Thursday 8/27 Introduction and library orientation - WE START AT 8:15 AM!

Readings:

- Please read the syllabus carefully and bring in any questions about how this class will work.
- Preference and Introduction to *They Say I Say*.
- Read the creation story from the book of Genesis (B’reshit) in the Hebrew Bible (handout) from an anthropologist’s point of view. If this is a sacred text to you, try to step outside that understanding for the moment to reflect on what the creation story says to you about the culture from which it arose.

**Focus questions:** Does the creation story have a clear structure? In what way is the structure notable? What is the depicted relationship between humans and other life in this story? What is the depicted relationship between the creative force and humans?

Pre-class assignments:

1. Go to Burling library and locate the Iowa Reading Room. Ask the librarian in the Iowa Room to tell you about any resources there that might be relevant to the subject of this tutorial (Hint: look in the display area outside this room!). At the reference desk, introduce yourself to the librarian on call and ask about the best book s/he has read in the last year. Come to class prepared to tell me what you’ve found out.

2. Write a single, well-constructed paragraph that, in a single coherent argument, addresses at least two of the focus questions. You may quote the text at most twice in the paragraph, and then only in brief. Do not use other quotations or sources. Bring a printed copy of your paragraph to class.
Tuesday 9/1: Creation myths

The goals of this class period are to appreciate how human cultures vary in their origin stories (or “creation myths”) and to consider what meaning these stories may bring to the people who live in that culture. This should help us understand why the story of the origin of species developed by Darwin, and Western science in general, has cultural ramifications.

Readings:

• Use library resources to find a translation of a creation myth from the culture that you’ve chosen. Choose an excerpt to share with the class. I’ll ask you to read it aloud. Email me an electronic copy of the myth by 11:59 PM on Monday, so I can make copies for everyone. The excerpt should be less than 1 page typed and take 3-5 minutes to read aloud. Make sure you include the source for your myth on the page! You are not required to send in discussion questions for this class.

Focus questions:

1. What similarities/differences does this creation myth have with other origin stories with which you are familiar?

2. For your myth, what is the depicted relationship between humans and other life? What is the depicted relationship between the creative force and humans?

Writing assignment due today (email by 1 p.m.): One-paragraph answer to 8/27 focus question.

Upcoming Writing assignment (due 9/8 by 1 pm): Write a 500-word essay that compares/contrasts the creation myth you found with that in the Hebrew Bible. Make sure your essay discusses how the myths reflect (or create?) differences between the two cultures. You may assume your reader has read the first 2 chapters of Genesis and the excerpt you brought into class today. Do not use any references besides the two texts.

Thursday 9/3: Darwin’s mechanism of evolution

Readings:

• Evolution of Racism (ER): Ch. 1
• Excerpt from Origin of Species by Darwin (Handout pages 1-9)
• Tennyson and Dillard poem excerpts (below)
• Chapters 1-2 of They Say, I Say

Submit a question for discussion via email by Wednesday at 11:59 pm!
Focus questions:

1. What personality traits of Darwin were important in determining the nature of his thesis and the circumstances surrounding its publication? (ER)
2. What is the goal of the “Introduction” to the Origin of Species? How does Darwin structure this short chapter to achieve these goals? (Handout)
3. For each chapter excerpt from The Origin of Species, write a short paragraph condensing the logic of Darwin's argument.
4. What elements of a “darwinian” view of the world are apparent in the two poems? Based on what you’ve read of Darwin so far, can you find differences from a d arwinian worldview?

From In Memoriam A.H.H. by Alfred Tennyson – 1850


LIV
Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last--far off--at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

LV
The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LVI
'So careful of the type?' but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries, 'A thousand types are gone:
I care for nothing, all shall go.

'Thou makest thine appeal to me:
I bring to life, I bring to death:
The spirit does but mean the breath:
I know no more.' And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law?
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed?
Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behide the veil, behind the veil.

From Pilgrim at Tinker's Creek -- by Annie Dillard -- 1974

I am a frayed and nibbled survivor
In a fallen world, and I am getting along.
I am aging and eaten and have done my share
Of eating too. I am not washed and beautiful,
In control of a shining world in which everything fits,
But instead am wandering awed about on a splintered wreck
I’ve come to care for, whose gnawed trees breathe
A delicate air, whose bloodied and scarred creatures
Are my dearest companions, and whose beauty beats and shines
Not in its imperfections but overwhelming in spite of them.
Tuesday 9/8: Darwin's argumentation

Reading (download from class web page):

- Recapitulation and Conclusion to *Origin of Species* (1859, 1st ed.) (Online handout pages 9-16)
- *On the Tendency of Varieties to Depart Indefinitely From the Original Type* (1858) by A.R. Wallace (Online handout)
- *In a Different Kingdom*, Paula V. Smith (Handout)

Submit a question for discussion by 11:59 on Monday

Focus questions:

1. Outline the structure of Darwin’s final chapter. Does it have a good structure for a "conclusion?"

2. What is the logical structure of Darwin's arguments in support of his theory? Does each paragraph have a similar structure?

3. At the bottom of p. 5 Darwin states the "chief cause" for resistance to his theory. Do you agree, or are there more important causes?

4. What scientific and philosophical consequences of his theory does Darwin identify at the end of the book? Was he correct in his predictions of how biology would be altered by this theoretical shift? Which do you believe are most important?

5. How were Wallace’s descriptions of the mechanism of evolution distinct from Darwin’s?

**Writing assignment due today** (1pm): Write a 500-word essay that compares/contrasts the creation myth you found with that in the Hebrew Bible. **Say something here about comparison between means to end, rather than end in itself** **Say something about the need to focus on the texts themselves**

**Writing assignment due on 9/15** (1 pm): Answer one of the focus/discussion questions from 9/8 or 9/10 in a single paragraph (200 word max). Put the question at the top of the page. Make sure it’s an interesting question. And an interesting answer!
Thursday 9/10: T.H. Huxley: Darwin's Bulldog

Reading:

Evolution of Racism (ER): Chapters 2 and 3
T.H. Huxley, *On the relations of Man to the lower Animals* (download from class webpage)
Chapter 3 of *They Say I Say*

*Submit a question for discussion by 11:59 on Wednesday*

Focus questions:

- In what ways were Darwin and Huxley's personal histories and personalities similar? different? How did their scientific philosophies compare?

- What do you conclude about the nature of Victorian science based on the picture painted by Shipman in these chapters? Do you believe that scientific controversies are settled in a similar manner today?

- Outline the logic of Huxley's arguments about the origins of humans. What are the philosophical implications of his conclusions excerpted at the bottom of page 65?
Week 4 -- Darwinism in literature

Tuesday 9/15

Reading: *Morpho Eugenia* from Angels and Insects by A.S. Byatt, pp. 1-84

Submit a question for discussion by 11:59 PM on Monday.

Focus questions:

1. From its first page, this novella is characterized by analogies and parallels. Keep track of the major kinds of parallels drawn by the author, and by the characters themselves. How are they used? What patterns of meaning do they reveal or suggest?

2. A remarkable feature of the narrative is its use of inset texts. Examine the two from today's reading, the section from Adamson's journal and the story of Cupid and Psyche. What is the relationship between these inset texts and the main narrative? What is their significance?

3. "Morpho Eugenia" is written in the tradition of historical fiction, narrative fiction that is meant to "realize" the past by representing it both vividly and accurately. Consider the following questions related to this goal:
   a. What is the effect of Byatt basing her protagonist on A.R. Wallace?
   b. If we take her portrayal of 1860's England as accurate, what picture of the place and time does she paint? What were Victorians’ major concerns, fears, desires? What social and cultural forces were they grappling with? What relation to literature did they have? To science?

Writing assignment due today (1pm): Answer one of the focus/discussion questions from 9/8 or 9/10 in a single paragraph (200 word max). Put the question at the top of the page. Make sure it’s an interesting question. And an interesting answer!

Writing assignment due on 9/22 (1 pm): 500-word (max) essay: Choose a scene from the novella and argue for its importance in the narrative and/or for a theme that Byatt is developing.
Thursday 9/17

Submit a question for discussion by 11:59 PM on Wednesday.

Reading: *Morpho Eugenia* pp. 84-end.

Focus questions:

- Consider the two major inset texts of the second half of the novella, Adamson's book (pp. 113-115, 116-120, 127-133) and the long fairy tale that Matty Crompton writes (pp. 137-160). Consider what the main concern of each text is and develop an argument for its importance as a parallel to the main narrative.

- Consider Harald Alabaster's writings and Adamson's response as an example of the philosophical/religious conflict brought about by Darwin's work.

- Consider the developing relationship between Adamson and Matty Crompton during the second half of the novella. How is this used to drive the narrative forward? What insights does it give you with respect to the position of women during this time?
Week 5

9/22 -- Angels and Insects -- film based on Morpho Eugenia

I’ll show the film on Sunday afternoon (9/20) from 3-5 pm in the classroom (I’ll contact you if the location needs to be changed).

Let’s meet for a discussion of the film over breakfast at the JRC – we’ll meet in one of the upstairs rooms, as we did on the first day. **Please come through the line to get your breakfast and be ready to discuss the film by 8:45 AM.**

You needn’t submit questions for discussion, but please come to breakfast having thought about the film critically, with the following in mind:

1. How has the effect of the narrative been altered by its presentation in this form? What aspects are weakened or missing? Strengthened?
2. What qualities of the characters have the actors brought to their performances that are their own invention (i.e., not those of A.S. Byatt)?

**Writing assignment due today** (1 pm): 500-word (max) essay: Choose a scene from the novella and argue for its importance in the narrative and/or for a theme that Byatt is developing.

**Writing assignment due on 9/29** (1 pm): Complete the assignment on pages 29-33 of the Academic Honesty handbook. Use the text section on pages 108-9 of the Evolution of Racism, beginning with the last paragraph "Herbert Spencer was among . . ." and ending with " . . . natural selection would act mechanically." Your four paragraphs together do NOT have to constitute a paper; in fact, they may attempt to summarize the same aspect of the excerpt. Each may also focus on a subset of the excerpt, as you see fit. Please use the MLA style for citation and referencing your source for this exercise.


Submit a question for discussion by 11:59 PM on Wednesday

These chapters consider the acceptance of Darwin's theory in Germany, highlighting the roles of Rudolph Virchow and Ernst Haeckel.

1. Shipman paints a sharp contrast between the nature of science, scientific society, and the nature of politics in England and Germany. Characterize these differences and consider their importance to the way in which Darwinism became accepted in Germany.

2. At the end of Chapter 5, Shipman states, "Between them, Virchow and Haeckel defeated empirical science in Germany altogether." Evaluate this claim critically. Were they bad scientists? Were they different types of scientists? How did their political convictions influence with their scientific philosophies, or, conversely, did their philosophies determine their political views?
Week 6 -- Evolution and Racism through the world wars

9/29 -- Chaps 6 and 7 of The Evolution of Racism, and excerpts from Darwin's Descent of Man [online – see link on webpage]

Submit a question for discussion by 11:59 PM on Monday

1. Characterize Darwin's views of human racial variation, as depicted in these excerpts, in light of the use of evolutionary arguments in favor of racial differences.

2. In Chapt. 6, Shipman traces the origins of the eugenics movement in England and America and its ties to ideas of "Social Darwinism." What features of Spencer's social philosophy are tied directly to Darwinian principles? Which features are not derived from Darwin, and what might be their origins? Consider carefully the logic of Galton, Pearson and other eugenicists arguments as they move from descriptions of human similarities across generations to social policy. What assumptions do they make? Are they defensible at all?

3. Why was the social outcome of the eugenics movement so much more extreme in Germany than in England or America (or was it)? Consider the different political conclusions drawn from eugenic principles, as well as economic and historical factors.

Writing assignment due today (1pm): Complete the assignment on pages 29-33 of the Academic Honesty handbook. Use the text section on pages 108-9 of the Evolution of Racism, beginning with the last paragraph "Herbert Spencer was among . . ." and ending with " . . . natural selection would act mechanically." Your four paragraphs together do NOT have to constitute a paper; in fact, they may attempt to summarize the same aspect of the excerpt. Each may also focus on a subset of the excerpt, as you see fit. Please use the MLA style for citation and referencing your source for this exercise.

Writing assignment due on 10/6 (1 pm): Find a popular article (from a magazine or newspaper op-ed page or online source) from the last five years that addresses some aspect of the biology of human ethnic/racial variation. Summarize the article in 1-2 paragraphs (no commentary necessary).

10/1 -- Chaps. 8 and 9 of The Evolution of Racism
Excerpt from The Science of Life (1929) by H.G. Wells, J.S. Huxley, and G.P. Wells (handout)

Submit a question for discussion by 11:59 PM on Wednesday

1. In Chapt 8, Shipman characterizes the response of some evolutionary biologists to social Darwinist views of racial differences. What is the basis of Huxley and Haddon's critique of racial biology?

2. Identify the key differences that split biology in the early part of the twentieth century, as well as the breakthroughs that reunited them. How was this "New Synthesis" view of evolution distinct from a purely Darwinian view (i.e., why is it called "neo-Darwinism")?

3. Chapter 9 chronicles the first post-war attempts to fashion a scientific response to the excesses of racial biology of the first half of the century. What new conflicts did this episode illuminate? What are the roots of the conflicts?
Week 7

10/6 – Chaps. 10, 11 and 12 of The Evolution of Racism.

Submit a question for discussion by 11:59 PM on Monday

- In chapter 10, Shipman describes conflicts over the understanding of human diversity by focusing on Carleton Coon and portraying him as caught between the opposing camps of Harvard physical anthropologists (Hooton and Sheldon) and the anti-racist evolutionists of the New Synthesis (Washburn, Montagu and Dobzhansky). What are some of the scientific errors made by the Harvard anthropologists? In Shipman's view, why is Coon unjustifiably ignored? Do you agree?

- Contrast Dobzhansky's view of human evolution with Coon's. Shipman is very openly advocating the position that Coon's was a reasonable theory that deserved consideration. Do you agree with this?

- Consider Dobzhansky's statement "It is the duty of a scientist to prevent misuse and prostitution of his findings." Marshal arguments both for and against this position.

Writing assignment due today (1pm): Find a popular article from the past five years that addresses some aspect of the biology of racial differences. Summarize the article in 1-2 paragraphs.

Oral presentation due next week: Deliver an oral presentation based on the popular article you found for the 10/6 assignment. In your presentation you should (1) summarize the arguments of the popular article, (2) explore the issues brought up in the articles by using information from 2 other sources (one may be a popular article with a different points of view of the same subject, but at least one should be a scholarly article). In your conclusion, you should state your evaluation of the effectiveness of the original article, including questions or problems raised by it. You’ll have 12 minutes for the presentation, leaving 3 minutes for questions from the audience.

10/8 -- Chaps 13, 14 and epilogue of The Evolution of Racism.

Submit a question for discussion by 11:59 PM on Wednesday

- Consider the story told in chapters 13 and 14 in light of the article you have selected for your paper. Are there common threads between this reading and the one you've chosen? Be prepared to discuss your article with the rest of the class.

- In the Epilogue, Shipman reviews some recent developments in human genetics and evolutionary biology in attempt to illustrate the value of the study of human variation. Are you convinced by her argument that we can do so AND avoid the traps of racism and typological thinking? Or do you agree "there are types of research that shouldn't be done?"
Week 8

Oral presentations
Week 9  Evolution and gender

10/27  -- Darwin’s analysis of gender differences

Class begins at 9 AM!  See below for assignment for individual meetings.

Readings (all available from the web page):

Charles Darwin. 1871. Excerpts from *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (2 documents)

How is Darwin’s approach to considering human gender differences similar or different to his way of considering other organisms?  Do you see evidence of bias in Darwin’s language or conclusions?

Submit a question for discussion by 11:59 PM on Monday

Assignment due next week (11/3):  Use library resources (print and/or online) to find a scholarly article about the biology of sex/gender differences or sexual behavior written during the past 5 years. Prepare a 300-word summary in your own words of the article’s argument. Please include a link or a pdf of the article when you email your summary.

10/29  -- Evolution and women’s rights in the 19th Century

Class begins at 9 AM!  See next page for assignment for individual meetings.


Submit a question for discussion by 11:59 PM on Wednesday

Assignment for midterm individual consultation meeting

Our group meetings will be shortened this week to give time for individual consultations with me about your progress in this class. Here are the directions:
1. Each of you should make an appointment for a 30 minute consultation with me sometime this week (consult my online calendar for free times).

2. 24 hours before the consultation, email me a “reflection” on your writing for this course so far. This assignment is not a piece of formal writing, but should be coherent, organized, and thoughtful. I will not grade this but will give you feedback. This is good practice since these sorts of reflections will be part of your final portfolio.

The content and length of your reflection is up to you, but at a minimum you should address the following points:

1. Describe the process of your writing for the two essays, i.e., how did you begin, when did you begin, did you do revision and how would you describe what that entailed, how have you used the feedback you’ve gotten from me and others?).

2. Has your writing process changed at all during the first half of the semester? What similarities and differences do you see in the writing you are doing in this class versus other classes?

3. What are the issues with writing that you think you need to work on the most? How do you plan to address those things?

4. What would you like me to know about your writing so far that you think I might have missed? Are there specific things I could do differently that can help you reach your writing goals?