ONE

Pax vel Bellum? Evolutionary Biology and Classical Liberalism

An Introduction to the Volume

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Charles Darwin and John Locke continue to exercise extraordinary influence from the grave. The former birthed a revolution in biology which has persisted to the present day; the latter fomented a revolution in political philosophy which reasserts itself in every contemporary iteration of "individual rights." Darwin's theory is widely taken to be the unifying theory in modern biology; apparently nothing in biology makes sense except in light of his view.[1] And Locke's classical liberalism has been a profound influence on an array of thinkers, from the Founding Fathers of the United States to members of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. Collectively, Darwin and Locke tell human beings where they have come from, what they are, and how they ought to live with each other. The legacies of these men could hardly be more powerful.

But too little attention has been directed to the interplay of their ideas. The Darwinian vision, it seems, has direct implications about human nature, mental capacities, and moral obligations, a point Darwin made with striking clarity in *The Descent of Man* (1871). The classical liberal vision, developed by Locke and others, also has direct implications for these same areas—it portrays human beings with very specific dispositions, moral duties, and intellectual abilities. Although some people unreflectively assume that evolutionary science and classical liberalism fit seamlessly, their relationship is in fact both complex and contentious. Moreover, because Western culture has been so significantly influenced

by evolutionary science and classical liberalism, the relationship of these visions—whether complementary or conflicting—is of profound importance to the coherence and vitality of prominent strains of the Western tradition.

Of course, the concepts "Darwinian evolution" and "classical liberalism" must be clear before any progress can be made in examining their relationship. We may begin with Darwinian evolution. By this, I mean Darwin's core theory as originally exposited in the *Origin of Species* (1859) and as updated in the Modern Synthesis in the early-to-mid-twentieth century. The two theories are not identical, of course. The chief difference is that the Synthetic theory wedded Mendelian genetics to Darwin's original version so that the nature, source, and inheritance of variations (mutations) are no longer as mysterious as they once were (Bowler 2003, 325–46; Larson 2004, 219–44).

Despite this main difference, the two theories are in basic harmony on the fundamentals. (For simplicity's sake, I shall primarily refer to Darwin's original theory, with the understanding that much of what will be said will also apply to the Synthetic theory, *mutatis mutandis*.) Darwin's theory holds that all biological life on earth is the descendant of one, or a few, ancient ancestors, having evolved to the present state primarily by natural selection acting upon random variations (mutations), among other natural processes. In Darwin's theory, variations are "random" in the sense that they occur irrespective of the biological needs of an organism. Some variations are beneficial, while others are not; but *no* variations occur *in order to aid* an organism's survival and reproduction. Given the fierce struggle for existence between organisms in nature, any variation that allows an organism to better fight, flee, forage, or mate will provide that organism with an advantage over its competitors. Natural selection is precisely this culling process in which better adapted organisms in a population live longer and reproduce more than organisms less well suited to their environment. Over time, populations take on the (inheritable) physical traits of the better-adapted members. With enough time and beneficial mutations, radical changes can occur in populations so that organisms develop new tissues, limbs, organs, and body plans. After millions of years of mutation and selection, Darwin argued, organic life had developed and diversified into the present-day array.

Since Darwin's time, many thinkers have wrestled with whether or not God had anything to do with the mechanism of selection and mutation.[2] In a volume which explores the relationship, if any, between Darwin's theory and human politics, this question is unavoidable. If God providentially guided evolution, purposely planning the arrival of human beings so that they have an *essentia* and *telos*, then apparently these facts shape the basic moral obligations human beings have to one another, what individual rights or privileges they possess, and what kinds of social and political arrangements best facilitate the fulfillment of their

telos. Conversely, if God does not exist or did not guide, plan, or orchestrate the advent of human beings, then presumably, this fact has at least some implications for the capacities, obligations, and purposes of human beings and their social and political institutions. Of course, there are thoughtful scholars who believe that God's involvement (or lack of involvement) with evolution has no implications for human politics. I will return to this view later. For now, since so many thinkers believe that a great deal rides on the relationship between God and evolution, a word should be said about it.

While the topic often produces heated debate (and invective),[3] some light can be shed on it by considering Darwin's own view. (Darwinian theory is *his* theory, after all.)[4] The mainstream scholarly opinion is that Darwin was a deist (of a sort) at the time of the *Origin* (Ruse 1999, 181; Gillespie 1979; Richards 1997, 64; Browne 1995, 411, 438–39, 513; Brooke 2009; Dilley 2012).[5] In this regard, Darwin chose a passage from William Whewell's *Bridgewater Treatise* (1833) as an epigraph opposite the *Origin*'s title page:

> But with regard to the material world, we can at least go so far as this—we can perceive that events are brought about not by insulated interpositions of Divine power, exerted in each particular case, but by the establishment of general laws.

And Darwin wrote near the finale of the *Origin*:

> To my mind it accords better with what we know of the laws impressed on matter by the Creator, that the production and extinction of the past and present inhabitants of the world should have been due to secondary causes, like those determining the birth and death of the individual. (1859, 488)

According to Darwin, species originate and change by "laws" that can be described as "secondary causes" rather than by God's direct miraculous intervention in nature. While God fashioned the initial conditions of the cosmos by "impressing laws upon matter," He allowed nature to take its course from there.[6]

Seven months after the publication of the *Origin*, Harvard botanist Asa Gray queried Darwin about the relationship between Providence and evolution. Darwin's reply reinforced his view in the *Origin*: "I am inclined to look at everything as resulting from designed laws, with the details, whether good or bad, left to the working out of what we may call chance" (1887, vol. 2, 311–12). The relationship between evolution and the divine continued to trouble Darwin during his adult life, even to the point of wrestling openly with it in his published work (1868, 430–32). But despite this struggle, Darwin's fundamental conviction remained into his waning years: as far as he could tell, God did not guide, plan, or

orchestrate evolution. He wrote in his autobiography just six years before his death,

> no shadow of reason can be assigned for the belief that variations alike in nature and the result of the same general laws, which have been the groundwork through natural selection of the formation of the most perfectly adapted animals in the world, man included, were intentionally and specially guided. (1958b, 88)

Variations, which provided the raw materials for natural selection, did not appear to be "intentionally and specially guided," including those that led to human beings. Moreover, Darwin did not simply preclude divine *guidance* of variations, but also divine *planning* of variations as well. Writing to his mentor Charles Lyell in 1861, he explained,

> I have just said that I cannot agree with "which variations are the effects of an unknown law, ordained & guided without doubt by an intelligent cause on a preconceived & definite plan" . . . If you say that God *ordained* that at some time & place a dozen slight variations should arise, & that one of them alone should be preserved in the struggle for life, & that the other eleven should perish in the first, or few first, generations; then the saying seems to me mere verbiage.— It comes to merely saying that everything that is, is ordained.
>
> Let me add another sentence.— Why should you or I speak of variation as having been ordained & guided more than does an astronomer in discussing the fall of a meteoric stone. He would simply say that it was drawn to our earth by the attraction of gravity, having been displaced in its course by the action of some quite unknown laws.— Would you have him say that its fall at some particular place & time was 'ordained & guided without doubt by an intelligent cause on a preconceived & definite plan'? Would you not call this theological pedantry or display? (1861b; original emphasis)[7]

In sum, Darwin's view was that variations were not planned, ordained, or guided.

What about natural selection, the other crucial part of Darwin's mechanism? As he candidly explained to Lyell in another letter, "The view that each variation has been providentially arranged seems to me to make Natural Selection entirely superfluous, and indeed takes the whole case of the appearance of new species out of the range of science" (Darwin 1861c).[8] If variations had been guided or planned, then natural selection would have been entirely unnecessary. That is, if God had arranged outcomes by ordaining or guiding variations, natural selection would cease to be the engine that drove evolutionary innovation but instead a modest culling mechanism that made minor alterations to God's pre-planned designs. For Darwin, the whole point of emphasizing natural selection as the crucial force behind evolutionary change was that *nature*, rather than God, did the selecting.

Little wonder that Darwin wrote in the third edition of the *Origin*:

> It has been said that I speak of natural selection as an active power or Deity; but who objects to an author speaking of the attraction of gravity as ruling the movements of the planets? Every one [sic] knows what is meant and is implied by such metaphorical expressions. . . . So again it is difficult to avoid personifying the word Nature; but I mean by Nature, only the aggregate action and product of many natural laws, and by laws the sequence of events as ascertained by us. (1861a, 85)

"Nature" was nothing more than the matrix of natural laws, and "natural laws" nothing more than the human apprehension of one event after another. So "natural selection" was just the human apprehension of one event after another in organic history. It wasn't a metaphor for God's providential ways, but rather a shorthand way of describing the pattern of better-adapted organisms surviving and reproducing while others perished.

Darwin helpfully summarized his general position in his autobiography: "There seems to be no more design in the variability of organic beings and in the action of natural selection, than in the course which the wind blows. Everything in nature is the result of fixed laws" (1958b, 87). Put simply, God was nowhere to be found in the primary mechanism of evolution.

But one might wonder: even if God did not work through variation and selection, did the Almighty work in *supplemental* ways to orchestrate organic history, especially the advent of humans? As we have seen, Darwin answered negatively. In keeping with his long-standing beliefs (Gillespie 1979; Ruse 1999), he punctuated his mature views (quoted above) with the telling line: "*Everything* in nature is the result of *fixed laws*" (emphasis added). For Darwin, "fixed laws" precluded miracles. As he explained on the previous page of his autobiography, "the more we know of the fixed laws of nature the more incredible do miracles become" (1958b, 86; Dilley 2012). Since "everything" in organic history came about by natural laws, there was no place left for miraculous intervention.[9] Thus, Darwin believed that the Almighty stayed His hand from variation, selection, *and* direct miracles.

But might Darwin's reference to "fixed laws" still leave the door open for divine involvement? That is, even if God did not perform miracles, did He ordain a *law* which providentially guided the development of organic life? If so, then one could legitimately claim divine guidance in organic history. As we have seen, however, Darwin clearly rejected this view, pointing out to Lyell (and others)[10] that the suggestion was "mere verbiage" (Darwin 1861b).[11] The notion of a divinely-ordained law of biological evolution was "theological pedantry or display" because it lacked good evidence, amounting to nothing more than a superfluous gloss on what simply happened in nature.[12]

Thus, it appears that Darwin rejected God's action in organic history both via random variation and natural selection *and* in addition to them. Even if God had originally "impressed laws of nature upon matter" at the beginning of the universe, no clear evidence of Providence was to be found in the history of life.[13] Instead of divine guidance, planning, orchestration, or miracles, Darwin saw only purely natural processes in the rise of flora and fauna.

Of course, the matter was never simple for Darwin. He openly puzzled about how his naturalized view could be reconciled with "[a]n omniscient Creator [who] must have foreseen every consequence which results from the laws imposed by Him" (1868, 431).[14] He also acknowledged in his autobiography the limitations of the human mind when wrestling with the origin of "this immense and wonderful universe, including man" (1958b, 92). "But then arises the doubt," he worried, "—can the mind of man, which has, as I fully believe, been developed from a mind as low as that possessed by the lowest animal, be trusted when it draws such grand conclusions?" (1958b, 93). The human mind was apparently ill-equipped by evolution to answer questions of ultimate origins. "The mystery of the beginning of all things is insoluble by us," Darwin concluded, "and I for one must be content to remain an Agnostic" (1958b, 94).

To summarize, Darwin's mature position seems to be that his theory was incompatible with divine miracles as well as with God's guidance, planning, or orchestration of organic history, in part or in whole. Either evolution was outright opposed to divine involvement *or* the theory implied that such matters were "insoluble" and, hence, allowed only a suspension of belief in God's participation (the "Agnostic" view). *In short, divine activity in organic history was either improbable or inscrutable*. Even *if* one was justified in accepting the deistic view that the laws of nature were designed, there was little ground to hold that anything else was, humans included. In the end, it was either Darwinian evolution or the God of the Bible.[15]

None of this purports to settle the conflict about whether a non-theistic or theistic interpretation of the *empirical* data is correct. That debate is for another time (Plantinga 2011; Sober 2008; Sober 2011, 121–52; Miller 1999; Provine 1988; Dawkins 1996; Giberson and Collins 2011). For now, the present claim is that Darwin's theory, as he understood it, ran contrary to a traditional Judeo-Christian interpretation of organic history, including the advent of human beings. Much the same can be said of current evolutionary biology as well.[16] If this is correct, then Darwinian evolution, properly understood, excludes God's intervention, guidance, planning, or orchestration but seems to rely on purely natural laws and causes to explain organic history.

But there is ample room for disagreement on this matter, as Michael White's well-written Afterword makes clear. While Darwin made a host

of significant claims—including ones about miracles and divine providence—White argues that such claims are *not* essential to evolutionary theory. Instead, Darwin's theory can be legitimately decoupled from both metaphysical claims about God and normative claims about human behavior.[17] If White is correct, then Darwin's theory has very little to say about political theories like classical liberalism. By contrast, if the view portrayed above is correct, then Darwinian evolution seems to have significant theological and normative implications for human belief and behavior.[18] While the majority of contributors to this volume agree with my view (above), readers will benefit from listening to both sides.

CONFLICTING CONCEPTIONS OF CLASSICAL LIBERALISM

What about "classical liberalism"? The term admits different meanings. As one contributor in the volume observes, the word *liberalism*, in particular, "is a term broadly used with different connotations depending upon the historical *time* to which one is referring (say, the late-seventeenth-century Whig liberalism of John Locke, the socioeconomic liberalism of the early-nineteenth-century devotees of Thomas Malthus, or the radical liberalism of the American far left in our own time), or depending upon the *place* (the current American use of the term liberal vs. the European use)." In the United States today, the term "liberal" designates a person who stands on the political left and tends more toward socialism than libertarianism, for example. Paradoxically, some would argue that, in the United States (as opposed to Europe), the heirs of classical liberalism are political conservatives. On the surface, at least, the term means very different things to very different people.

Because of its diverse use, the term almost seems to have a kind of Wittgensteinian "family resemblance" quality in which no unified meaning exists but rather a group of contextualized uses, which overlap and interface in complex ways. Be this as it may, there *is* a historical core to classical liberalism. The view was originally born out of an emphasis on individual autonomy, in contrast to the expansive power of a centralized state. In the seventeenth century, the state was often justified under the rubric of the "divine right of kings," a view defended in Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings* (1680) and attacked in John Locke's *First Treatise on Government* (1689). Locke's famous *Second Treatise* (1689) provided an architecture of a new "liberal" order designed to replace the old monolith of Filmer and others. At the center of Locke's view stands the affirmation of the autonomous individual who engages the world with rationality and freedom of choice to pursue life, liberty, and property by uncoerced contract and consent, as long as he recognizes the same rights for others.

But from this center, to paraphrase Chairman Mao, a thousand flowers have bloomed. For one thing, liberalism took different guises in the American and French Revolutions (Himmelfarb 2005), including different notions of the power and limits of human reason as well as the role of religion, moral sentiments, and passions. The classical liberals of the French Enlightenment tended, by and large, to emphasize the ability of human beings—intellectual elites, especially—to effect proper social and political change in a manner that required the demolition of the old order and the implementation of the new, the political analog to Descartes' use of universal methodological doubt to eradicate traditional foundations so as to set knowledge on an indubitable mooring. "Nothing must be sustained," wrote one sympathizer, "because it is ancient, because we have been accustomed to regard it as sacred, or because it has been unusual to bring its validity into question" (Godwin 1793, ch. 5). Another concluded that laws should expire every thirty years, so that a new order might arise, unfettered by customs and procedures no longer suitable to new circumstances.

This view gained currency in eighteenth-century France, championed by luminaries like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Antoine-Nicolas Condorcet, and Baron d'Holbach, making its appeal felt across the English Channel and the Atlantic by influencing William Godwin, Thomas Paine, and others. In this vision, select human beings were not just in principle capable of anticipating, planning, and predicting complex social and economic interactions but were also in principle capable of acting impartially out of genuine altruistic motives towards others, even when their own interests were at stake. Human beings, thought William Godwin, are able to transcend selfish behavior, which is due to external constraints rather than internal dispositions: "Men are capable, no doubt, of preferring an inferior interest of their own to a superior interest of others; but this preference arises from a combination of circumstances and is not the necessary and invariable law of our nature" (Godwin 1793, ch. 10).

In his contemporary classic *A Conflict of Visions* (1987), Thomas Sowell calls this view the "unconstrained vision" which emphasizes (among other features), first, the potential of human beings to be altruistic, rational, and impartial, especially those who are educated elites or "experts," whom Mill called "the wisest and the best." Second, this vision also aims at equality in social and economic outcomes, even if that requires differential treatment of peoples under the law, inequality in the distribution of power, or partiality in the redistribution of wealth. Third, the unconstrained view holds that solutions to social, political, and economic problems are possible rather than merely prudential trade-offs and sacrifices. Fourth, this vision supports an approach to jurisprudence which allows radical changes to the law (or its interpretation), contrary to long-standing tradition, so as to achieve social change directly or to meet the needs of unique or modern circumstances. And fifth, the unconstrained posi-

tion prefers top-down social, political, and economic planning rather than bottom-up organization, which tends to rely instead on individual autonomy, natural instinct, and the collective wisdom of human experience. In keeping with the roots of classical liberalism, *freedom* is the center of the unconstrained view, a kind of freedom that stresses liberation from the natural intellectual and moral limitations of human nature in particular.

This view of freedom is hardly recognizable to a very different strain of classical liberalism, rooted in British and American soil. Anglophone classical liberals were more circumspect about the power of reason, emphasizing that human beings are primary passional creatures—ones who have natural sympathy but who also are prone to tribalism and selfishness. As David Hume said, "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them" (Hume 2000 [1739], 264). Adam Smith also regarded human beings as often motivated by self-love, a key theme of *The Wealth of Nations*. "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner," he famously wrote, "but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity, but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities, but of their advantages" (2008 [1776], 21–22). And in his foundational work, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith wrote an equally famous passage:

> If [a man] was to lose his little finger to-morrow, he would not sleep to-night; but, provided he never saw them, he will snore with the most profound security over the ruin of a hundred million of his brethren, and the destruction of that immense multitude seems plainly an object less interesting to him, than this paltry misfortune of his own. (2010 [1759], 134–35)

This is not to say that Smith believed that virtue was unattainable or unnecessary; on the contrary, he thought social virtues of compassion, benevolence, justice, and so on were necessary for an orderly state. But, in his view, human beings were invariably self-interested and imperfect, in contrast to "the unconstrained vision," as Sowell calls it. Similar cautions about the limited probity of human beings and their political institutions pervade the works of other Anglophones as well, including Edmund Burke, Thomas Malthus, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison. In general, this "constrained vision" emphasizes decentralized government, individual freedoms, the intellectual and moral imperfectability of human beings, spontaneous social and political order rather than planned or top-down organization, the pivotal roles of natural desires, traditional customs, and prudential reasoning in effective social and political arrangements, the importance of private property, economic liberty, the free market, and the like.

The different visions of classical liberalism, epitomized in the French and American Revolutions, are not the whole story, of course. There are other important permutations, nuances, and hybrids which are beyond the scope of this introduction. To cite just one example, John Stuart Mill played a role in the articulation of nineteenth-century classical liberalism, exploring in *On Liberty* "the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual" and endorsing, among other things, a governmental structure characterized by "the greatest dissemination of power consistent with efficiency; but the greatest possible centralization of information, and diffusion of it from the centre" (1989 [1869], 5, 113). That is, Mill argued for maximal freedom of the individual (so long as her actions do not impinge upon the freedom of others) combined with a learned citizenry, in which the state allows and encourages the education of its members. While Mill adopted some of the robust conceptions of freedom characterized in France, at times, he also added deep qualifications more in keeping with the British and American conception.[19]

CLASSICAL LIBERALISM TODAY

As we have seen, "classical liberalism" is a term of varied interpretations. Surveying all interpretations past and present would require a volume in itself. In order to make our exploration more tractable, this volume will center on the British and American (or "constrained") interpretation. Classical thinkers like Locke and Smith will be examined as well as contemporary thinkers who may be plausibly regarded as present-day classical liberals. Because the special interest of this volume is the relationship between mainstream biological science and politics, one political movement deserves special attention: Darwinian conservatism.[20] In broad strokes, this view integrates a Darwinian conception of human nature with the essentials of classical liberalism, drawing on the work of Locke, Smith, Hayek, and others. The most prominent members of this approach include Americans like Larry Arnhart (1998, 2009), Thomas Sowell (1987), Robert McShea (1990), James Q. Wilson (1993), Michael Shermer (2008), Francis Fukuyama (1999, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007), and others.[21]

In *Darwinian Natural Right* (1998), for example, Arnhart, a political scientist at Northern Illinois University, makes an impressive argument that the natural rights consonant with the conservative (or classical liberal) tradition can be grounded in a Darwinian understanding of human beings. His view, expanded in *Darwinian Conservatism* (2009), centers on five fundamental claims, a number of which clearly resonate with classical liberalism, especially of the Anglophone strain: (1) humans are morally and intellectually imperfectible; (2) natural instinct, customary traditions, and prudential reason are significant to the proper order of a free

society; (3) family life, parental care, and sex differences are central to social moral stability; (4) private property is invaluable to civil economic health; and (5) a limited government is crucial for a just and effective political order (Arnhart 2009, 10–11).

More generally, advocates of this approach contend that evolutionary biology reveals how the human mind arose and evolved to its present-day form, outfitted with an ability for forward-looking deliberation and volition. Darwin's theory, they contend, also illuminates the development of human moral sensibilities, showing that morality is rooted in biological instincts and desires, yet is amenable to social custom and prudential reasoning in a manner that avoids nihilism and relativism. On this view, Darwinism provides evidence that human beings are by nature morally and intellectually limited—not malleable or perfectible—yet they are capable of acting cooperatively, altruistically, and justly in social contexts. Among other things, a Darwinian foundation can support a prudential approach to government, which preserves individual freedoms, avoids coercive policies, fosters cooperation between citizens, and so on.

On the surface, at least, there seem to be significant similarities between British/American classical liberals and modern-day Darwinian conservatives. Even so, a few qualifications are in order. First, there *are* differences between classical liberals and *traditional* conservatives, as classical liberal F.A. Hayek makes clear in "Why I am Not a Conservative," his postscript to *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960). In particular, Hayek thinks that, unlike classical liberals, traditional conservatives have a "fear of change, a timid distrust of the new as such" as well as a "fondness for authority," "lack of understanding of economic forces," excessive nationalism, a tendency to resist new knowledge, and the like. Perhaps most poignantly, traditional conservatives, unlike classical liberals, believe that coercion is acceptable in areas of morality which affect only consenting individuals and do not "directly interfere with the protected sphere of other persons" (Hayek 1960, 522–24). Even semi-popular news publications like *The Economist* reflect this difference, self-consciously identifying their philosophy with the "Western" conservatism, which emphasizes individual liberty and economic freedom, rather than "Southern" conservatism, which emphasizes moral traditionalism.[22] Having noted these differences, however, I think it is safe to say that close inspection of Darwinian conservatism shows that it can generally avoid Hayek's concerns about *traditional* conservatism.

By way of a second qualification: there are other contemporary political movements that see themselves as *more* supportive of classical liberalism than Darwinian conservatism purports to be. To cite just one example, some thinkers embrace what may be called "Christian classical liberalism." In very broad strokes, this interpretation emphasizes both the dignity of human beings—as creatures fashioned in the *imago Dei*—and their depravity, having been subject to Adam's Fall.[23] Chapter eight in

this volume gives a spirited defense of this perspective (compare to Neuhaus 1997; Richards 2009; Novak 1982, 1993; Hill and Rae 2010). On this view, even though the Church is not a political institution, its insistence on the free choice of human beings to respond to the grace of God provides a robust foundation for individual liberty in the political sphere.

"Authentic faith is of necessity an act of freedom," writes Richard John Neuhaus. "Although the Church's message provides a secure grounding for liberalism, liberalism is not the content of the Church's message. It is simply *the condition* for the Church to invite free persons to live in the *communio* of Christ and his Mystical Body" (1997, 5, emphasis altered). In this general approach, human beings are free and autonomous; they are endowed by their Creator with "certain inalienable rights," yet they are also prone to selfishness, tribalism, rationalization, and hubris. Human moral and intellectual limitations can be channeled in creative and ingenious ways to benefit to others (often unintentionally), but human limitations can never be eradicated. Thus, any governance of human beings must allow freedom, yet also protect its citizens from harm—both from within and without. This means that government must shield citizens from itself, from the natural proclivity of those in power to exploit other citizens.

Of course, there are prominent Christian theists who criticize (aspects of) classical liberalism, especially in its contemporary manifestations and associations, contending that it is inimical to authentic faith (for example, Schindler 2001; Hauerwas 2000; Sider 2005). And there is no consensus among Christians about what are, exactly, the political implications of their worldview. Even so, a number of Christian intellectuals see the Church as a crucial support to classical liberalism. With respect to Darwinian conservatism in particular, they generally hold that a Christian metaphysic is a much more suitable foundation for classical liberalism than the Darwinian naturalism (or agnosticism) typically preferred by Darwinian conservatives.

As these qualifications have made clear, it would be simplistic to claim without a detailed argument that Darwinian conservatism is the *only* legitimate interpretation of Anglophone classical liberalism. Indeed, part of the purpose of this volume is to examine this very claim. In this introduction, however, it is important to point out that, because this volume seeks to analyze the connection between Darwinian evolution and classical liberalism, Darwinian conservatism *is* a natural candidate for focused attention, whatever its ultimate viability or lineage.

Moreover, without putting too fine a point on it, a plausible case can be made that, in general, some versions of *American conservatism* are the heirs of classical liberalism. This is *not* to say that all American conservatives carry the mantle of classical liberalism nor is it to say that, of those who do, their conservatism is identical to classical liberalism. Nor is it to claim, to repeat, that Darwinian conservatives (in particular) have a

monopoly on contemporary classical liberalism. Instead, the claim is minimalist: arguably, a number of American conservatives are faithful to the core ideals of (British/American) classical liberalism. The conservatives I have in mind are those in the United States who emphasize individual liberty, free markets, private property, limited government, prudential reasoning in politics, the moral imperfectability and intellectual limitations of humans, and the like. Their views are remarkably similar to that of the Anglophone conception of classical liberalism.

A number of other thinkers concur. For example, Richard Epstein's "modern case for classical liberalism" emphasizes the key tenets of American conservatism referred to above: respect individual autonomy, private property rights, voluntary exchange of labor and possessions, and prohibitions against force or fraud (Epstein 2003). Deepak Lal makes this connection explicit in *Reviving the Invisible Hand: The Case for Classical Liberalism in the 21st Century* (2006, 50): "The major votaries of classical liberalism today are American conservatives. . . . apart from the brief period of Margaret Thatcher's ascendancy in Britain, it is only in the United States that the classical liberal tradition continues to have political force." The late Richard John Neuhaus also linked American conservatism with classical liberalism, seeing the former as recovering the latter: "Conservatism that is authentically and constructively American conservatism is conservatism in the cause of reappropriating and revitalizing the liberal tradition" (1997, 3). Arguably, this makes (some) American conservatives the intellectual and moral heirs of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century classical liberalism—at least of the "constrained" liberalism emanating from Britain, spurred by Smith, Hume, Burke, and others.

So, while classical liberalism is a diverse tradition and while its moorings in the writings of Locke, Smith, and others are not identical to the present day views of (some) American conservatives, it is arguably the case that, if classical liberalism is alive and well anywhere, it is in the writings of American conservatives. If this is the case, then a volume dedicated to exploring the relationship between Darwinian evolution and classical liberalism ought to pay special attention to "Darwinian conservatism," a branch of American conservatism that purports to be heir of Smith, Locke, *and* Darwin. Of course, nothing like an exhaustive exploration can occur within the confines of a single book. But some of the key areas of (apparent) intersection between Darwin's theory and classical liberalism can be analyzed, including ones that (i) are foundational to the discussion past and present, (ii) have been overlooked, especially in recent literature, or (iii) are of contemporary significance.

To step back for a moment, this volume will explore important facets of the relationship between Darwinian evolution and classical liberalism, past and present. While I have emphasized the relevance of Darwinian conservatism to our discussion, the volume begins with chapters examining "classical thinkers" like Locke and Smith. Other chapters provide

analyses of present-day classical liberalism, focusing especially on Hayek, Sowell, and Arnhart, the most prominent advocates of their contemporary perspective.

ORGANIZATION OF THE VOLUME

The volume is divided into three parts. The first section examines foundational issues: morality, human freedom, and the origin of order in economics and biology. The second section of the volume turns to contemporary applications, addressing the relationship between Darwinian evolution and classical liberalism on matters of limited government, religion, economic freedom, and the traditional family. This section also examines the impact of Darwinian theory on Western civilization, assessing the theory's (historical) compatibility with classical liberalism.

The final section of the volume contains alternative views to those in the first two sections. Readers may be curious as to why I have chosen to include these critical voices. Indeed, many scholarly volumes make a sustained case for a particular position without including critical views in the volume itself, instead simply referring readers to dissenting sources elsewhere. Despite this widespread practice, I have elected to include different perspectives because, although I disagree with them, the reader will benefit from having critical arguments close at hand. They add rich richness and diversity to the discussion, and help the reader to assess the majority view more carefully.

Respectively, these critical chapters reject the idea that Darwinian conservatism is the heir of classical liberalism, maintain that an evolutionary account of human consciousness and volition is fully compatible with the individual choice presupposed in classical liberalism, and claim that evolution, unlike religious alternatives, provides a strong foundation for freedom, morality, the traditional family, and the like.

Part I: Foundations

Benjamin Wiker leads off the volume by arguing that Darwinism is incompatible with classical liberal morality. Wiker focuses on Darwin's *The Descent of Man*, which portrays morality in several ways. First, morality arises in the same way that physical traits do: as products of a brutal competition for survival and reproduction. Second, moral truths are not universally binding or immutable. Third, "sympathy" may not always curb the cold, "hard reason" of natural competition: Wiker argues that Darwin predicted in *Descent* that the more civilized races "will almost certainly" destroy the less civilized ones.

According to Wiker, troubling implications follow. Among them is that even if Darwinism is compatible with good behaviors, it is also fully

Having surveyed the volume, it is now time to turn it over to the contributors. As we do so, a pause is in order to remind ourselves of the importance of the issues that follow. To put it broadly, the legacies of John Locke and Charles Darwin continue to powerfully shape Western visions of humankind's past, present, and future. Whether evolutionary biology and classical liberalism harmonize or clash is of enduring importance to the intellectual, moral, and political well-being of Western culture.

NOTES

1. There are those who disagree. For example, Johnson (2010), Wells (2000), Behe (2006; 2007), Dembski (1998; 2007), Dembski and Wells (2007), and Dembski and Ruse (2004).

2. I use the term "mechanism" lightly. Robert Richards has argued that Darwin's concept of natural selection is best understood not as a mechanism but rather (metaphorically, yet indispensably) as a moral and intelligent *agent* (Richards 2009; 2007).

3. In the present day, few topics produce such radically different perspectives as the relationship between God and evolution. (Few topics also produce such radical invective.) Richard Dawkins (1996; 2009b), Daniel Dennett (1996), William Provine (1988), Jerry Coyne (2009a), Christopher Hitchens (2009), and others are convinced that evolutionary biology and God's providence are implacable foes. Others, like Kenneth Miller (1999; 2008), Karl Giberson (2008), Francis Collins (2006), Simon Conway Morris (2004), think that there is no conflict and, perhaps, even mutual support. Darwin himself strongly disagreed on this question with even close allies, including Charles Lyell, Alfred Russel Wallace, and Asa Gray.

4. An exploration of Darwin's personal religious views (aside from those directly relevant to his understanding of the relationship between God and evolution) is beyond the scope of this introduction. Even so, Darwin's religious odyssey is fascinating. He was a biblical literalist as a young man on the HMS Beagle but, with many fluctuations over his adult life, gradually moved into a muddled agnosticism. This change arose in part because of his conviction that, if his own theory was true, his mind had evolved from that of a lower organism and, thus, could hardly be well equipped to attain reliable theological knowledge (Darwin 1958b, 93; compare to Brooke 1985; Mandelbaum 1958; Dilley 2012, 51–52).

5. See Brooke (2009) for a careful discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the claim that Darwin was a deist in 1859.

6. Darwin may not have been entirely consistent on this point, sometimes hinting at a miracle when he wrote of the life being "breathed" into the first organism (1859, 484, 488, 489; Dilley 2012; Brooke 2009). However, Darwin also confided to Joseph Hooker: "I have long regretted that I truckled to public opinion & used Pentateuchal term of creation, by which I really meant 'appeared' by some wholly unknown process" (Darwin 1863).

7. As noted in the quotation, Darwin said that a "divinely-ordained law which governed the formation of species" is mere theological pedantry or display. In the original letter, he went on to qualify his remarks, stating that such a law was not entirely pedantic because the formation of species "has hitherto been viewed as beyond law." That is, because the received view at the time was that the origin of species was the result of a miracle, rather than a law, an endorsement of the latter would be a substantive (and provocative) claim rather than a rote or unimaginative one. Even so, Darwin still believed that such a law was an empty theological "display," apparently because the theological gloss added no new content, substance, or understanding to the law itself. In sum, Darwin did not disparage recourse to a law per se, but only to a

divinely-ordained law. It is also worth noting, as I point out below, that Darwin conceded in his letter that such questions were "beyond the human intellect."

8. Later in the letter, Darwin states, "I do not wish to say that God did not foresee everything which would ensue; but here comes very nearly the same sort of wretched imbroglio as between freewill and preordained necessity." As we will see below, Darwin's mature position was either that God did not plan, guide, orchestrate, or intervene in organic history *or* that the whole matter was inscrutable.

9. Darwin seemed to have accepted David Hume's view of miracles as "violations of the laws of nature." Whether this is a defensible view of miracles remains the subject of much discussion. For now, the main point is that Darwin rejected the notion of God's intervention (or special action) in organic history.

10. See Gillespie's fine examination of this issue (1979). Note that the interpretation of Darwin's theory given here still allows (in principle) a progressive element to natural selection and random variation, even one that (inevitably) led to the production of human beings. What this interpretation excludes, however, is God's planning, guiding, or orchestration of organic evolution. For a contrary view, see Richards (1997, 63, 69), who argues that "Darwin created natural selection in the image of God" so that "natural selection was more than a blind force of nature. It functioned as the surrogate creator operating according to divine command." See also Richards (2009).

11. Darwin also discussed the idea in *Variation Under Domestication* (1868), as noted below. In this text, Darwin concluded that a divinely-ordained law of biological evolution was either highly unlikely or not assessable (Darwin 1868, 430–32). As I point out below, this conclusion precludes acceptance of the claim that God guided, planned, orchestrated, or intervened in organic history.

12. See Darwin's qualification, explained in note 7.

13. See my discussion in note 6 above.

14. Darwin concluded that the matter may be "insoluble," a view consonant with his conclusion in his autobiography. In fact, Darwin even used the same word—"insoluble"—to characterize the problem in this later work.

15. I take it that an essential tenet of Judeo-Christian theism is the doctrine of *imago Dei*, in which God intentionally fashioned human beings in His image, whether by primary causation or by secondary causation in accord with a foreordained plan. The *imago Dei* doctrine appears to be incompatible with Darwin's understanding of (human) evolution. See his *Descent of Man* in particular (1871, 1–250, especially 34–69).

16. While a full exploration cannot be undertaken here, see the helpful debate between Alvin Plantinga and Jay Richards, archived at http://www.evolutionnews.org/2012/04/. The matter of divine teleology is somewhat puzzling because contemporary biologists are not always univocal or consistent on the matter. It is safe to say, however, that many of the very top biologists hold that current evolutionary theory precludes divine planning, orchestration, or guidance in organic history. (See also note 18.) As Ernst Mayr, the dean of late twentieth-century biology, explained in *What Evolution Is*: "Does any process in evolution require a teleological explanation? The answer is an emphatic 'No.' . . . Before the discovery of the principle of natural selection, one could not imagine any other principle than teleology that would lead to such seemingly perfect organs as the eye, annual migrations, certain kinds of disease resistance, and other properties of organisms. However . . . teleological explanations of evolution have now been thoroughly refuted" (2001, 275; see also 121). Stephen Jay Gould, Richard Dawkins, Richard Lewontin, Francisco Ayala, E.O. Wilson, and many other leading biologists say much the same thing.

17. In a related vein, see also Roger Master's fine contribution (chapter ten).

18. With respect to the controversy about the compatibility (or incompatibility) between Judeo-Christian orthodoxy and Darwinian evolution, my own view is that the matter turns in part on the troubling "demarcation" problem. In this case, the difficult question is: just what non-empirical (or partly empirical) concepts or claims count as "scientific" rather than as "non-scientific"? It is quite clear that Darwin relied upon non-empirical (or partly empirical) concepts and claims to reject divine design in

organic history. What is less clear is a principled way to designate these concepts and claims, in whole or in part, either as "scientific" or as "non-scientific." Given that (realist) science relies upon at least *some* non-empirical (or partly empirical) concepts and claims, and given that demarcation questions sometimes turn on larger philosophical or metaphysical considerations, the problem admits no easy solution. Broadly speaking, there are two possibilities: an expansive conception of science, which would include all of Darwin's non-empirical (or partly empirical) concepts and claims, would be firmly at odds with Judeo-Christian orthodoxy (since, among other reasons, this interpretation of Darwin's theory would deny that humans were created in God's image). On the other hand, a narrow conception of science, which would exclude much of Darwin's non-empirical (or partly empirical) concepts and claims, would not conflict per se with traditional Judeo-Christian theism (since, among other reasons, it would still allow both miracles and the *imago Dei*). The problem is that it's not easy to say which conception of science is most plausible.

Fortunately, there is a way forward that does not require solving the demarcation problem. This way involves paying attention to the content of evolutionary theory as understood by both Darwin and most leading contemporary biologists. While it may be possible to construct a stripped-down version of evolution, as far as I can tell both Darwin and most leading biologists today generally take *Darwinian* evolution to deny divine teleology in organic history, including in the advent of human beings. Whether or not this view is epistemically justified is a separate issue. And, whether or not this view is properly "scientific" is also a separate issue. The real matter simply concerns the conceptual content of evolutionary theory—and surely Darwin and his contemporary followers are allowed to define their own theory. (See note 16 as well.)

19. While I have emphasized the French and Anglophone interpretations of classical liberalism, it is important to note the historical (and contemporary) importance of other interpretations and nuances as well. In fact, features of Mill's view—including his consequentialism—remain influential to the present day. Legal scholar Richard Epstein, for example, rejects natural law, Kantian deontology, and W.D. Ross's non-consequentialism and instead adopts a consequentialist approach in his extended *apologia* for classical liberalism, *Skepticism and Freedom* (2003).

20. Not all the thinkers who I characterize as "Darwinian conservatives" explicitly claim that title for themselves. Even so, an analysis of their beliefs shows that the label is an appropriate short-hand description of their fundamental position.

21. Darwinian conservatism has its share of critics, including Jay Budziszewski (2004), Carson Holloway (2006), John Hare (2000), Jay Richards (2009), John West (2006), among others. I have raised some concerns as well (Dilley 2008).

22. See also Deepack Lal's brief and helpful discussion about the differences between classical liberalism and traditional (contemporary) conservatism (Lak 2006, 246–47).

23. This understanding of classical liberalism, rooted in Christian theism, should not be confused with the political agenda of the Religious Right or Moral Majority.

24. While Jay Richards argues in chapter four that "spontaneous order" (or "emergence," in Arnhart's account) is compatible with God's providence and thus, *a fortiori*, teleology and intelligent design, in chapter six John West advances the bolder claim that spontaneous order is *more* compatible with intelligent design than with Darwinian evolution.

25. Sandefur does not accept the term "Darwinian evolution" or "Darwinism" but prefers to write simply of "evolution."