

## ‘Oneness’ trumps an abominable evolutionary doctrine

by Martin Lockley

**OVER THE BONES OF THE DEAD: EVOLUTIONARY SCIENCE- PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE. Theodore D. Hall** 2003-2005 Hallograph Publishers, Rainier Washington. 145p, p/b ISBN: 1-4116-2153-0 \$14.97, or \$7.21 downloaded from [www.biofractalevolution.com](http://www.biofractalevolution.com)

American historian Theodore Hall (Ph.D) joins the growing ranks of independent thinkers who have something to say about the shortcomings of Darwinism, which still clings to its claim as the pre-eminent theory of evolution. Much of the problem, from Hall’s valuable perspective, stems from what Samuel Coleridge called “the abominable doctrine” of Thomas Malthus regarding the so called ‘population problem.’ As any student of evolution knows Darwin was strongly influenced by Malthus’ 1798 essay which argued that population increase causes competition for scarce resources. Thus, Darwin inferred, with a little help from Alfred Russell Wallace, that ‘natural selection’ ensured the “survival of the fittest” (a phrase borrowed from Herbert Spencer). This established a competitive, rather than a co-operative, doctrine in evolutionary theory. Darwin, who appears quite a borrower, derived his ostensibly biological theory from such socio-political domains, as social Darwinists firmly note.

What evolutionary science overlooks in its inadvertent but nonetheless revisionist desire to recognize Malthus as a clever population statistician, is that by modern standards, he was a shameless lackey of the moneyed establishment. He warned of the dangers of charity and welfare for the poor and disenfranchised victims of industrialization, who could weaken the race and interfere with the manifest destiny of the privileged classes. Thus, Malthus who worked for the East India Company, one of the first multi-national corporations, created the eugenics mentality which reared its ugly head so blatantly in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and, alas, still lingers in the abomination of ethnic cleansing and the indulgent fantasy of designer babies. The ruling classes, according to Hall, found it easy to blame the breakaway independence of Americans and such radicals as Tom Paine on the ‘population problem,’ rather than on their own monopolistic, robber-baron policies.

Let me digress to note that early 20<sup>th</sup> century Neo-Darwinism heavily based on quantitative *population* genetics. It also coincided with the most overt eugenics movements, not only in Nazism but also in a bizarre eugenic literature on health and hygiene. Mention of Coleridge reminds us that Owen Barfield (1971) studied his thought and offered penetrating ‘evolution-of-consciousness’ insights into the pitfalls of idolatry that await those who mistake our ‘collective representations’ for ultimate reality. It strikes one as a huge irony that the present political idolatry of unbridled private (corporate) enterprise, especially in the USA, is so intimately wedded to the roots of Darwinism while claiming to be so anti-evolution!!

Hall, therefore, as a good historian, prompts us to look closely at the reality of the corporate agenda that motivated the population problem doctrine, and suggests we discard the revisionist gloss that paints Malthus and Darwin as infallible heroes of modern science. As Hall notes Darwin at times borrowed distasteful Malthusian language to warn against the “weak members of civilized societies propagat[ing] their kind’ in a process “highly injurious to the race of man.” (See *War against the weak* by Carl Zimmer). However, later in life Darwin revealed another, more repentant side in *The Descent of Man* where he acknowledges human altruism and adherence to the golden rule of love (see my review of David Loye in Network 80).

One of the strengths of this short, concise and well-rounded little book (and bibliography) is that it balances its criticism of orthodox Darwinism with a well-informed presentation of alternatives. We are reminded that the unjustly-maligned Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, who held that variation acquired in life by individuals could be inherited, was really the father of the evolutionary concept, which Darwin subsequently elaborated. Likewise Alfred Wallace Russell was also an unsung hero whose ideas and life were significantly more creative and visionary than Darwin's despite the latter's eminence, and his lack of culpability for subsequent distortions or simplifications of some of his ideas.

Hall points out the current need for alternatives to Darwinism ("a textbook orthodoxy which remains oblivious to its own demise") and so selects various evolutionary paradigms for special emphasis. The first, developed from obscure progenitors by Lynn Margulis into an established *Symbiogenesis Theory*, is perhaps the most accepted, even by ultra-Darwinists like Richard Dawkins. Inherent in this paradigm is the idea that organisms cooperate rather than only compete. A second alternative centers on evidence of *membrane expansion* promulgated by biologist Bruce Lipton, who argues that the nucleus and the genome are not the brains of the cell but merely the gonads (reproductive organs that can be removed without destroying the cell). The membrane, however, is essential to the cell's vitality and is in constant interaction with the environment, sending signals from impish *integral membrane proteins* (IMPs) back to the genome, which happily responds in Lamarckian fashion. Lipton and Hall equate expansion of membranes (e.g., prokaryotes to eukaryotes to multicellular organisms) with the evolution of intelligence and consciousness (enhanced receptivity and relationship with the environment). Lipton also stresses the fractal nature of this organization, likening the epithelium to the membrane. (One might also liken the biosphere to the Earth's intelligent skin).

Although these concluding hypotheses are rather sketchily presented I believe they are essentially correct, as long as we attribute intelligence to the whole system. The Earth's vegetation (biota), fresh water, salt water and soil are like the biosphere's lungs, arterial, venous and digestive systems respectively. Goethean biology already recognizes this bio-fractal organization on many levels from cell to organ, individual, species, family and so on (especially in the case of mammals: Schad, 1977). Hall ends with a reminder that institutional paradigms eventually fail, and in a speculative afterword predicts the same imminent fate for the "Church of Materialistic Scientism." Hall boldly picks 2012 as the date for a marriage of "Symbio-Darwinism and bio-fractal evolutionary theory" claiming optimism about a future religio-scientific synthesis: "The Oneness" predicted by Nostradamus. So ... might we anticipate that in seven short years the abominable doctrine will be history?

Barfield, O. 1971. *What Coleridge Thought*. Wesleyan Univ. Press

Schad, W. 1977. *Man and Mammals: towards a biology of Form*. Waldorf Press.