

Darwin and Dewey

Charles Darwin (1809–1882)

Herbert Spencer (1820–1903)

John Dewey (1859–1952)

1. The origins of how we think about competition and cooperation.

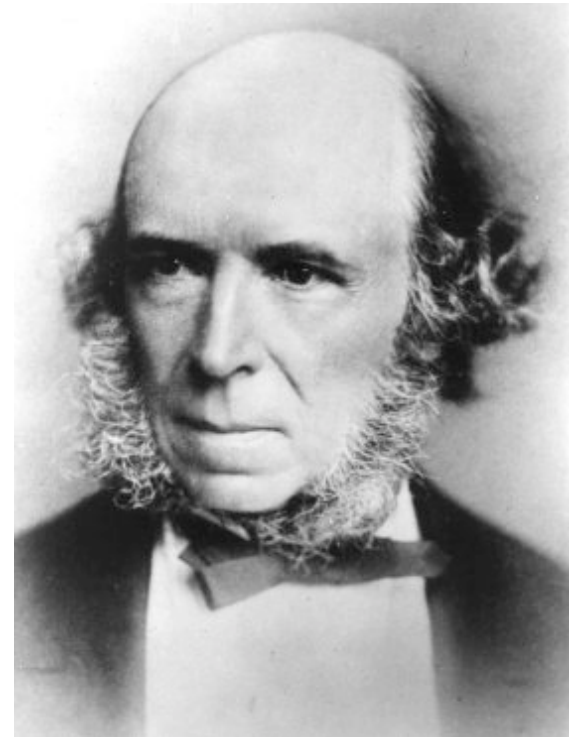
2. How this plays out in the consciousness and actions of modern U.S. citizens and society.

3. How we got to what we think of as "That's just natural."

“On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life,” by Charles Darwin

First edition Nov. 1859

“Survival of the fittest”: Herbert Spencer, not Darwin.



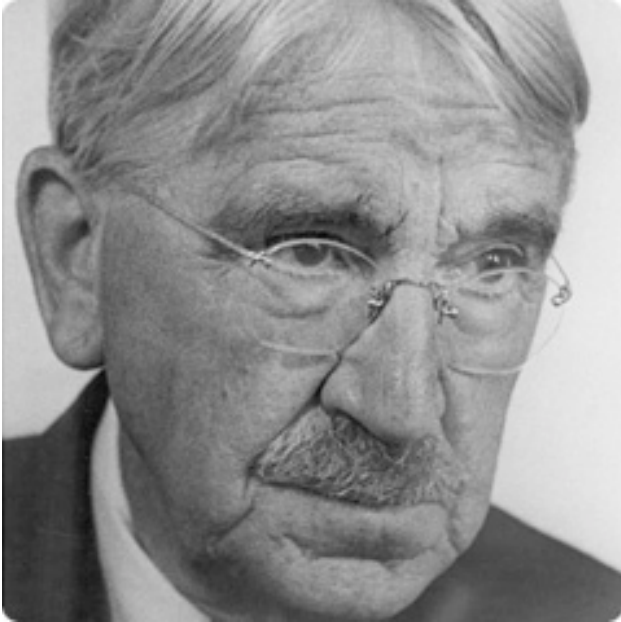
Charles Darwin (1809–1882)

Natural selection,
chance, adaptation.
This is Darwin.



Dewey on Darwin

“The conceptions that had reigned in the philosophy of nature and knowledge for two thousand years, the conceptions that had become the familiar furniture of the mind, rested on the assumption of the superiority of the fixed and final; they rested upon treating change and origin as signs of defect and unreality.”



“The opposite of intelligent method is no method at all or blind and stupid method”
--Dewey, Individualism, Old and New

"The School and Social Progress." Dewey, 1899

"What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy."

Our school methods, and to a very considerable extent our curriculum, are inherited from the period when learning and command of certain symbols, affording as they did the only access to learning, were all-important. The ideals of this period are still largely in control, even where the outward methods and studies have been changed....

In educational terms, this means that these occupations in the school shall not be mere practical devices or modes of routine employment, the gaining of better technical skill as cooks, seamstresses, or carpenters, but active centers of, scientific insight into natural materials and processes, points of departure whence children shall be led out into a realization of the historic development of man.