

*The advance from the simple to the complex, through a process of successive differentiations, is seen alike in the earliest changes of the Universe to which we can reason our way back, and in the earliest changes which we can inductively establish; it is seen in the geologic and climatic evolution of the Earth, and of every single organism on its surface; it is seen in the evolution of Humanity, whether contemplated in the civilized individual, or in the aggregation of races; it is seen in the evolution of Society, in respect alike of its political, its religious, and its economical organization; and it is seen in the evolution of all those endless concrete and abstract products of human activity, which constitute the environment of our daily life.*

– Herbert Spencer, *First Principles*, 1862

I. Progressionism and evolutionism

- A. The Great Chain of Being in western thought
- B. Progress as a modern idea
- C. Darwinisms
  - 1. Evolution as a *scientific theory* (theory of evolution)
  - 2. Evolution as a *universal law* (evolutionary paradigm)

II. Herbert Spencer and the evolutionary paradigm

- A. Survival of the fittest
- B. Synthetic Philosophy (*First Principles*, 1862)
- C. Social Darwinism: William Graham Sumner

III. The evolutionary paradigm and racism

- A. Scientific racism: Joseph Le Conte
- B. Scientific racism and popular culture: Thomas Dixon

IV. The evolutionary paradigm and the New Imperialism

- A. E. B. Tylor and theories of sociocultural evolution
- B. The New Imperialism (1870-1914)
  - 1. The British Empire
  - 2. The “Scramble for Africa”
- C. Anglo-Saxonism and cultural imperialism
  - 1. Josiah Strong
  - 2. Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden”

1) “This preservation of favourable individual differences and variations, and the destruction of those which are injurious, I have called Natural Selection, or the Survival of the Fittest.” (Charles Darwin, *Origin of Species*, 1858)

2) “This survival of the fittest, which I have here sought to express in mechanical terms, is that which Mr. Darwin has called ‘natural selection’, or *the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life.*” (Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Biology*, 1864; emphasis added)

3) “The task before us, then, is that of exhibiting the phenomenon of Evolution in synthetic order. Setting out from an established ultimate principle, it has to be shown that *the course of transformation among all kinds of existences*, cannot but be that which we have seen it to be. It has to be shown that the redistribution of matter and motion must *everywhere take place in those ways, and produce those traits, which celestial bodies, organisms, societies, alike display.* And it has to be shown that this *universality of process* results from the same necessity which determines each simplest movement around us . . . .” (Herbert Spencer, *First Principles*, 1862; emphasis added)

4) “Private property, also, which we have seen to be a feature of society organized in accordance with the natural conditions of the struggle for existence produces inequalities between men. The struggle for existence is aimed against nature. It is from her niggardly hand that we have to wrest the satisfactions for our needs, but our fellow-men are our competitors for the meager supply. Competition, therefore, is a law of nature. Nature is entirely neutral; she submits to him who most energetically and resolutely assails her. She grants her rewards to the fittest, therefore, without regard to other considerations of any kind. If, then, there be liberty, men get from her just in proportion to their works, and their having and enjoying are just in proportion to their being and their doing. Such is the system of nature. If we do not like it, and if we try to amend it, there is only one way in which we can do it. We can take from the better and give to the worse. We can deflect the penalties of those who have done ill and throw them on those who have done better. We can take the rewards from those who have done better and give them to those who have done worse. We shall thus lessen the inequalities. We shall favor the survival of the unfittest, and we shall accomplish this by destroying liberty. Let it be understood that we cannot go outside of this alternative: liberty, inequality, survival of the fittest; not – liberty, equality, survival of the unfittest. The former carries society forward and favors all its best members; the latter carries society downwards and favors all its worst members.” (William Graham Sumner, “The Challenge of Facts,” [orig. “Socialism”] c. 1900; pub. 1914)

5) “[T]he recent introduction of the idea of evolution by Darwin, and its extension by Spencer to every department of Nature, has revolutionized the philosophy and methods of every department of thought, especially that of sociology. . . . The laws determining the effects of contact of species, races, varieties, etc., among animals may be summed up under the formula ‘The struggle for life and the survival of the fittest.’ It is vain to deny that the same law is applicable to the races of man also. All the factors of organic evolution are carried forward into human evolution, only they are motivated by an

additional and higher factor, Reason, in proportion to the dominance of that factor – i.e., in proportion to civilization.” (Joseph Le Conte, “The Race Problem in the South,” 1892)

6) “When the white men elected were sworn in, the guards went to the woods and told the terrified and half starving negroes they could return to their homes, a competent police force was organised, and the volunteer organisation disbanded. Negro refugees and their associates once more filled the ear of the national government with clamour for the return of the army to the South to uphold Negro power, but for the first time since 1867, it fell on deaf ears. The Anglo-Saxon race had been reunited. The Negro was no longer the ward of the Republic. Henceforth, he must stand or fall on his own worth and pass under the law of the survival of the fittest.” (Thomas Dixon, *The Leopard’s Spots: A Romance of the White Man’s Burden - 1865-1900*, 1902)

7) “The thesis which I venture to sustain, within limits, is simply this, that the savage state in some measure represents an early condition of mankind, out of which the higher culture has gradually been developed or evolved, by processes still in regular operation as of old, the result showing that, on the whole, progress has far prevailed over relapse. On this proposition, the main tendency of human society during its long term of existence has been to pass from a savage to a civilized state.” (E.B. Tylor, *The Origins of Culture*, vol. 1 of *Primitive Culture*, 1871)

8) “It seems to me that God, with infinite wisdom and skill, is training the Anglo-Saxon race for an hour sure to come in the world’s future. Heretofore there has always been in the history of the world a comparatively unoccupied land westward, into which the crowded countries of the East have poured their surplus populations. But the widening waves of migration, which millenniums ago rolled east and west from the valley of the Euphrates, meet to-day on our Pacific coast. There are no more new worlds. The unoccupied arable lands of the earth are limited, and will soon be taken. The time is coming when the pressure of population on the means of subsistence will be felt here as it is now felt in Europe and Asia. Then will the world enter upon a new stage of its history – *the final competition of races, for which the Anglo-Saxon is being schooled*. . . . If I read not amiss, this powerful race will move down upon Mexico, down upon Central and South America, out upon the islands of the sea, over upon Africa and beyond. And can any one doubt that the results of this competition of races will be the ‘survival of the fittest’? . . . Whether the extinction of inferior races before the advancing Anglo-Saxon seems to the reader sad or otherwise, it certainly appears probable.” (Josiah Strong, *Our Country*, 1891; emphasis in original)

9) “Take up the White Man’s burden – / Send forth the best ye breed – / Go bind your sons to exile / To serve your captives’ need; / To wait in heavy harness, / On fluttered folk and wild – / Your new-caught, sullen peoples, / Half-devil and half-child. . . . Take up the White Man’s burden – / The savage wars of peace – / Fill full the mouth of Famine / And bid the sickness cease; / And when your goal is nearest / The end for others sought, / Watch sloth and heathen Folly / Bring all your hopes to nought.” (Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden,” 1898)