

An Evolutionary Approach to the Research of Speculative Historiosophy and Its Possible Influences on the Research of the Social Sciences and Humanities

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Abstract

This study aims to recall the ideas and activities in the field of an evolutionary approach to the research of speculative historiosophy and its possible influences on the research of the social sciences and humanities. The research is in the form of a scientific essay in which different concepts are analyzed. The main points in the essay are: “Genetics” and “What is the role of the humanities and social sciences? Is their existence really pointless?” The essay ends with conclusions: the “social sciences” – the areas of research must be assisted by evolutionary explanations in order to understand the source of the creation of their objects of research in their attempt to analyze the behavior of a person/society and create a better social order for human society.

Keywords: genetics, humanities and social sciences.

1. Introduction

In the year 2002, the British scientist Prof. Robert Winston wrote a book titled *The Human Instinct*. In this book, Winston asserted that in the framework of the process of evolution that lasted for millions of years *homo sapiens* “inherited” (Winston, 2002) from his ancestors “human instincts” (*Ibid.*). In other words, these are automatic responses of his body that were created following actions performed by his ancestors during tens of thousands of years.

Today it is known in the world of science that the person experienced as *homo sapiens*, like every other creature in nature, a process of evolution that lasted for millions of years that was caused by necessities and environmental needs that were necessary for his survival. These automatic actions that the person undertakes are in scientific language “human instincts”, namely, actions that we see as automatic or as a result of practice/adjustment that are transmitted to the future generations. They are in essence an example of the genes created in our body when it understands the need to carry out actions regularly. An example of a human instinct that has developed over the years is the chemical processes that occur when the person feels a sense of loss or alternatively a feeling of victory. This same chemical process that becomes “automatic” by the body is considered to be evolutionary, as one we obtained from the womb, since in our “forefathers” lives in nature and in caves the direct outcome of loss was death and alternatively the direct outcome of victory was life.

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But one should not think that only human instincts developed from the evolutionary period. It should be assumed that all that composes us as people on the external level and the internal level was given to us by the previous generations. It is definitely possible to assume that all the genes that compose us were created and shaped by our adaptation to the environment in which we live and in which our forefathers lived. Every gene that characterizes the person was transmitted to him in the womb from the previous generations of the ancestors who developed according to the environment in order to survive.

2. Genetics

Every gene is conveyed to the coming generations in a process known as genetics, and thus the “traits” of the father or the mother are transmitted to their descendants. But there is another process in addition to the genetic process, a process that only in recent decades have people begun to study and to understand how significant it is in the process of our genetic coding – *epigenetics*. Epigenetics is a change in the activity of the gene, a change that can be caused by environmental factors. This change is not a change in the DNA proteins themselves but is a mechanism that acts on the genes (and thus the word epi-genetics) and causes them to be expressed, or alternatively to be stifled.

The existence of the epigenetic mechanism means that the environment has an impact that can enter the nucleus of the cell and influence our children. Human behaviors, therefore, can derive not only from genetic inheritance but also from epigenetic inheritance. There is a different type of inheritance, one that is not encoded in genes or in any genetic process. This inheritance was well described by Eva Jablonka and Marion Lamb in their book *Four-Dimensional Evolution* (Jablonka & Lamb, 2008). It is a cultural inheritance as well as a social inheritance, in which the way information is transmitted is not limited to changes in the genetic code, but is transmitted by social learning and is influenced by the behavior of the creatures at every stage and at all times.

3. What is the role of the humanities and social sciences? Is their existence really pointless?

Therefore, when we go to ask philosophical questions pertaining to human behavior or values as they are perceived in human culture, we should ask them in light of our knowledge in these fields, in light of the evolutionary insights that I have now mentioned.

If we start from this point of view, then we see that every behavior of a person is in essence an action derived from or a side effect of the evolutionary process, which is influenced from the environment, which includes survival-oriented adjustment over time in all the areas of life (including social and cultural areas, of course). If so, it is possible to explain many human behaviors and responses to different events in light of this understanding. Whether this is the understanding of physical characteristics – the fact that we stand erect, have a certain structure of hands and feet, or whether this is the understanding of behavioral characteristics – communication between individuals, feelings of happiness or arousal, everything can be explained with scientific means and an evolutionary perspective as representation of what his forefathers left him from their days in nature.

The understanding that the attributes and feelings that characterize us today as people (in addition to the personal characteristics of identity that every person adds for himself during his life) originate in evolutionary needs that formed in a long process from early periods in ancient history until today indicates that all philosophical thought that examines and researches the person without this reference is deficient. A philosophy that that the Ancient Greeks began and that examined human behavior with the naked eye actually reached only the tip of the iceberg in

its quest to paint an overall picture or to understand in depth the different phenomena it encountered. As aforementioned, this is because the research of human behavior or other natural phenomena (with emphasis on human emotions) was analyzed only according to observations and one-dimensional feelings without taking into consideration their origin.

An example of the evolutionary view in philosophical research can be found in the field of the philosophy of history, in the field of speculative historiography. There it is possible to see the attempt to build different theories that will provide a conceptual explanation of human history in terms of its characteristics and future destiny. Thus, for example, Marx saw the events of human history as a constant and perpetual struggle of an exploited class and an exploiting class and its destiny to be the revolution of the proletariat and therefore a Marxist historian will look at every event in human history from this fundamental assumption. Another example is the religious speculative historiographical perception that looks at all the events of human history as a journey towards the coming of the Messiah.

However, if we adopt as the working assumption the evolutionary approach described above, then we can assume that the historians who focused mainly on the analysis of a certain period of human history did not see the overall picture and were deficient in the understanding of the causes of different events in human history. Like the physical and behavioral development of the person, this perception can illuminate also the reasons and purposes of every historical event on the human continuum. In addition, in speculative terms (looking at history from a “bird’s eye view” – Libs, 1987), there must be another understanding that the history of the evolution of human society (from antiquity to modernity) is not a puzzle in itself, but is a small part of an even larger puzzle, and once the above fundamental assumption is accepted, it is possible to understand the origin of different events in different periods in a broad developmental perspective, and even to better predict where human progress is leading.

Until now, humanistic research and the social sciences are expressed primarily in the analysis of events and phenomena related to the person and human society in interpretative or positivist approaches. Therefore, given a new working assumption, considerable time and efforts will be necessary to change the old approach and to turn the subjects of research in the disciplines of the social sciences and humanities into research subjects that are examined and tested under basic research assumptions of evolutionary scientific theories.

This has far-reaching implications, of course. If all the explanations for the humanistic questions in general and the philosophical ones in particular on the facts of life can be explained in an evolutionary perspective, and if we concluded that the social sciences and humanities (humanism) are themselves a part of human progress, then what is the role of the humanities and social sciences? Is their existence really pointless?

4. Conclusion

In my opinion: no. But definitely it is necessary to define their role anew.

First, it is necessary to accept the fact that every behavior that characterizes the person is an outcome of genetic or other evolutionary development (Jablonka & Lamb, 2008).

Second, it is necessary to begin to analyze the objects of research in the different humanistic sciences using this insight and to explain in a better and more comprehensive manner the different humanistic phenomena. The analysis of the phenomena needs to be carried out through “superficial” observation (factual recording of data) and then the adjustment of an evolutionary explanation or the development of an evolutionary explanation from what is known to us scientifically (Jablonka & Lamb, 1987, 2002),

Last but not least, we must take into consideration that some of the areas of humanistic research not only try to analyze the characteristics of a person and/or society but also see as another goal to adapt a series of laws and rules, through the same analysis, through which people can live together reasonably such as: law, sociology, political science, management, etc. (these fields are called the “social sciences” in Israeli universities – Weinrib, 1987). Therefore, the areas of research must be assisted by evolutionary explanations in order to understand the source of the creation of their objects of research in their attempt to analyze the behavior of a person / society and create a better social order for human society.

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