition - especially with the addition of the last sentence - is more coherent with FM's theory of the evolution of 'conscious guidance and control'.

When one reads what even prominent scientists suggested on the nature of evolution, which can only partly be excused by lack of knowledge, (I find they reveal their social and cultural prejudices to a staggering degree), I do think that FM has avoided the worst flaws of his time with regard to equating evolution with natural selection.

FOOTNOTES

- 1) Darwin inserted in the fourth edition of *The Origin of Species*: "Many species when once formed never undergo any further change..." (D, p.408). "The coelacanth is a fish, which (compared to fossil remains) has not changed in 400 million years because it lives in the oceans at a depth of 200 meters; an area without predators and competitors". (NC)
- 2) See on disuse of an organ, p.5; on the lowering of kinaesthetic potentiality, p.120; and in CCC his description of the eye's development, p.20.
- 3) To do justice to FM, it must be remembered that it is characteristic of 19th century writings to plunge into poetic exclamations at regular intervals in a treatise, to leave the dreary facts behind for a moment of emotional indulgence which could add some spice to the reading of otherwise long and tortuous passages. One might view some expressions of his as the dramatist at work. In this paper I only wish to treat his work in the literal sense.
- 4) He called this law the Law of the Persistence of Force, believing that there was a driving force behind all matter which created evolution. Compare with FM's use of force in example no. 3.
- 5) He wrote in the last edition of the *The Origin of Species* in 1872: "As my conclusions have lately been much misrepresented, and it has been stated that I attribute the modification of species exclusively to natural selection, I may be permitted to remark that in the first edition of this work, and subsequently, I placed in a most conspicuous position - namely, at the close of the Introduction - the following words: 'I am convinced that natural selection has been the main, but not the exclusive means, of modification.' This has been of no avail. Great is the power of steady misrepresentation." (D, p.421)

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