

The Misuse and Abuse of Darwinian Concepts in Social Theory (or was Darwin a Social Darwinist?)

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There are many remarks about Darwinian concepts of “selection” and “nature” in social science literature especially in the 19th century philosophy. Social sciences such as sociology, psychology and economics have been developed in the 19th century mainly imitating and trying to be similar with natural sciences methodologically.

Scientific developments begin with the protruding of the principle of inferring the knowledge on the world of objects through inspection and experiment. Classically, it was Bacon who was the most provocative philosopher of his era insisting on the value of this kind of knowledge. Bacon’s major argument was to analyze the objects as they are and to research on the comprehension possibilities of humans on that matter; but not to try to pursue how to reach the God in a transcendently and search for wisdom by equipping objects with meaning like scholastics such as Thomas Aquinas and Tertulianus¹. Scientific/positivist epistemology developed on this basis. Understanding the nature, by first examining the object, trying to settle the relationships among objects via tools out of transcendental processes going through independent from those objects and reaching general conclusions were the basic aims of this new methodology.

Among these tools, mathematics has a bright existence. But, mathematics is not solely consisted of mathematical operations and processes, but a kind of ideology and pursuit to comprehend the relationships among objects in a certain definiteness degree. The extraction of mathematics from being a kind of plaything of human mind which gets its share from God’s wisdom and application of it on the world of objects actually meant the formation of the dominance of human mind and its ultimate victory in these terms on the world of objects. Comprehending the world by mind was possible and

¹ As Samuel Tyler (1850:14-15) indicates “We see then that a mere matter of intellectual contemplation to satisfy the speculative mind, the Baconian philosophy is preeminently sublime. We will show that it is also eminently practical; and in this particular it differs from all the philosophy of the ancients, who thought that the only use of philosophy was in its influence upon the mind in elevating it above the concerns of live, and thus purifying and preparing it for the philosophical bestitude of their heaven, into which none, but philosophers were to enter and that the practical affairs of life belonged to those of common endowments who are fated by destiny to be mere ‘hewers of stone and drawers of water’.”

mathematics was our major assistance in this endeavor. In that respect, the idea of Enlightenment ascribed to mind being unchangeable in opposition to religions, mythos, traditions and ephemeral styles. Thus, great enlightenment philosophers such as Kant, Locke, and Hume thought on the qualities of mind and its capabilities of understanding. In the core of this value ascribed to mind, there existed its power of describing the relationships among objects mathematically, because the subjects which have not been considered to be discussed under mathematics until 18th century began to be rearranged and reshaped by mathematical theories. Enlightenment considers thinking and mathematics as one from now on (Horkhemier and Adorno, 1995:42). The establishment of one to one relationship of mind and mathematics was taking all the mind categories and thinking styles which have preserved their legitimacy until then, down from their thrones. In these categories and styles of thought here were all mystical and religious thoughts, the meaning relationship formed between the human and supernatural, and the philosophy of this thought itself. As Horkheimer and Adorno (1995:21) states “humans succeed in giving up meaning on the way towards the science of the new era and replacing the concepts with formulas, and the reason with rules and possibilities”. The exaltation of mind in this way cannot be condemned easily by looking through a point of view which has been formed through a history full of sorrow and matters for humans caused by positivism and its effects on philosophy and social sciences. The generation of physicist, mathematician, philosopher who preserve the tradition of pioneers who were jammed with the clamp of thought patterns of Middle Ages, and thus prohibited from understanding and explaining the nature, and were not able to declare what they found and what they thought, began seeing the alternation in practices with the benefits gained through the loosening of this clamp with the effects of social, political and economical, verifying the availability of an explanation for the nature with already existed formulas and reasoning styles, and thus, their belief in mind and the need for humankind to go through on this path was hardening. So, the only obstacle in front of the development of humanity was the obstacle in front of the application of mind itself and thus, the area of power should be opened to mind from now on. As Edmund Husserl indicates in this new world derived from mathematics and consisted of idealities our knowledge on objects will no more be flawed and coincidental. The design of objects in this new world which heads towards infinity are respect to full “Existence in Itself” (Ansichsein) in a rational and systematical way. The world which was designed as the total of objects which were idealized the “Existences in Itself” by mathematics in the shape of the mathematicization of nature by Galileo, would be idealized in the management of new mathematics then (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1995:42). The name of this idealization method is positivism. But in this new methodology which constructs the relationships among objects through the inspection and another style of inspection (experiment) which is based on the repetition of the operations on objects, taking the mind as the base will not be enough and the real foundation of this new methodology will be empiricism.

We find the basics of empiricism in terms of philosophy of science in *Newton's The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* (Philosophie Naturalis Principia Mathematica).² Newton gives

² *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* was published in 1729. Newton was defining the existences and movements of the principles he purported and objects not by their substances or the ideas they were

preference to practical analysis but not deduction. Newton shows that it is not possible to begin with a priori arbitrary point or an assumption and also does not put forward any certain rule to pave the way for reaching the information of “the single” or the “factual one”. According to Newton, a scientific abstraction or definition actually cannot serve as a starting point; such kind of a starting point can only be derived from observation. But this does not mean that Newton and his followers separate the experiment and reasoning severely. A kind of duality like the one between “fact” and “idea” in Hume’s “An Investigation on Man’s Ability to Understand” does not exist among Newtonian thinkers. The main aim and basic acceptance of Newtonian method is to find out the universal order and its principle in the material world. This new methodological order forms the basic foundation of all 18th century thinking (Cassirer 1951:7-8). We find this Newtonian essence in the reflection of Enlightenment on life in terms of both as a positive science and politically. While analyzing the great systems of the 17th century, Condillac specifies that singular concepts which are almost dogmas play role in the failure of these systems. The “spirit of systems” is replaced by an alliance between “positive spirit” and “rationalist spirit” from now on. The positive one and the rationalist one never clashes but the real synthesis of these two is possible just by the use of a true tool. An a priori order giving the phenomenon priority, law, or “reason” should not be looked for. Instead, the thing as a form of continuous link, arranging the phenomenon itself should be found. Thus, instead of expecting help from “reason” in a closed system, mind as one of the facts in the appearance of improvement which gains openness and perfection through time should let a step by step opening to come true. This is not a scholastic logic or a pure mathematical concept, but a new logic going on as the “logic of facts”. In this scientific path, enlightenment, was able to find its own concrete verification formed through the perfect synthesis of “positive” and “rational” which was theorized as an aim but not just a postulate. Because philosophy of enlightenment believes that it can concretely grasp its own ideal in the progress of the science of nature. It approaches towards modern analytical spirit step by step. This spirit will conquer the whole reality and will reach the target of deducing the plurality of the phenomenon of nature to a unique universal law with the arrangement capability of reason (Cassirer, 1951:8-9).

This new relationship with reason formed by enlightenment philosophers and their limitless trust in the availability of a comprehension of the nature, which is not groundless by virtue of “scientific revolution”, constitutes the foundations of new relationships which will be established with nature, knowledge and society. As long as the positive knowledge production styles, the informational basics of which were constructed by enlightenment philosophers and especially the empiricists, derive conclusions providing concrete benefits and uncovering the unknown about the nature and the world of objects, this trust increases and causes a presumption indicating that every aspect of life is able to be comprehended in this way. This presumption flourishes in the social thought of the beginnings of the 19th century and we come up with an idea of social sciences which can be applied to society and individual (in the area of morality and culture). Kant’s proposal “dare to know” (*Sapere aude!*) draws

accidental, but by their physical properties. Just like Durkheim’s search for the reasons of social events in also social events.

positive conclusions and it has been accepted that the other aspects of the methodology which is useful for comprehending the nature zone is also useful for “knowing”.

Darwin’s research in which his ideas on nature, and the existence and alterations of animates were based is the test of this methodology which is shaped in the 18th century on nature successfully. The problem is not with his research and findings, but with the transference of his findings and concepts to social/cultural area completely and mostly in a wrong and sometimes intentionally in a distorted way, and with the thinking of the relationships in nature are also valid socially (in the world of meanings).

In that respect the first step was taken in France. According to Albert Soboul, “Encyclopédie, which is regarded to be the basic text of French enlightenment and accepted as the manifest of new bourgeois, sees society on one side just like nature, and considers it “measurable” with the principle which inspires the formation of social sciences to emerge in future (Beales, 1990:37).

This “measurable” area is in a “progress” just like the one in nature and mind. It is accepted that this progress is from the primitive forms of society to developed ones in the atmosphere created by French Revolution, it is from the dominance of religious and mystic thought which encapsulates human mind to a new era in which the mind is freed and with this effect the human is freed and became sovereign for the nature and for his own future.

Thus, the success of human mind on physical world can be repeated for social field and for this to happen, there is no way but to transfer the methodology which is used by human mind to comprehend the physical world to social domain. In this respect, August Comte’s naming “social science” which is to be constructed as “social physics” is not a coincidence.

In an environment in which this idea has begun to firmly being established, Darwin’s findings about the evolution of species and his new concepts completing these findings have emerged. This finding and new theory emerged in the field of biology has been applied to social domain roughly and without being completely understood by social philosophers and sociologists. It is true that one of these applications which gets its name from Darwin – somewhat wrongly – as *social Darwinism* sets the basics of racism with the ideas that “the strong one survives” also in social and cultural domain and also by adding a moral predicate to this idea creating “thus, the one who is strong, is also right”. But here there is also a difference. In fact, Darwin was not talking about “the strong one in nature”, but about “the one which is adapted”. The “ability to adapt” in biology is not a condition related with power or volition, on the contrary, they are the conditions which are fully arbitrary and automatically formed outcomes of outer natural conditions; the history of evolution is full of instances of this. Also, a similar debility is seen in the criticism of pseudo Darwinian study of history and philosophy of society, i.e. anti-racist literature. The ground for this debility is the relationship formed between the Darwinian thought and the ideological shape which was formed, even if not being speculated in honor of the name of Darwin, under the influence of Darwinian discoveries and put forward by Prussian history

school and the 19th century social philosophy (moreover by omitting the real sources of this ideological formation).

This was, at one hand, inevitable, because biology began grasping a central role in western intellectual world since the Darwinian theory of evolution which has been breaking the ground for endemic cosmological perception. [Biology had become a central preoccupation of the western world of mind since Darwinian evolution theory had broken conventional perceptions of cosmology down.] (Crook, 1984:25).

On the other hand, the ethical theory of this improvement understanding was established. The state of continuous improvement in the history of the humankind is a stable and humanly tendency. This “tendency for improvement and evolution” has been thought as the orientation of history and the expansion and a kind of realization of “social – cultural improvement law”. The major job of the ones who are interested in social – human field was to see the humanity in its full and linear improvement in terms of its benefits and to find out the eternal laws of this linear movement (evolution) (Sorokin, 235).

Darwin’s discoveries and the concepts he proposed paved the way for extreme evaluations in the field of biology. Darwinian evolution was defined as a process for the whole nature as progressing from simple to complex, from low to high, from the less perfect to more perfect, from ameba to human and from the reflexive to mind and intellectuality bearer by abstracting the theory of its all scientific explanatory power. We find a summary of this understanding in Conklin’s words which take place in his book *The Direction of Human Evolution* published in 1925: “During the evolutionary line, the elimination of the least suitable ones, and the survival of the suitable ones... the elimination of the ones who are against the society and the increase in specialization and cooperation has always gone on” (in Sorokin, 235). Conklin, here, approximates the biological conclusions to sociology and incorporates it into the sociological evolution theory, which follows a direction from simple to complex, of structuralist-functionalist sociology. Most biologists who worked in the beginnings of the 20th century could not detain themselves from agreeing with this social and moral interpretation of evolution. In the works of these biologists and natural scientists it is observed that “evolution” and “improvement” is equated.³

³ For instance, E. Haeckel, in *Prinzipien der Generellen Morphologie* (Tübingen, 1906), J.C. Smuts, in *Holism and Evolution* (New York, 1925), Frances Baker Mason (ed) in *Creation by Evolution* (New York, 1928) and English physicist and mathematician James H. Jeans in *Evolution in the Light of Modern Knowledge* (New York, 1925) displays this approach (in Sorokin, 287). Haeckel was a prominent figure in early 20th century biology. He developed Darwinian evolution studies in Germany through by promoting and popularizing of Darwinian work. He developed the controversial recapitulation theory which can be summarized as “ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny” and he mapped a new genealogical tree including new species and new terms such as phylum, phylogeny, and ecology. He was a very important biologist who took Darwin’s works forward in Germany. He improved the theories of biological developments of organisms and the evolutionary developments of species. He

An idea stating that humanity and society “improves” from simple to complex has led to two important thought trends. The first of these is the Marxist theory which finds the freedom of human in the nature of this progress bound to dialectical progress. The second one is the Darwinist mode of thinking which supports the existence of a linear evolution in lieu of a dialectic improvement, and legitimatizing the dominance of Western cultures symbolizing the “advanced” level and the rest to be improved just in case they enter that linear path in that process of evolution.

The systematizer of evolutionist sociology and the theory of social improvement is Herbert Spencer. We see the footprints of Comte’s “law of three stages”⁴ in Spencer. He puts forward the principles of his evolutionist sociology in *First Principles* (London, 1870) and *Principles of Sociology* (Londra, 1875-96). Spencer was a prominent and brilliant representative of his time and exerted a serious influence upon the intellectual history of the late 19th century. Although he was a sociologist and philosopher, he seriously interested in biology. Spencer who convert their fundamental concepts from biology, tried to unify all human knowledge about the physical world in terms of “evolution” principle. He wrote in *The Principles of Sociology* that (in the introduction of volume I):

For example, in Biology the interpretation of function implies knowledge of the various physical and chemical actions going on throughout the organism. Yet these physical and chemical actions become comprehensible only as fast as the relations of structures and reciprocities of functions become known; and, further, these physical and chemical actions cannot be described without reference to the vital actions interpreted by them. Similarly in Sociology, it is impossible to explain the origin and development of those ideas and sentiments which are leading factors in social evolution, without refereeing directly or by implication to the phases of that evolution.

The famous social scientists of the era Henry Lewis Morgan, Ferdinand Tönnies and Emile Durkheim also followed this evolutionist line and the social science paradigm of the mentioned era was shaped in that way. Among them, without Morgan, Tönnies and Durkheim can be argued as the founders of structural-functionalist sociology. The academic father of this point of view in the discipline was Herbert Spencer who regarded the society as an organism. According to Tönnies, society has been evolved from *gemeinschaft* (community) to *gesellschaft* (society), and after Durkheim it has been moved from “mechanic solidarity” to “organic one”. It is the development of “division of labour” which set the organic solidarity. Like this, another sociologist Lester F. Ward wrote that human adaptation is a gradually enhanced linear-social dynamic which has teleological, circuitous, artificial, self-oriented

was not only the first person to use the terms “branch” and “ecology” but also the one who proposed the basic law of biogenetics which can be summarized as “bireyoluş” is the summary of phylogeny. Jeans, in his book could not detain himself from saying that “It was through the door of cosmogony that evolution entered the temple of science”. Francis Baker Mason was one of the first inventors of “intelligent design”. He emphasizes an improvement intrinsic to theory of evolution and the divine arrangement of this improvement.

⁴ “Law of three stages” [*la loi des trois états*] of Comte

and self-controlled. According to H.T. Buckle, the social dynamic can be summarized as while effects of physical laws minimize the effects of mental laws enhance (see Sorokin, 236-37). To summarize, social evolution is defined as an affirmative and linear process going from primitive to modern, from village society to urban society, from hunter-collector and agriculturist society to industrial society, from clan or tribe to nation, from a fighter and barbarous to peacemaker and civilized type of human, and from primary social relations to secondary, complex and contracted social relations. This, at the same time, is the history of civilizations and reflects the success of Western societies.

Among the most prominent social thinkers of the 19th century is, no doubt, Herbert Spencer. Spencer has affected many people and the thought of "Social Darwinism" was established in that way. The followers of Spencer have created a significant literature especially in America, England, and Germany. So, the mode of thinking named as "Social Darwinism" is the product of Victorian capitalism and the social philosophers like Herbert Spencer and a general discussion is still being carried out on this mode of thinking both on its sources and its effects.⁵ Benjamin Kidd who was regarded as one of the most significant "Social Darwinists" of his time, was affected also by Spencer, besides Darwin and Huxley (Crook, 1984:26). [Benjamin Kidd who is accounted one of the most important "Social Darwinists" of his time was deeply influenced by Spencer, with Darwin and Huxley]. With this influence on the ones of his time who wrote on social theory, like Benjamin Kidd, a great anthropomorphism was dominant. Parallelisms were being formed between the communal lives of animals in nature and human sociality and the relationship of sociality with organism was being produced from this point. Kidd was also an important nature observer and he had considered wild bees to represent an earlier evolutionary stage in the species' development, comparable to the family or clan stage of social organization". As a follower of Herbert Spencer's view of human society, he had argued that "The independence and welfare of the individual is still preserved, and the community still largely exists for the individual and not the individual for the community". Kidd had set a social progress theory through bees' life in his article in 1885: "The humble bee still barbarically focused on self, living a single-handed and self-reliant existence most of the year. Its survival depended on the existence of all its inherited intelligence. By comparison hive bees led a dull and regimented life. Half of their community was unsexed (neuters), the other half (drones) preserved their sex but had lost nearly everything else to become degraded victims of the meanest kind of slavery... But the species has prospered, the government is highly centralized, and the state is rich, populous. And powerful beyond comparison with its less civilized competitors. What are the lessons? Has progress been dearly bought as we should count the cost?" (Crook, 1984:30).

In this quotation we see that how the human concepts and the idea of social progress and its concepts easily adapted to animal kingdom; and the life cycles of animals are evaluated by a

⁵ See. Peter J. Bowler, *Evolution: The History of An Idea*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, 1984, pg.269-274; Richard Hofstadler, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1955; Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1945*, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

discourse of a hierarchy unique for mankind. This is one of the first instances of a discourse of mode of thinking which is wrongly named as “Social Darwinism” instead of being named as “sociobiology” which would better fit the concept.

Still in the 19th century, a critical stance indicating that this theory of evolutionist society cannot be applied to the society and the human has emerged. This stance is a “moralist” one and by appreciating the notion of “merit” in human, specifies a new position for it in history. This is a position in which a thought of progress considering the progress of mind and in the context of this progress human conditions are ordered hierarchically will never be able to be legitimized, and also it is a position, overflowing directly from the essence of the individual, and a thinking is carried on the values of all the solutions and produced and created in opposition to nature and conditions. This is a position in which an idea of humanity, not fighting to and becoming victorious against nature, but producing solutions without harming the decision of the nature and also sometimes submitting to its decisions, is thought. This expressivist world perception is after understanding the essence of human and thus follows it throughout history. All the human works are the conditions in which this essence is expressive whatever the action and the life, the dimension and the quality of the human is and history can only be read like this. Thus, the aim of history and other social sciences is not to discover the “laws” that are dominant on history and other social contexts, but to discern the depiction styles of the essence of human in history (expressivism) and “to try to understand” these in that historical context. The forms in which the essence of human is expressed in history is the “cultures”. So, since each various culture (the expression forms of the human essence) has a possibility to evaluate the nature, human and society and since it is not possible to construct a hierarchical relationship among all these, there is no one single right way of living, no one single “form of perceiving”. This understanding set forth relativism. But while looking at the objects it is not possible for each way of looking be considered “to be right on its own terms” because “positive sciences” have proved that a certain way of looking has produced more doubtless, clearer, and righter knowledge with their findings. So the problem is whether the human and the society can be regarded as “object” or not. The Spencer – style understanding of human and society has been criticized since it considers human and society “as an object” and challenged by the emergence of a category of science of nous (geisteswissenschaften) or culture sciences (kulturwissenschaften) which tends to study the human and the society in the context of “meaning”.

While it is possible to use the methodology of the thought of science of nous or culture sciences while we look at the history itself, or the networks of human relationships, or human mind products (mythology, kinship, language, religion, folklore, etc.) and to produce meaningful texts based on this methodology; a debatable condition emerges at the grey zone existing in the intersection point of the world of objects and the world of human. Especially, the biological evolution history of human and the production of knowledge on the objective existence of human clashes with the view point considering

the human through the world of “values” and “meanings”⁶. The Darwin thought on itself is one of these testimonies in this respect. As Carl Degler indicates Darwinian thought “...was paradoxical because in showing that nature changed over time, Darwin simultaneously made nature a more powerful influence on human thought” (Degler, 1991:5). The mathematical tries of making relationship and positivist determinism which do not work or seem to be deficient while inspecting social networks, always works well in this grey zone. It is this condition that encourages Spencer and sociobiology fans following him, or the emotion which lay beneath their claims to explain successfully the relationships in the field of humanities who study in the field of natural sciences is the continuous achievements in the field of natural sciences and their partly domination on this grey zone. Darwin and his findings are much abused just on that point. This abuse is bilateral: while, on one hand, there exists the followers of sociology which is a pseudo-science, have been translating the findings of Darwin to the world of human in such kind of a rough positivist tendency; on the other hand, there exists the consideration of Darwin by postmodernists who see that the Darwinist point of view is used especially in order to legitimize the bad human practices such as eugenicism, racism, and war, or the humanist social scientists who can easily set this relationship with the ignorance in biological sciences.

In terms of both the two types of abuse, the overflow of Darwin’s observations on natural world and his inferences based on these observations without taking into consideration the context he proposed and the framework he drew, and an overgeneralization by taking it off its content is under consideration, and this attitude is problematic on its own. For example, nowhere within the *Origin of Species* is evolution or natural selection applied to human beings. Darwin only says in the last page of *Origin of Species* that “much light will be thrown on the origin of man and history”. However, *Descent of Man* which has been written twelve years later from *Origin of Species* by Darwin, appeared an evolutionary theory for human beings explicitly including the human beings in evolution related with all other animals from single-cell organism to complex one, as shaped by natural selection.

Darwin’s idea proposing that human is under the control of the same evolutionary mechanism with all the animate is provocative for his time. Apart from his placing the human in general evolutionary

⁶ Darwinian revolution proved that the conceptual tools and the way of observation used while inspecting the alternations in the world of animates may also be used while inspecting the biological alternation of the human, since human does not belong to a different category in terms of his biological hardware, moreover he is in a definite relationship of kinship with the other members of the world of animates. On the other hand, while human does not have a difference in terms of his biological hardware, and the processes of its formation and alternation, ontologically he has created a different world: World of culture. If one turns to Hartmann’s ontology, human is the member of the “psychic” and “historical” existence zones besides “organic existence zone”. Historical existence zone is the one which is unique for human and does not have an existence for other species. (see. Hartmann, 1942/1968). This existence zone which we may also call “suprarorganic”, i.e. the artifacts that human created out of nature, the world of values, meanings, and norms, or in a different way of naming, the phenomenon related with the space of existences produced by the flow of human mind thorough time is not comprehensible via the conceptual and methodological tools we use while we are looking at the world of objects in which there exists also the biological existence zone. The source of this dilemma is here.

mechanism (thus, taking the human down from his throne where he was put at the top among all animate being), three false premises were purported from Darwin's writings in *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man*:

1) Darwin's evolutionary derivation theory mentions a hierarchy among animate beings and Darwinist point of view forms a scientific base for the construction of a racist hierarchy among humans by carrying this onto human.

2) Darwin gives the nature a divine responsibility in the mechanism of natural selection and under this pressure of selection "the strong species survive", and the rest disappears. This point of view has been translated to the human world as the strong "races" stand still and develop, and the ones who are weak are either vanished or underdeveloped. So, the matter of being developed-underdeveloped is not a matter of exploitation but the law of nature. In that respect the war is also a valid (moreover "useful") mechanism in terms of the "elimination of the worthless". This point of view merges with Malthusian mind at that point⁷. Especially, Darwin's concepts such as "fight for survival" and "survival success" have been abused in that respect.

3) Man evolved from the ape. Apes are the immediate ancestors of man. Therefore, the holiness that man attributed to himself does not have any basis. Even some human races are closer to apes. This inference, adopted by the religious groups, is the point where they attack Darwinism. Certainly Darwinism hits the idea of 'noble creature' (Eşref-i mahlukat), but it is not the way intended in this inference.

Here we are dealing with the first two inferences. The fallacy of the last inference has been proved by the works of biology and anthropology innumerable times. Unfortunately, the first two inferences are in the minds of the positivist scientists who have a mechanistic viewpoint and in the center of the postmodernist enlightenment criticism.

1) Darwin's "racism" tried to be proven in a primitive way by underlining the word 'race' in the subtitle of the book *The Origin of Species*. However, Darwin's attitude towards variation in population is far

⁷ Malthus said that a balance to be formed between the world population which increases in a geometrical speed and the natural sources that are limited and just can be improved by an arithmetical speed can only be realized by population planning. For him, this planning can just can be a product of a policy. This policy should prevent the reproduction of socio-economically low classes and uncivilized societies, therefore, the social support policies should be abandoned. Malthus argued that population was held within resource limits by two types of checks: positive ones, which increased the death rate, and *preventative* ones, which diminish the birth rate. The positive checks such as hunger, disease and war; the preventative checks, abortion, birth control, prostitution, postponement of marriage, and celibacy. According to him these factors work freely and states must be stopped their assistance to poor and given up to support lower classes. And it must be applied some techniques among men similar to that among animal husbandry. This viewpoint is the precursor of Francis Galton's approach defined as eugenics in 1883. See Malthus, 1798, 1960.

from racism. His attitude inclined to geographical and ecological explanation. Darwin notes that (1874:190)

...Geographical distribution is often brought into play unconsciously and sometimes consciously; so that forms living in two widely separated areas, in which most of the other habitants are specifically distinct, are themselves usually looked at as distinct; but in truth this affords no aid in distinguishing geographical races from so-called good or true species...

Darwin's use of the word race in his various writings aroused curiosity about the origins of racism among the groups with a literal view. However, this notion was meant to be used for 'species' especially when the subject is about animals. Furthermore, in the language of 19th century 'race' was a notion referring to ethnicity rather than biological species. In the 18th and early 19th century literature, this concept was used as 'human race' with semantic extension. On the other hand, socio-biologists called Social Darwinists and racists directly focus on the concept of 'power' and then they move to the concept of 'war'. The ones who lay the theoretical foundations of racism, in general, are in pursuit of the basic argument which can legitimize the practice of the Western world; the colonization of the rest of the world. This argument, directly based on the idea that colonized societies are on the 'lower levels' of the cultural evolution hierarchy and they are considered as 'less human' compared to the Europeans. Furthermore, racism, in principle, concerned with 'discovering' the biological causes of this situation (being culturally underdeveloped). Theory of Evolution in this sense, provides an appropriate ground for abuse of it. But, a wrong one... Therefore, to propose a direct relationship between evolutionism and racism results in a kind of essentialism. For this reason, as the concept of hierarchy of races on which White man stick had appeared long before the popularization of Darwin's Evolution Theory. This discussion continued in Darwinian period and Darwin's ideas on the issue of how races are closely related came to the fore⁸. However, among the ones who inflicted this burden upon Darwin were important scientists like Marvin Harris and Jacques Barzun (see 1965:135)⁹. Because the hypothesis adopted by racism was polygenism rather than Darwin's Theory which implies single origin. There were various arguments and approaches on the problem of human nature at the end of 18th century and in early 19th century. The idea of 'monogenism' posits a single origin of humanity whereas polygenism posits multiple origin. In 19th and 20th centuries this was the

⁸Peter J. Bowler, *Evolution...*, p. 282

⁹Barzun considered the words 'struggle' and 'race' in Darwin's book as an evidence for Darwin's racism. However, as shown in this particular article to relate these concepts with racism is impossible. Some scientists claim that Darwin used the word *struggle* in order to explain "why some races can not reach the level of others". Another local scientist who saw no harm in putting Darwin among the racist scientists did not consider translating the name of Darwin's book inspired by Barzun's conclusions as "The Origin of Species Through Natural Selection" or "The Survival of the Competent Races in Life Struggle" as problematic (see Maksudyan 2005:20). Darwin asserts that he used the concepts struggle and even natural selection as a metaphor. However, as pointed out above, to interpret the word 'race', used in the sense of 'species', as racial group indicates the ignorance about the language of the period and semantic displacements throughout history.

major argument in the fields of anthropology and biology and it is difficult to claim that throughout this period the idea/argument of polygenism won out¹⁰. Today, as Darwin had predicted long before¹¹, it is widely accepted that the progenitors of man was originated in Africa and spread out to the world.

2) In the passages of *Descent of Man*, Darwin has always defended that the principle of “survival of the fittest”, in spite of “survival of the powerful”. He has justified the principle in the frame of the “struggle for existence”. He wrote that ‘Man... has no doubt advanced to his present high condition through a struggle for existence’. According to Darwin, if the struggle for existence has been not a key role in the evolution and survival of the whole living species, we couldn’t find any living species in the earth. The ground of the differentiation of species throughout the evolution process is developing strategies of theirs under the stress of natural selection. Darwin, in some, was hardly free from the accoutrements of Social Darwinism (Degler, 1991:11). Because the Darwinian concept of “struggle” do not imply a voluntarily or teleological context. Darwin expresses an instinctive experience peculiar to all living species and he relates the concept of “struggle” with natural selection. Thus the historians of the period pointed out to Herbert Spencer rather than Darwin as a champion of social Darwinism (Degler 1991: 11). Also Darwin had been forcely stressed that “the term, struggle for existence” was used by himself “in a large sense”. He guaranteed us that he “use this term in a large and metaphorical sense including dependence of one being on another, and including (which is more important) not only the life of the individual, but success in leaving progeny...” (Darwin 1872: 52). Darwin also applied the same tender attitude towards the concept of “natural selection”. Darwin does not ignore emphasizing that he has used this concept, which has a key role in his theory, in the sense of “survival of the fittest” at the very beginning of the relevant part and states that (Darwin 1872:64):

¹⁰ For a symposium on these issues see Gunter Mann and Franz Dumant, (eds), *Die Natur Des Menschen: Probleme der physischen Anthropologie und Rassenkunde (1750-1850)*, Soemering-Forschungen, 6, akademie fur Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mains, Stuttgart, Gustav Fischer, 1990.

¹¹ “...In each great region of the world the living mammals are closely related to extinct species of the same region. It is, therefore, probable that Africa was formerly inhabited by extinct apes closely allied to the gorilla and chimpanzee; and as these two species are now man’s nearest allies, it is somewhat more probable that our early progenitors lived on the African continent than elsewhere...” (Darwin 1874:177) This viewpoint, at the same time, is the major basis of humanist anthropology. ‘The Aboriginal Protection Society’ (APS) was one of the first anthropological associations whose major goal was to protect the indigenous people (Aborigines), who are harmed by the war and European migrants, from the ‘spread of civilization in this form’. This first association, which pursues a humanistic and religious goal, undertook the task of defending the Museum of ‘foreigners’ against civilization. At the same they undertook the duty of keeping those people away from the harmful effects of civilization and to find a more suitable way for civilization of those barbarous, dark skinned people. In 1839 by emulating APS another association was found in France called *Societe Ethnologique de Paris (SEP)*. In 1842 another association was found in London *Ethnological Society of London (ESL)*. The constitutional idea in those associations was the need of distinguishing the humanistic aims and the ethnological way of research. The motto of APS was *ab uno sanguine* (We’re from the same blood) (Stocking1970: 370-77).

In the literal sense of the word, no doubt, natural selection is a false term; but who ever objected to chemist speaking of the elective affinities of the various elements? –and yet an acid cannot strictly be said to elect the base with which it in preference combines. It has been said that I speak of natural selection as an active power or Deity; but who objects to an author speaking of the attraction of gravity as ruling the movements of the planets? Every one knows what it meant and is implied by such metaphorical expressions; and they are almost necessary for brevity. So again it is difficult to avoid personifying the word Nature; but I mean by Nature, only the aggregate action and product of many natural laws, and by laws the sequence of events as ascertained by us. With a little familiarity such superficial objections will be forgotten.

In opposite with this sensitive use, according to Spencer governments and other social and political institutions operates as the “natural” processes of the social order. Spencer wrote that if we do not believe a social order in which concordant with natural law, it shouldn't be entirely argued the sociology as a science (See Spencer 1873: Conclusion). Spencer's conception of the term “natural” does not concord with the operation of the principle of the survival of the fittest. He defends that the modern social and political organizations have an inheritive excellency. According to him those institutions have acquired characters due to eliminating those of wrong, unpowerful and injury in the historical process in opposition with Darwinian view of selection due to the survival of the fittest, rather his conception is adjacent to the inheritance of acquired characters of Lamarck (Swingewood 1998: 74) and epigenesis theory of von Baer¹². Therefore, such statements has been assessed by some historians as the “social Spencerism” is a more accurate label for the concept of social Darwinism (Degler 1991: 11). Also Marvin Harris, in spite of their insistance of Darwinian effects on racism, has preferred the term of “Spencerism” in his book, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* (1968)¹³. Because, Spencerian sense of evolution coincides with a moral position which implies good against bad or true against wrong in an historical (evolutionary) perspective, in terms of rising colonialist experience of Victorian Britain. Ones who survive, at the same time, ones who right and true.

The adaptation of Darwinian concepts to the world or the vice versa, the idea that Darwin chooses his biological concepts inspired by social relations in that society was a frequently used argument among 19th century thinkers. For example, Marx identifies Darwin's ideas with his capitalism. He does not think Darwin's description of biology apart from the division of labor in the English society or its competition towards new markets. He thinks it together with Malthus' war of existence. Engels claims that Darwin's work is the exact transfer of Hobbes' doctrine of war. Furthermore, he thinks that with Malthus' theory of population, Darwin's work is the reflection of competitive bourgeois economic policy. Oswald Spengler defines Darwin's book *The Origin of Species* as the adaptation of economy

¹² The von Baerian formulation relies on embryological development. According to Baerian theory, in embryological development “there is gradually taking place a transition from something homogenous and general to something heterogeneous and special” (quoted in Mayr 1982: 473).

¹³ For instance Lester Frank Ward says that: “I have never seen anydistinctively Darwinian principle appealed to in the discussion of ‘social Darwinism’ ” (quoted in Degler 1991: 12).

to biology. The American social Darwinist Benjamin Kidd asserts that the concept of natural selection is the projection of the ethics of capitalism whose slogan is "let them do it" (Crook 1994:13). The most striking one of these fanatic explanations is identifying the metaphoric concepts of Darwin such as 'struggle' and 'war of survival' with human war.

War in human world is one of the major ways of struggle to survive. Malthus was one of the scientists who attracted attention to war. However, Malthus' issue was the role of the war against population growth rather than its selection effect. Malthus put war among the other population control devices. However, certainly this viewpoint was only popular in Bismarck Germany.

The ones who associate evolutionism with militarism and who explain economic imperialism with the methodology of *Lebensraum* ("Life-Space") were Germans. However, the real influencer of this thought in Germany was German biologist Ernest Haeckel who prepared the country intellectually for this thought rather than Darwin and Darwinism. His mystical, monist theory was open to polemics. His theory of cell and embryology considers man and nature together. (Crook 1994:30). Moreover, in Germany, before Darwin, there had been a belief supporting the idea that life was all about the war between cultures and nations. In addition to that there had been an effective custom of sociology, philosophy and history supporting the view that war was the force for development. Ranke and Treitschke were the powerful representatives of this idea. It also unionized Germany and became the complementary unit of nationalist German mentality like militarist, nationalist and invasive 'social Darwinism' which uses Darwin's concepts.

In 1880's and 90's the influence of powerful and attractive Darwinian concepts encompassed the soul of German historicism. The effect became apparent among some historians like Wilhelm Bolsche, Ludwig Gumplowicz and Ratzehofer. The ideas of these people force Germany to take part in the 1st and 2nd World War and formed the theoretical basis of nationalism. This historicist thought defines war as the major way of development and the war between nations and cultures is considered as the only way of the survival of a society. Furthermore, it was establishing the biological base of legitimacy of irredentism by saying that it is natural for a nation, which succeeded to survive, to spread till the boundaries of *Lebensraum* which will provide its vitalism. The apex of this thought appeared in the works of the bright German philosopher Carl Schmitt.

Carl Schmitt's political theory puts politics before government and defines it as a basic human dynamics. Politics is the only guiding and determining human activity and government, one of the major products of human existence, is the product of politics. According to Schmidt, the division of friend and enemy is the major aspect of politics. Political enemy refers to the 'other' or 'foreigner'. The enemy is public, in terms of its being perceived as an opponent against a whole consisted of human. The concept of enemy involves the potential of real 'struggle' and has an existential meaning. This quality separates it from intellectual, symbolic and superficial form of struggle. In fact the whole life is a kind of struggle and each human is a struggler. War is the result of hostility and with this aspect it is

the incarnated form of politics. If there is war, there will be struggle and war, the extreme form of struggle (see Schmitt 1927).

CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper is to show that the concept of social Darwinism, per se prejudice, and its content is irrelevant with the Darwin's ideas and work. It also aimed at pointing out the drawbacks created by the thought proposing that the accumulation of knowledge and theories pertaining to world of objects could be transferred clumsily to the world of human or the explanations related to the world of objects have also the ability to explain the world of human via the Darwinian practice and the way its being treated (by the way the unfair treatment of Darwin and his thought). The explanation of the supraorganic world related to human necessitates other ways of thinking and other methodologies. It is possible to say that this reflection has been carried out for a long time and has been successful. However, this settlement consist an extreme tendency which might result in a change in the direction. The danger appears in the form of a discussion about the ways of producing positive information and the how incorrect and malign is the success of it. The implications about the possibility of other ways for explaining the world of objects which is related with positive thinking and use the ways of positive explanations (at least for the time being) failed in practice. Thus the theory of Darwin succeeded to stand still by being supported and amended because it has a direct perspective towards the world. Therefore, this viewpoint is contra to the minimalist perspective that is produced by the opponents who think that human world can only be explained with the positive methodology.

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