

Ethics after Darwin

Ethics and Public Policy in the Light of Evolutionary Theory

A workshop organized by

The Prindle Institute of Ethics and the Evolution Institute

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Prindle Institute of Ethics

DePauw University

Greencastle, Indiana

Ethical inquiry requires assumptions about human nature. In the past, these assumptions have been based on intuition or scientific knowledge available at the time. Today, we are witnessing an explosion of knowledge about the nature of our species from an evolutionary perspective.

“Ethics after Darwin” will bring authorities on evolution together with ethicists to consider the implications of modern evolutionary science for ethical inquiry and the formulation of ethical public policies. The workshop will review the history of evolutionary ethics and will explore the relevance of modern evolutionary science for contemporary issues such as sex discrimination, the environment, and social equality.

One purpose of the workshop is to create a permanent framework for examining the ethical implications of policies formulated by the Evolution Institute, which provides a conduit from the world of evolutionary science to the world of public policy formulation.

For more information, contact Martha Rainbolt at rainbolt@depauw.edu

Participants

Patricia Gowaty

Patricia A. Gowaty is Distinguished Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at UCLA. As an evolutionary (behavioral) ecologist, Dr. Gowaty asks questions about selective forces shaping phenotypic variation in behavior that result in patterns of social organization. She is author of *Feminism and Evolutionary Biology - Boundaries, intersections and frontiers*. She is formerly Professor of Ecology at the University of Georgia and President of the Animal Behavior Society. She has also served as Vice-President of the American Ornithologists' Union. She was elected to the "Committee of 100," also known as the International Ornithological Committee, the governing body of the International Ornithological Congress. Dr. Gowaty received the "K-award" Independent Scientist Award from NIMH (competitively renewed 1995 and 1997), and the Lamar Dodd Award for Creative Research from the University of Georgia.

Stephen Hubbell

Stephen P. Hubbell is chairman of the National Council for Science and the Environment. He is a Distinguished Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of California, Los Angeles. Dr. Hubbell was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1984 and was a Pew Scholar in Conservation and the Environment from 1990-1992. In 1992 he received the Distinguished National Service Award from the Society for Conservation Biology. Hubbell is author to more than one hundred papers in tropical plant ecology, theoretical ecology, and plant-animal interactions. Recently, he published *The Unified Neutral Theory of Biodiversity and Biogeography* at Princeton University Press. Dr. Hubbell's principal research concerns the ecology and management of tropical rain forests.

William Hurlbut

William B. Hurlbut is a physician and Consulting Professor at Stanford University Medical Center's Neuroscience Institute. He is the author of numerous publications on science and ethics including the co-edited volume *Altruism and Altruistic Love: Science, Philosophy, and Religion in Dialogue* and "Science, Religion, and Human Spirit" in the forthcoming Oxford Handbook of Science and Religion. He is also co-chair of two interdisciplinary faculty projects at Stanford University, "Becoming Human: The Evolutionary Origins of Spiritual, Religious, and Moral Awareness," and "Brain, Mind, and Emergence." Since 2002 he has served on the President's Council on Bioethics. He is the author of *Altered Nuclear Transfer*, a proposed technological solution to the moral controversy over embryonic stem cell research.

Melvin Konner

Melvin Konner is the author of *The Tangled Wing: Biological Constraints on the Human Spirit* (a 1982 American Book Award nominee). He has written or contributed to nine other books including *Medicine at the Crossroads: The Crisis in Health Care*, *Unsettled: An Anthropology of the Jews*, and *The Evolution of Childhood: Relationships, Emotion, Mind*. Dr. Konner is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a member of the Board of Trustees of the Russell Sage Foundation. He has testified twice at United States Senate Committee hearings on health care reform and on the care of the dying. He holds Ph.D. and M.D. degrees from Harvard University, and is Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor in the Department of Anthropology and the Program in Neuroscience and Behavioral Biology. He spent two years among the !Kung San (Bushmen), and has taught at Harvard and then at Emory, for over 30 years. He teaches courses on human biology, human brain/behavior relations, biological approaches to childhood, human nature, medicine and society, and the anthropology of the Jews.

Janet Radcliffe-Richards

Janet Radcliffe-Richards is Professor of Practical Philosophy and Distinguished Research Fellow at the Oxford Uehiro Centre. She was until 2007 Director of Bioethics in the medical school at University College London, and previously a member of the Philosophy Department of the Open University. She originally worked on metaphysics and philosophy of science, but for many years now has concentrated on the practical applications of philosophy, with books on topics such as feminism (*The Skeptical Feminist*, 1980), discrimination and inequality (*Philosophical Problems of Equality*, 1996) and the implications of Darwinian theory (*Human Nature after Darwin*, 2000). She is currently preparing her UCL work on medical ethics for publication, but hopes afterwards to return to her work on discrimination and equality, on the complex connections between science and ethics, and on techniques of practical reasoning in general.

Sahotra Sarkar

Sahotra Sarkar is a philosophy professor and integrative biologist at the University of Texas at Austin. He is a noted critic of creationism and intelligent design. He describes his current research in this way: "The major thrust of our research is in systematic biodiversity conservation and restoration planning, in particular, the design of conservation area networks." He has published widely, including *Doubting Darwin: Creationist Designs of Evolution* (2010) and *Systematic Conservation Planning: Ecology, Biodiversity and Conservation* (2007), and *Biodiversity and Environmental Philosophy: An Introduction* (2005).

Julie Seaman

Julie Seaman is an associate professor of law at Emory University, where she teaches courses on evidence, constitutional law, and hate speech. She received her BA degree from the University of Pennsylvania (summa cum laude) and her JD from Harvard (magna cum laude), where she was an editor of the *Harvard Law Review* and a teaching assistant for the federal litigation course. Her article, "Form and (Dys)Function in Sexual Harassment Law: Biology, Culture, and the Spandrels of Title VII" was awarded the first Society for Evolutionary Analysis in Law (SEAL) Junior Faculty Writing Prize. The article explains sexual harassment law in a nuanced and sophisticated fashion through the use of evolutionary biology. Though she has no formal training in evolutionary biology or evolutionary psychology, she became intrigued with these subjects several years ago when she happened upon an article that used evolutionary theory to argue that laws against sex discrimination in the workplace were misguided.

David Sloan Wilson

David Sloan Wilson is President of the Evolution Institute and Professor of Biology and Anthropology at Binghamton University (State University of New York). His main area of research is evolution. He is perhaps best known for his work on multilevel selection, in which the fundamental ingredients of evolution-variation, heritability, and fitness differences can exist at all levels of the biological hierarchy, from genes to ecosystems. His publications include *Evolution for Everyone: How Darwin's Theory Can Change the Way We Think About Our Lives* and *The Neighborhood Project: Using Evolution to Improve my City, One Block at a Time*, which will be published in August 2011. Dr. Wilson manages a number of programs designed to expand the influence of evolutionary theory in higher education, public policy, community-based research, and religion. He received the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities in 2003. He received his Ph. D. from Michigan State.

Schedule

The workshop includes blocks of time for the participants and Prindle faculty to meet without an audience to discuss the prospects for a new evolutionary ethics, including an infrastructure for considering the ethical dimensions of policies formulated by the Evolution Institute. These sessions will alternate with lectures and discussions in front of an audience, meetings with classes that have been reading in preparation, and free time for reflection and conversation at the Prindle Institute's beautiful facility.

April 25

Arrival and informal dinner for those who arrive in time

April 26

09:00-11:00 1st participant-only session
11:30-13:00 Lunch/meet with students
13:15-16:00 Free time/meet with students
16:00-21:00 First public session
16:15-16:30 Introduction by David Sloan Wilson
16:30-17:15 Melvin Konner
17:15-18:00 Janet Radcliffe-Richards
18:00-18:30 Reception
18:30-19:30 Dinner
19:30-20:15 Julie Seaman
20:15-21:00 Patricia Gowaty

April 27

09:00-11:30 2nd participant-only session
12:00-13:15 Lunch and conversation with William Hurlbut on
the John Templeton Foundation and the prospects for a new
evolutionary ethics.
13:15-16:00 Free time/meet with students
16:00-16:45 Stephen Hubbell
16:45-17:30 Sahotra Sarkar
17:30-18:00 Reception
18:00-19:30 Dinner
19:30-21:00 David Sloan Wilson

April 28

09:00-11:30 3rd Participant-only session
12:00-13:00 Lunch