

## ***THE NEW THEORY VERSUS THE OLD STORY***

The old way insists we are merely the willy-nilly playthings of random variation and natural selection, or of blind chance, fate or Karma. The new way says what matters is the power of our vision of the better world, and the power of our desire to journey there.

The old way was and is to outfit a comparative handful of kings, priests, scientists and politicians, to board the ship to the future, leaving the rest of us in ignorance behind.

Historically we were and are to be left behind until they run the ship aground, then suddenly we become of value—suddenly gone from peon to cherished helper status, we are called up to help push the ship they've grounded from the rocks.

The new way is to bring us *within the process*—as I hope it can be said I've done in this book. By widening our minds and enlisting our energies, the goal is to help drive the ship of state faster and more surely toward the better future not just for the few, but for us all.

The old theory of *Origin*, misapplied, tells us we're inherently, predominantly, and indeed overwhelmingly selfish and aggressive. Emergent in *Descent*, the new theory tells us that, unless we've been unnaturally and disastrously warped, both over the short term and the long term we can be—and generally are—more powerfully driven by concern for the regard of others and by love.

The old theory tells us we are primarily driven by the need to perpetuate our own genes or the genes of our kin. The new theory tells us that we are also driven by the need to transcend ourselves, resonating to the whole of humanity and to the whole of life.

The old theory tells us that we are alone in the universe. In the phrase picked up in simultaneous book titles by biophysicist Stuart Kauffman and physicist John Wheeler, the new theory tells us we are "at

home in the universe." It tells us we're linked to one another and to the universe by something that's just "out there," whether we call it spirituality, God, the cosmic connection, the Akashic Record, or the quantum vacuum.

The old theory tells us that our destiny is whatever chance and forces larger than ourselves select for us. The new theory offers something immeasurably more difficult to understand, but immeasurably hopeful once we do understand it. It tells us that although we are massively constrained by all that really is larger and more powerful than ourselves, we are also driven by self-organizing and self-regulating processes that open up within the constraints a surprisingly large leeway, or "window of opportunity." Given then our capacity for the *will* to shape it, the choice of destiny *to a vital degree is ours*.

The old theory tells us there is nothing inherent within us to help tell us good from bad or right from wrong—that throughout our lives from birth to death "moral sense" must always be hammered into us by self-appointed authorities who know better. The new theory tells us that moral sensitivity has been embedded within us over at least one billion years. It tells us that, by providing an inner voice of basic guidance, it has escalated upward from sexual emergence level by evolutionary level to reach the culmination of choice within ourselves.

The old theory encourages us to just sit back and enjoy the medium, for supposedly the message is settled. Having been scientifically worked out and certified by people much smarter than we are, who are we to question what we have been and will again and again be told?

Oh sure, the message may not be what we want to hear, but the old theory affirms this is the grim reality we must not only learn and teach but that each of us—as best we can—must *adapt* to.

The new theory and the new story tells us that the message is open-ended and eternal, stretching out of the dim past into the mists of the future for our species. It tells us that we have a voice in the shaping of the message—but that this message needs a great deal more nurturing, and understanding, and the assignment of much more financing for its R&D, and much more of the power of updated schooling and updated media to its spreading.

Above all, it tells us that we are not just what we more or less dutifully adapt to. Much more importantly—standing with the best of minds and hearts over the ages—we *are what we refuse to adapt to*.

The old theory tells us with scientific precision why we are driven by what used to be called our vices. The new theory scientifically accounts for, and offers hope and encouragement for, the expansion of the kind of values that used to be called our *virtues*.

Darwin's lost completion of theory accounts for and offers hope for our gaining more of such virtues as the *courage* of a Gandhi, the *compassion* of an Eleanor Roosevelt, the *perseverance* and *self-discipline* of a Helen Keller or a Stephen Hawking in the face of inconceivably debilitating handicaps.

It celebrates the virtues of *cheerfulness* and *friendliness* that lighten the life of others, which distinguished Franklin Roosevelt, Will Rogers, Darwin himself, or the Dalai Lama today. It further explains the *helpfulness* that psychiatrist Robert Coles pointed to in Dorothy Day's leadership of the Catholic Workers Union, or the all-too-often unappreciated *responsibility* that the all-too-rare best political leaders take on in giving of themselves to look after the rights, livelihoods, and betterment of others throughout the world.

These italicized "virtues" are not just "nice" things for embroidery on Victorian walls or the Boy Scout or Girl Scout Manual. As I probe elsewhere, in terms of their evolutionary function, all the virtues I identify within these paragraphs are among those either experientially defined by Darwin in the development of the theory of *Descent*, or empirically defined by psychologists Milton Rokeach, Abraham Maslow, and Darwin's other modern successors in psychology.

Most of all, the theory of *Descent* accounts for the majesty of mind—for the virtues of the *intellect*, of *logic*, of *imagination*, of "*broadmindedness*" and of *wisdom* embodied in an Einstein, Freud, Marx, in Darwin himself, in the legendary Hypatia, or a Marie Curie, or a Maria Montessori.

The theory of *Descent* also begins to account for the *love of beauty* of a Mozart, Chagall, Schubert, the *passion* of a Van Gogh, or how Isadora Duncan could throw herself into dance or Sarah Bernhardt into

drama.

It certainly accounts for the virtue of *self-transcendence* that Darwin writes of in the human rescuers of others from fires and from drowning. It is also clearly what he had in mind in the third level for his theory of human evolution. It is this virtue of self-transcendence he also sees emerging among prehumans: the rabbits who stamp their feet, the sheep that whistle, the monkeys that cry out to warn others.

*In short, what Darwin set out as a young man, and then returned to as an old man, was to give us what everybody who hungers for intelligence, decency, stability and hope in our world today is seeking.*

In the long lost rounding out for the second half for his theory, he gave us the most extensively grounded and carefully reasoned vision of the wonder of what is within all of life—including, most of all, what is within ourselves, as well as where this force can take us.

He gave us this vision of a *completed* theory of evolution, where out of the truncated first part—in which the educated mind of the 20th century got bogged down—rises the thrust of what used to be called heart and soul as well as mind into the vast hopeful expansion of a higher level for evolution.

He gave us the map, the ship, the port and the specific dock from which we are to embark. He gave us the list, which the best of his successors greatly expand, of provisions to take aboard, the pass-engers, the books to read, games to play en route, places to refuel, the compass and the radar to scan for icebergs.

And so we cannot possibly go astray, marked with a big X on the map, Darwin—and his successors attuned to the *full* theory and vision—give us the destination for our journey to the better world.

Why wait?

### *End of Story*

We live by story—but must the story we are living by drive our species toward extinction?

How do we end the old story and begin the new one?

After thirty one chapters developing the picture of the social and personal devastation that only half a theory or the wrong or inadequate

theory of evolution can lead to, surely we're ready for what seems to me not only the main point of this book but the main point of Darwin's life.

It is that the story we live by is shaped by the prevailing theory of who we are, what we are here for, and where we are going.

*Thus if we change the theory, we can change the story, and thus the old pattern to our lives, opening the way to the better world.*