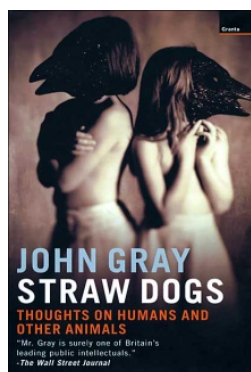


1. Homo (not so) Sapiens: the myth-understanding of humanism

1.1. The Comedy of the Humanist Creed



Among Contemporary philosophers it is a matter of pride to be ignorant of theology. As a result the Christian origins of secular humanism are rarely understood. Yet they were perfectly clear to its founders... enlightenment philosophers aimed to supplant Christianity but could do so only if they could satisfy the hopes it had implanted.

...Over the past 200 years, philosophy has shaken off Christian faith, but it has not Christianity's cardinal error, the belief that humans are radically different from all other animals... Other animals are born, seek mates, forage for food and die. We humans (*we think*) are different... We are *persons*, whose actions are the results of our *choices*. Other animals pass their lives unawares, but we are *conscious*. Our image of ourselves is formed from our ingrained belief that *consciousness, selfhood and free will* are what define us as human beings, and raise us above all other creatures.¹



Whose image and which faith is Gray challenging?

1.2. Where there's a Will there's a Wire: the "contemporary orthodoxy"

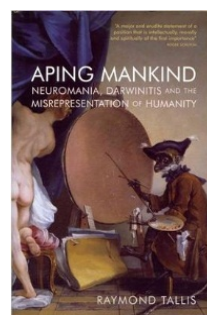


'There is only one sort of stuff, namely *matter* – the physical stuff of physics, chemistry and physiology...we can (in principle!) account for every mental phenomenon using the same physical principles, laws and raw materials'²

- ❖ The Libet experiment
- ❖ The Liberal doctrine of autonomy

1.3. Aping Mankind: Neuromania, Darwinitis and a Misrepresentation of Humanity

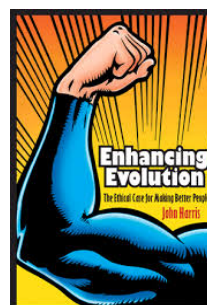
Denying the reality of change – so that biological roots are regarded as the **complete** explanation of cultural leaves – underpins the mistaken belief that *Darwinism* (which explains how the organism *H. Sapiens* came into being) requires us also to accept *Darwinitis* (purports to explain everything about *people* in terms of biological evolution)³



Where does this become relevant in our society/self-understanding?

1.4. Enhancing Evolution: The Oxford Centre for "Neuro-Ethics"

'There is much that is profoundly evil in human nature...which speaks against the desirability of cognitive enhancement, if it is not accompanied by extensive moral enhancement. We review the possibilities for **moral enhancement by biomedical and genetic means** and conclude that, though it should be **possible in principle**, it is in practice probably distant...If moral enhancements are ever developed, there are strong reasons to believe that their use should be obligatory, like fluoride in the water, since those who should take them are least likely to be inclined to use them'⁴



¹ Gray, J. *Straw Dogs* (Granta Books, 2002), p.xi-xii, p.43-44

² Dennett, D. *Consciousness Explained* (1991), p.33

³ Tallis, R. *Aping Mankind: Neuromania, Darwinitis and the Misrepresentation of Humanity* (Acumen, 2011), p.220

⁴ Persson, I. and Savulescu, J. 'The Perils of Cognitive Enhancement and the Urgent Imperative to Enhance the Moral Character of Humanity' in the *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, vol. 25 (2008): 162-177

2. Dominion over Nature: Humanism, Speciesism and the *Imago Dei*

2.1. The myth-taken elevation of human reason in the tradition of the *imago dei*



'My acceptance of Adam and Eve as historical is not incompatible with my belief that several forms of pre-Adamic 'hominid' seem to have existed for thousands of years previously...They made their cave drawings and buried their dead. It is conceivable that God created Adam out of one of them. You may call them *Homo erectus*. I think you may even call some of them *Homo sapiens*, for these are arbitrary scientific names. But Adam was the first *Homo Divinus*, if I may coin the phrase... 'made in the image of God'. Precisely what the divine likeness was, which was stamped upon him, we do not know, for Scripture nowhere tells us.⁵



What constitutes the *imago dei*: what distinguishes man (male and female) from the animals?

2.2. Two approaches to the image of God⁶

❖ capacities approach

cf. Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (1979), distinguishes **human being** from **human person**

'Non-'persons' are 'replaceable', just like barnyard animals' (132-3, 185-8)

'Life only begins in the *morally significant sense* when there is awareness of one's existence' (189-90)

'Killing [infants who lack these characteristics] cannot be equated with killing *normal human beings*' (182)

'Killing a *defective or disabled* infant is not morally equivalent to killing a *person*... (191)

❖ relational approach



Compare Eccl. 3:18-21 with what Attenborough says that "*above all, Darwin has taught us*"

3. The Mark of the Beast and Homo (not so) Sapiens: re-reading Genesis

3.1. Common descent, uncommon speech ...*but*

3.2. The Tree of Life and the Living Soul...*but*

3.3. The Generations of the Heavens and the Earth...*but*

37:2	?17?	10:1
36:1		6:9
25:19	11:27	5:1
25:12	11:10	2:4



'Darwin dethroned humans and as the abysses of geological time opened to paleontological scrutiny, so the idea that we had any special role in the cosmic drama seemed increasingly absurd...So is it time to shut up shop and go shopping? Not so fast. Is evolution truly random, or are there deeper patterns? How on earth do we begin to explain mind and consciousness? And on the religious side, if one subscribes seriously as I do to the central tenets of Christianity, not least the incarnation and Resurrection, then perhaps we really do have a part to play in the cosmic drama. By invitation, mind you'.⁷

⁵ Stott, J. 'Understanding the Bible', p. 43 (cf. Schaeffer, F. *Genesis in Space and Time* (IVP 1976): "the bible is a very efficient book")

⁶ cf. Wolterstorff, N. *Justice: Rights and Wrongs* (Princeton University Press, 2008), pp.342-350 on 'correspondance'

⁷ Conway Morris, S. 'Is Science an Enemy to Faith?' lecture at the Lanier theological library, October 29, 2011