

“Here’s to Pure Mathematics: may it never be of any use to anyone!”

Altering the Ground of a Culture of Argument

This paper examines a set of foundations for the dominant debate with the North American discipline of International Relations, between Realists and Liberals. It extends the Liberal side of this argument to a degree to incorporate other “Progressivists” as well. This foundation consists of the themes of society, progress, rationality and evolution. It is argued that, while this common ground for contention allows the debate to be conducted – with some profit – it also may undesirably confine how these elements are conceptualized or distort possibilities for different approaches. The paper suggests that the elements of the debate might thus be reconsidered, with a view to opening up the range of possibilities and escaping the undesirable effects of this debate.

Introduction

Unlike Pure Mathematics – which strangely has turned out to be of considerable use, at least in encryption – International Relations is an avowedly vulgar discipline. It was founded on the desire, the hope and an effort to make a difference in the world. It bases its appeal not simply on the wish to fulfill our curiosity about the nature and workings of the structures and processes of international relations, but also on our desire to make the world “a better place.” It appeals to our natural predilections to demonstrate our own righteousness and to expose the sins of others, to engage in Monday-morning quarterbacking and to give advice – whether or not solicited – to Princes. We argue with each other not only about how to explain and understand the world, but also about what we should attempt to do within it and how. There is a theoretical aspect to the study of IR, but there are also strong policy and ideological bents which may influence fundamentally the nature of our theoretical arguments.¹

On all three of these fronts, the discipline of International Relations in North America has long been structured largely along the lines of a divide between Realists of various more particular types and Liberals and broader “Progressivists”, again of various more particular types. Whether or not this debate gives an adequate or an accurate account of the actual history and character of the discipline is a separate issue (see, e.g., Schmidt 1998). For the purpose of this paper, it is enough that this structuring is currently and widely significant as a central line of division and debate. Nor does this deny that other schools may occasionally arise – Marxists formerly and now constructivists, for example – as potentially third sides. By and large, these third sides come and go, but the two main contenders persist at least in North America. Indeed, as noted below, the main contenders may even absorb elements of the third side, as well as of each other.

Well-established, long-running debates may have a number of beneficial properties and outcomes. They force proponents of the clashing positions to define, focus and strengthen their positions, and to test them against counter-arguments: the opposing sides whet their knives on each other. They may encourage not only a greater internal development of a position as it responds to outside criticism, but also an extension of its claims as it attempts both to accommodate such counter-arguments and to respond to new phenomena or new opportunities.

But there are also potential negative effects. The theoretical argument in International Relations may be dominated by programmatic/policy or ideological concerns, which shape the pattern of its development – the questions asked and the assessment of the answers, for example. The search may be not only for dominant probabilistic patterns and pathways but also for demonstrations of the possibility of specific paths to desirable futures. If a theory gives answers which are not those sought (for example, predicting failure in policy rather than success), it might be abandoned. A theory that fails to give the answer sought, even if it fails in interesting ways, may thus be given up and new paths to the desired goal sought, rather than the theoretical potential of its fruitful failure being exploited. Thus, Liberals may advance economic interdependence as the path to peace (a reprise of the earlier argument over free trade), and if that becomes unsustainable in the face of the Realist counter-attack, move on to something else (e.g., democratic peace theory, a reprise of Kant). In some cases, new phenomena may be addressed, but in others old arguments are unearthed, refurbished, and presented again.

Established debates may too easily both stimulate and limit theory by absorbing everything into existing quarrels. Much of the driving force of the argument may be linked to the basic debate rather than to the specifics of particular elements. A desire to deny the other and a fear of seeming to accept arguments put forward by the other, *because* they are put forward by the other, may lead to delays or denials in the recognition of phenomena or approaches, or a misunderstanding, distortion or limitation of the potential which these phenomena or approaches might present. Babies soaked in the opposition's bathwater may be regarded as tainted and thus suspect. If Realists present themselves as upholders of positivism, some of their opponents may present themselves as opposing positivism in the name of opposing Realism. Realists may respond initially by attempting to dismiss anti-positivists as non-scientists and thus beyond the pale of respectability. However, a more sophisticated and nuanced strategy is to try to absorb them into a revised Realism – as for example Barkin (2003) and Sterling-Folker (2002) suggest may be possible with constructivism. Similarly, Waltz (1970) responded to the claimed links between economic interdependence and peace by dismissing economic interdependence as insignificant (and was subsequently rebuked by Morse (1971)). Gilpin (1987), however, later tried to absorb interdependence within a more Realist approach to international political economy.

A well-established debate may be an old shoe – comfortable and easy to slip into even if a bit broken-down. New questions, new opportunities, new phenomena, and new takes on existing phenomena, are readily drawn into the established parameters of theory, policy and ideology. The result may enrich the ongoing debate, though it may also simply

be a ritual, an observance of approved forms valued for their own sake. It may limit unnecessarily and undesirably how such opportunities are conceived of, approached, phrased, and drawn into the discipline, and the results that follow. Theoretical advances are made in the context of each side attempting to overcome or bypass the arguments posed by the other. There may be some development of the overall argument to be sure, but the content and direction of the shifts are dictated by the underlying and overriding argument, and in so far as they can be hitched to the opposing sides. Attempts to define and analyze the debate may even be an obstacle to theoretical development: stating, restating and defending the foundation positions of each side may lead the argument into an oversimplified, dogmatic and even catechism-like style, which drives each side back to basics instead of encouraging more subtle, nuanced and extended applications. Everyone knows that Realists are amoral, if not immoral, and thus nasty and limited people; everyone knows that a “nice” theory that fails is, above all else, a theory that – perhaps disastrously – fails. Everyone knows that system-level theories pay inadequate attention to the significance of domestic attributes and processes; everyone knows that state-level or domestic theories pay inadequate attention to system-level forces and constraints. Everyone knows that “problem-solving” theories are trapped in their assumptions; everyone knows that “critical theories” *become* trapped in their assumptions as soon as they cease being merely critical of other theories and instead seek to say something about the world. Everyone knows that “positivism” is tripped up by the theory-laden character of observation; everyone knows that an absolutist approach to constructivism in the philosophy of science reduces any consideration of evidence to solipsism. Even with an element of variation, everyone knows the general structure, content and process of what will follow. Much like impromptu theatre, the participants may be creative and may be permitted to ad lib, but they do so within an initial scene set for them. However much we may appreciate the ingenuity of the players within these constraints, and however beneficial the constraints in providing initial structures and guidance, there are still, however, limits.

This paper will examine in this vein some elements of the basis of the debate between Realists of varying stripes on the one hand and Liberals and Progressivists of varying stripes on the other. The broadening of the Liberal category to “Liberal/Progressivist” is deliberate in so far as there are similarities in patterns of argument and to prevent an escape by “Critical Theorists” from the broad common ground of debate: they will not get off that easily. Some of its material will be drawn from the theory of international regimes, but it will also range more widely. The paper will argue that this debate itself is based on a foundation – otherwise a meaningful debate would have much greater difficulty in occurring – which constitutes what it terms “a culture of argument.” The first section of the paper is a brief explanation of that concept. The concept may be applied on two levels: first, to some international phenomena themselves (such as international regimes); and second, to communities of International Relations scholars. It is the second level which is the focus here. The second section sets out one construction of the Realist-Liberal/Progressivist culture of argument in International Relations, in terms of four intertwined components: society, progress, rationality and evolution.

The paper will look briefly at the usual posing of the argument in regard to each of these four elements and their interactions. It will also, however, note problems in these

foundations, possibilities that could open up other lines of questioning and argumentation. These alternatives often seem to be systematically ignored in the debate, with the disputants simultaneously accepting the posing of a problem offered by their opponents while rejecting the conclusions offered. So, for example, an easy Realist response to a Liberal espousing of international law could be to point to the apparent limitations of international law as compared to a well-developed Western domestic legal system (a parallel that might be implicitly or explicitly drawn on by the Liberal), without asking whether this is the best way of understanding law, much less international law, at all. The result may be theoretical progress of a sort – e.g., sharpening a sense of the overlaps and differences between domestic western and international legal systems – but one that inherently refuses to ask the broader question: is the foundation parallel valid, or does accepting the domestic western system as our reference point mistake a particular manifestation of law for the broader, more universal notion?

The general intent of the paper is to try to clear the way for an opening-up of theoretical exploration that is not dominated by the existing lines or tendencies of debate – to escape from the Liberal/Progressivist-Realist terms of debate. It is accepted that any useful terms of argument must to some degree limit and shape debate, otherwise we would do even more talking past each other than occurs already. The concern here, however, is with the lost possibilities when the terms of debate might reasonably be challenged or varied but are not, and thus systematic considerations of alternatives to the general argument are ignored or sidelined in favour of the familiar. The paper concludes with some general thoughts on this theme.

Cultures of Argument

The notion of a culture of argument advanced here is based on a phrase by James Boyd White concerning the American legal system, a question posed by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz, and an approach to the study of culture and agency proposed by Margaret Archer. Only a quick sketch will be given here, but the broad concept seems to have considerable wider applicability.

White (1984) characterizes law in the United States as a

constitution of the world by the distribution of authority within it; it establishes the terms on which its actors may talk in conflict or cooperation among themselves. The law establishes roles and relations and voices, positions from which and audiences to which one may speak, and it gives us as speakers the materials and methods of a discourse. It is a way of creating a rhetorical community over time (Ibid., 266).

But note the peculiar nature of this community and this culture: “The law is best regarded not so much as a set of rules and doctrines or as a bureaucratic system or as an instrument for social control but as a culture, for the most part a culture of argument” (Ibid., 267). In agreeing on basics for the argument, the law “makes disagreement at once intelligible,

limited, and amenable to resolution” (Ibid., 268). But while it may draw on a shared base of sorts, it is also a conversation based on differences:

To conceive of the law as a rhetorical and social system, a way in which we use an inherited language to talk to each other and to maintain a community, suggests in a new way that the heart of the law is what we always knew it was: the open hearing in which one point of view, one construction of language and reality, is tested against another. The multiplicity of readings that the law permits is not its weakness but its strength, for it is this that makes room for different voices and gives a purchase by which culture may be modified in response to the demands of circumstance. It is a method at once for recognizing others, for acknowledging ignorance, and for achieving cultural change (Ibid., 273).

Within this sort of culture, certain themes, paired opposites, claims for consideration, patterns of argumentation, etc. will be found.²

The notion of cultures as sustained patterns of disagreements or differences, as well as or in place of the usual focus on underlying agreement, is also suggested by Clifford Geertz’s answer to his question, “What is a culture if it is not a consensus?”

The view of culture, *a* culture, this culture, as a consensus on fundamentals – shared conceptions, shared feelings, shared values – seems hardly viable in the face of so much dispersion and disassembly; it is the faults and fissures that seem to mark out the landscape of collective selfhood. Whatever it is that defines identity in borderless capitalism and the global village it is not deep-going agreements on deep-going matters, but something more like the recurrence of familiar divisions, persisting arguments, standing threats, the notion that whatever else may happen, the order of difference must be somehow maintained (Geertz 2000, 250).

Whether or not we go quite this far, it would seem at least that cultures could be defined as much by their recurring patterns of disputes as by their common concepts and understandings. Disagreement may occur within a context which, being shared in some sense, at least helps to make the argument mutually intelligible, but this shared battleground need not imply that the argument is resolved, merely that it *can be joined* in a way the participants find meaningful, and perhaps even comfortable and reassuring precisely because it is a *familiar* argument. Shared understandings are important, but so are the common disagreements, gambits, points and counter-points by which differences are expressed and explored, and which themselves constitute recognized patterns.

Margaret Archer disputes as well “the myth of cultural integration” (Archer 1988). Cultures do not consist simply of self-reinforcing and self-perpetuating agreements: this would exclude internal dynamics of development and require exogenous shocks for change to occur.³ Instead, they include tensions – inevitable in any complex systems of ideas – within and among ideas and meanings, and within and among groups

espousing those ideas and meanings. These groups contend with each other in both the level of the Cultural System – the sphere of ideas – and the Socio-Cultural level as groups within a larger society. In addition, cultures may be influenced from outside, on the plane of ideas by intrusions of foreign notions, or on the plane of contending groups by one or another obtaining access to additional resources (intellectual or otherwise) to shape arguments or to reinforce or provide alternatives to existing systems of education, etc. The path of development of a culture depends on the nature, the invocation, and the temporary resolution of tensions or their continuation on both the abstract and the societal planes. The result is a culture which has internal dynamics of change and which also reacts to external pressures or possibilities. It retains some form of identity over time, even as it may change substantially over time. It is not a fixed set of agreements (unless it is a static culture), but rather its history is in some degree a litany of disputes which may or may not reach temporary resolution.

That a culture conceived of in these terms is open to change, including possibly radical change, merely on the basis of internal dynamics (even aside from imperfect daily reproduction), is one of the attractions and strengths of this conceptualization. As compared to something static or excessively constricting, incapable of generating novelty except in the limited sense of very restricted or even stylized variations on set themes, it offers a wider prospect for forces of change, at least in the realm of ideas. If such a culture also can draw on external resources, whether ideas or material, then this may be an additional dynamic element to it.

As applied to the Liberal/Progressivist-Realist culture of argument within International Relations theory, the concern in this paper is that the culture does seem to tend to the more restrictive: that this culture may so dominate and shape how ideas are drawn on and employed, whether they are external or internal in origin, that certain possibilities inherent in those ideas, which might be of interest from the perspective of theoretical progress in the discipline, might be systematically ignored to the detriment of the discipline. This paper is thus a plea for the unrecognized positive potential of thinking that may depart from the dominating culture of argument, at least in North American International Relations theory.

The Realist-Liberal/Progressivist Culture of Argument: Society, Progress, Rationality and Evolution

What is the “culture of argument” of interest here? The Liberal-Realist debate, especially as found in North American scholarship, is taken here as a core set of disputes, but it is also suggested that this organization and understanding of the debatable ground may extend further, into more broadly “Progressivist” camps that might be horrified at the company they are being asked to keep. The strategy here is to seek coherence not in unity or in agreement, but in the themes around which disputes are centred, the patterns of disagreement, the characteristic attacks and defences, etc. The arguments fall into reasonably predictable patterns that help us to decide where to place a given author, or to anticipate what the general strategy of development of an argument within the culture may be, or to recognize a strategy of refutation. There may indeed be variations on all of

these, including as additional phenomena, examples or lines of reasoning are discovered and drawn in. There will, however, be an overall sense of familiarity which permits us to say that a given contention falls within or is enlisted to serve in an established, if elastic and evolving, broader disputation. A recognizable culture of argument exists in so far as we find that disputes, and the presentation and development of individual positions within these disputes, follow lines which, even where they present unexpected variations, are somehow fundamentally familiar. So, therefore, in the debates over relative versus absolute gains, “instrumental” versus “substantive” rationality, moral or legal theorizing versus science, structure versus unit, knowledge versus “material forces”, even “sovereign Man” versus history and geography, actors may appear, speak or even ad lib their lines and depart after taking their bows, but the play goes on along a recognizable and broadly anticipated path. Even new variants become old themes.

Four broad themes or components of the Realist-Liberal/Progressivist culture of argument are suggested here: society, progress, rationality and evolution. This complex captures much of the underlying pattern of argument between Realists and Liberals, and can be extended, with only a bit of variation, to capture as well some authors who might otherwise seem to fall outside of these categories. Society as a theme touches on the fundamental nature of the international sphere, and the fundamental target and objective of ameliorative or reformist – or even revolutionary – action. Rationality appears as a theme in the form of rational action analysis – whether as a means for observers to understand the world or for those within it to act in the world. It also appears, in the guise of a differentiation between instrumental and substantive rationality, as a challenge to rational action analysis without foregoing the hope put in rationality as such. Progress is the movement of the world from an initial state to or towards a more desired state. Evolution may appear in Darwinian or Lamarckian form, or even a combination, as a way of explaining or presenting or disputing that progressive motion.

In aggregate, the basic argument is over the state of the international system, whether or not it can be “improved” in some sense, and over rationality not only as a tool of analysis but also as a mechanism of improvement. To put it this way alludes to the character of the general debate as flowing from the hopes of broad Enlightenment thinking: that knowledge can be rationally sought and rationally employed to improve the world. To the degree that one espouses such a general position, one moves toward the Liberal/Progressivist side of the debate; to the degree that one challenges or at least has reservations about such hopes, one moves towards the Realist side.

Society

Is international politics best studied as an asocial world essentially locked in a state of nature, a world in a state of nature but with possibilities for sociability, a weakly or at best locally socialized one, a strongly and broadly socialized world (whether or not with variations in space and time)? If a society exists, what is its nature, and what would we like its nature to be? If no society, or an undesirable society, exists, might one be created that is desirable? What mechanisms might lead to this creation, and this movement? These sorts of questions, and the answers given to them, provide the foundation for a va-

riety of more particular arguments between Realists and Liberals/Progressivists, and set up the broader pattern of debate.

We might assemble these points along a continuum: no society, weak society, strong society. Variants on this might be found, whether as comments on theory or as attempts to order international phenomena, in Krasner's (Krasner 1983, 1-2, 5-10) arrangement of regime theory positions (structuralist, modified structuralist, Grotian), in Bull's (1977, 23-52) Hobbesian, Grotian and Kantian views of and versions of the world, in Buzan's (1991, 175-181) "immature" and "mature" anarchies, and even in Wendt's (1999) Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian systemic cultures. At the asocial anchor point we find the Realists, citing Hobbes's famous description of the state of nature, and projecting this onto the international sphere despite Hobbes's own disclaimers concerning that projection.⁴ Some Realists, and some of their opponents who accept the asocial starting-point of the world as at least an initial working assumption for theory development, might allow at least the possibility of some movement toward association, whether in a weakly if generally social world, or at least in specific realms of action. Thus, Keohane (1983, 141-142) adopts a form of social contract theorizing – a mode of theory strongly connected to arguments of rationality – to pose the question of movement from an initial asocial (or at least weakly social) state to one that is more strongly social:

I explore why self-interested actors in world politics should seek, under certain circumstances, to establish international regimes through mutual agreement; and how we can account for fluctuations over time in the number, extent, and strength of international regimes, on the basis of rational calculation under varying circumstances.

Whether or not intended to be an accurate description of the world, setting the question in these terms permits a stark posing of the problem in its bare bones, and a selection of a means to approach the answer.

In this set-up, the driving question is not "where are we going?" but rather, "if we assume the world to be this way, can we get there (i.e., to a desired end-point) from here?" The string having one end, it is posited that it has one other end of interest, and that the question and object of the exercise – a nice combination of theory, policy and ideology – is movement from the initial end to the desired or posited destination. What precisely the description is of the presumed end-state or desired objective – the "there" we are arguing over whether we can get to – is of less moment here than the fact that this is often the underlying argument in the first place. The domination of the argument by the question of the possibility or probability of a single line of change does not rob it of theoretical import. Indeed, the arguments over this may develop considerable theoretical and methodological sophistication. So, for example, Wendt (1992) challenges the Realist claim that anarchy inevitably points to a self-help system, with very limited prospects for improvement. He finds enough slack in the anarchy concept to allow him to identify another possible path, ignored by Realists.

However, the focus on advancing or refuting a specific line of possibility or probability also means that the possibility of additional lines of change, which may exist implicitly or explicitly in the theory as such, may be ignored. The approach is inherently, and literally, one-dimensional. Whether there might be more than one direction, more than one path, is seldom considered: argument focuses on whether we may proceed along a designated or hypothesized path toward a desired end. The other possibility, of a multiplicity of paths, is downplayed in favour of the familiar pattern of Liberal/Progressivist challenge and specific Realist refutation of that specific challenge.⁵ In the starkest terms, the choice is between no society and a specific – desired – society, with all other positions being treated as way-stations between the two. Thus, theoretical possibilities are constrained, or are bent to serve the particular debate. If the theory, or the phenomenon, or the tested hypothesis, does not turn out to give a definitive or at least a strong answer in terms of the debate, then it may well be merely noted and cast aside, while the debate goes on to the next candidate, to fresh grist for this mill. Candidates are embraced only as and in so far as they can be drawn into and used in the established debate. Or, even if alternative dimensions are noted, they may simply be projected onto the continuum, preserving that aspect of interest to the debate (where are they on the continuum?), but losing information in the process.

Progress

“Progress” is the driver in this quartet. The underlying argument is over whether or not movement along this continuum is possible, and particularly movement from a less desirable to a more desirable position. “Progress” is movement in a desired direction.⁶ Liberals and Progressivists will assert the possibility, desirability, probability, necessity or inevitability of such movement, while Realists might deny any real hope of advance, or might see it as limited in inherent possibilities or constrained by contingencies of space and time, or at least question how such movement is to be achieved. Mearsheimer (1994-1995) doubts the claims made for international institutions, and Grieco (1988) and Krasner (1991) set limits on the scope and effectiveness of regimes. That Keohane (1984) presents co-operation as a problem which may or may be solved, and looks for possible requirements of and mechanisms for a solution (e.g., also Axelrod and Keohane 1985), rather than assuming the harmony of interests as the basic state of affairs, presents a more nuanced argument within the overall familiar grounds of debate.

An initial distinction must be drawn at this point, between *theoretical* progress and progress *in the world*. Theoretical progress consists of improvements in our theories – here, our empirical theories. It consists of improving our descriptions and our explanations, and possibly our predictive ability. Our theories successfully capture more of the world, and what we capture we capture in greater detail and better. “Progress in the world,” however, taps especially the policy-maker’s, the advisor’s and the ideologue’s desire to alter the world, by achieving a specific objective or by a larger scale reworking of things. It is quite possible, of course, that theoretical progress may help to achieve progress in the world. Morgenthau (1993, 12), for example, holds out this hope even as he attacks Liberal theory:

The realist parts company with other schools of thought before the all-important questions of how the contemporary world is to be transformed. The realist is persuaded that this transformation can be achieved only through the workmanlike manipulation of the perennial forces that have shaped the past as they will the future. The realist cannot be persuaded that we can bring about that transformation by confronting a political reality that has its own laws with an abstract ideal that refuses to take those laws into account.

Whether or not theoretical progress is possible, probable or guaranteed, and what methods might be best employed to achieve it is another argument, which will be addressed below. What is clear is that theoretical progress in the sense noted above may open up lines of action but may also foreclose others. Theoretical progress may challenge as well as seem to substantiate arguments about what is desirable or feasible, or how we would like to believe things work. It might constitute a form of “learning” but “learning” is itself a value-laden category (we tend to assume that “learning” leads in directions we desire), and not all lessons learned may be unambiguous or uncontested, or pleasant. To put it bluntly, theoretical progress does not require “progress in the world.” “Progress” in this latter sense is not a theoretically-necessary category or criterion of evaluation, though it may be desirable for other reasons. Indeed, there is a danger of “theory-shopping” – if one theory does not tell us what we want to hear, we look for another that will. This may in some degree be a legitimate undertaking, of course, since otherwise we may be stuck with the (at least apocryphal) observation that bumble bees cannot, in theory, fly. However, it is fair to ask how much of theoretical “development” in International Relations is of this sort.

“Progress in the world” puts the question on a different plane, though some of the basic issues may be fundamentally similar. The criteria for the assessment of progress are here perhaps somewhat more contested and subjective, raising matters of values and desires concerning the nature of the world. Merely movement in a direction is not enough to qualify as progress: the direction itself must be desired. Leaving aside, then, the well-known problems of the status and methods of science, “progress in the world” is particularly problematic, as different people and groups may have radically different evaluations of both the present and any possible future state of the world. Where Liberals or Progressivists posit a desired state, or at least a desired direction of movement, therefore, they are open not merely to Realist challenges as to feasibility. Even though empirical theory may develop from a particular set of concerns, reflecting particular perspectives in the world, it may be able, though the application of science, be able to liberate itself (in part at least) from this initial stand-point (e.g., Cox 1986, 207).⁷ Progress in the world has more difficulty even than empirical theory in appealing to criteria of evaluation considered broadly valid. The world is recalcitrant, and is not obliged to accept either our theories or our specifications of desiderata for its condition. This leaves some opening for a broad positivism, in that the world is not obliged to confirm our empirical theories. It also poses a problem for “progress in the world,” in that others are obliged neither to accept our theories about phenomena, nor our advice about desirable or feasible policy ends or means, nor our concept of a desired end-state.

If “progress in the world” is itself a contestable category, then the various mechanisms drawn on to explain it bear an extra burden not shared with those who would deny it. Arguments for “progress in the world” must not only account for movement in a *specific* direction, but also show *why* it is in a desired direction, including potentially for those who may not actually desire it. Those who would deny any specific account of “progress in the world” need simply refute either of these points. In the case simply of movement as such, however, there is a possibility of a particular and narrow statement of the problem, due to the one-dimensional setting. We are forced to choose, to a degree, between Liberal/Progressivist protestations of “progress in the world” and Realist counter-arguments that nothing essentially changes. But outside of “no change versus progress in the world” there exists the possibility of a third option: mere change, as such, without attaching to it the additional burden of “progress in the world.”

Two broad mechanisms for “progress in the world” – or its denial – appear in the Realist-Liberal/Progressivist culture of argument: rationality and evolution. The former we shall take as focusing on individual actors making decisions on action in the world; the latter we shall take as an argument about environmental pressures and natural selection. The former appeals more specifically to Enlightenment thinking. The latter may appear to be Providentialist in form, or teleological, but certainly has a long-standing connection to ideas of progress. Even Kant, after all, pointed to the cunning of nature as a force for the achievement of perpetual peace.

Rationality

As a major posited driver of movement along the continuum from where we are to where we think we want to go, rationality is also, therefore, a major source of debate: do the dictates of rationality support claims for the possibility of such movement, or do they suggest its improbability? Here again, of course, whether rationality might lead us farther afield may not be a strong concern. Two broad styles of argument will be noted here. The first is the formal rational action model, whether employed to its fuller extent or used merely as a conventional and abbreviated reference point. This sort of rationality – the rationality of modelers and economists – is instrumental in nature. A second style, drawn upon by some of those who would challenge the use of rational action models, is “substantive” rationality. Whereas instrumental rationalists will tend to focus on questions of play within, for example, two-person non-zero-sum games, assuming given preferences and calculating the best moves and payoffs, supporters of “substantive” rationality will point to the limits of these assumptions, and ask, for example, how those preferences and policy objectives arose, whether or not they are really desirable, and so on.

There is a clear overlap here with Keohane’s (1988) rough categories of “rationalists” and “reflectivists,” just as there is between Hasenclever et al.’s (1997) categories of power and interest-based theories of regimes and especially “weak cognitivists.” This overlap justifies our extension of the Liberal camp to include “Progressivists” of other sorts, even where these stand opposed to rational action models. However, not all of Keohane’s “reflectivists” need be Liberal/Progressivists, just as not all of his “rational-

ists” need be Liberals. While “rational action” may provide some common ground for some Realists and some Liberals (e.g. Baldwin 1993, 3-25),⁸ it by no means exhausts the common ground afforded by rationality considered more generally.⁹

For this stage of the discussion, “rationality” raises the question of the possibility of conscious action by decision-makers to move along the posited continuum in the desired direction. Simon (1985, 294) notes that rational action may also be assessed in terms of “behavior that can be adjudged objectively to be optimally adapted to the situation,” as opposed to our focus here on the decision-maker. This rationality, however, is effectively a metaphor for natural selection – selection by an environment. This brings in other considerations, and shall be dealt with as an aspect of especially Darwinian evolutionary arguments. Lamarckian evolution, however, which posits that acquired characteristics may be passed on, is potentially relevant to our considerations here, since it readily fits into the argument that actors might “learn,” and thus adopt new behaviours.

Rational action theory provides a large, complex, nuanced and highly-developed body of rigorous thinking, and a wide repertoire of types of situations as reference points for the explication of real-world problems. It thus presents considerable advantages to International Relations theorists above and beyond the ability to borrow from the prestige accorded to Economics as a discipline. Even so, whether it points to progress is strongly challenged. Within the terms of the Realist-Liberal/Progressivist debate, one might find Liberals asserting at least the possibility of co-ordination to permit mutually-beneficial solutions to shared problems, and Realists either denying the non-zero-sum assumption (the value assigned to Grieco’s (1988) “k”) or the domination of efficient solutions as the criterion by which actors assess possible outcomes (Krasner 1991). The limitations of real decision-makers led Simon (1985) to develop notions of satisficing behaviour and “bounded” rationality. This in turn suggests as well that decision-makers may fall well short of the mark in making even “rational” progressive moves. Considerable work has gone into specifying the significance of different game types and issue-area types, recognizing that not all situations are Prisoner’s Dilemma, and that different issue areas may have different properties affecting the prospects for co-operation. (Hasenclever 1997, 23-135). Equilibrium solutions may be multiple or not exist at all. Salient points, framing and other phenomena might affect the choice of moves, and so on. Thus, Simon (1985, 297) also observed that much of the real work in rational action models was actually done by supplementary or auxiliary theories rather than by the basic rationality assumptions themselves.

Even where co-operation might occur, its progressive connotations may be questioned. As Keohane (1984) notes, this co-operation may only be to the benefit of the co-operating states, not necessarily to the benefit of a larger set. As Snidal (1985) notes, in a multilateral setting irrelevant rivals might co-operate against a third state. The co-operation that occurs need not, therefore, be desirable. And as Olson (1971, 15, footnote 22) has observed, “There is no necessity that a public good to one group in society is necessarily in the interest of the society as a whole.” However, the underlying implicit assumption is often still that the “regime good,” for example, is desired by all who receive

it, and the problem is getting them to pay for it: free-riding is discussed often, but seldom “forced consumption” (Keeley 1990).

Diesing’s (1971) distinction between formal models and empirical models is also of interest. As an empirical description of actual decision-processes, the above challenges suggest limits to rational action models, even as the rational action literature and the prestige of Economics as a discipline lead us to assume that these are how decisions *ought* to be made. At the same time, as formal models of decision processes, rational action models may, on the other hand, provide us with a language and tools of analysis. The intent here, however, is not testing but curve-fitting: can we, through the subtleties of our analysis, “fit” the model to an observed process, or does it require further elaboration? The intention here is to improve the fit. Rational action as a formal model may not be testable. It may, however, contribute a language and a mechanism for describing decision-processes – even if the results of those processes are sometimes less than rational.

The “rational reconstruction” of decisions also presents dangers, as Vaughn’s (1996) analysis of the Challenger launch decision and Lee and Ermann’s (1999) study of “Pinto madness” point out. Even while it was possible to present these cases retrospectively in rational action terms that would supposedly account for the outcome, in fact due attention to actual decision processes demonstrated that in neither case would a likely simple “cost-benefit-risk” calculation be at all accurate: the situation at the time of the decision was not understood in the way the reconstructed logic required. That players may not understand the game as intended by an observer, or play it with the same objectives in mind, is also shown by Hurwitz (1989): prisoners may not always play Prisoner’s Dilemma.

Critics from a more “substantive rationality” position might draw on at least some of these difficulties to demonstrate the need to ask where the game structures and the calculations of the instrumentalists come from and might be altered. In the hands of cognitivists, constructivists and others, the real attention might thus focus on the larger understanding that provides a context for state actions. However, in so far as these critics merely shift from instrumental to substantive rationality, they do not escape the full problem. Instead, by committing themselves (even if only apparently procedurally, as in the communicative action approach) to the objectives and understandings behind rationality, they grasp the nettle still more firmly: their mechanism of change, is no longer merely in rational calculations, but the shaping of those calculations as such. The focus may be on uncoerced and freely-argued positions, with a hope that ultimately the better argument will emerge (Risse 2000). But whether or not Habermas’s ideal speech situation is a valuable procedural norm, do things really work this way? There is no set test, in fact, other than how this basic political struggle may work itself out (Flyvbjerg 1998). Further, whether or not the model of communication espoused by Habermas is itself culturally limited – and thus cannot escape the contestable nature of “progress in the world” – may also be debated (Diez and Steans 2005).

So, Realist and Liberal/Progressivists may argue within the terms of rational action models about the likelihood of movement in a posited desired direction. Substantive

rationalists might challenge aspects of the rational action model approach, but they may still be intent on moving the situation towards a progressive end through greater attention to how arguments are conducted and goals and means are evaluated. But a consideration of the limits of instrumental rationality models suggests that movement even in a desired direction is not necessarily a given: movement, instead, could be non-rational or perhaps even, if rational, in other directions, including off the continuum. Challenges to the substantive rationalists could bring us back to the fundamental observation that “progress in the world” is as such a contested thing, to be assessed by multiple and possibly conflicting criteria.

Evolution

If we move from the rationality of decision-makers to selection by the environment, we move to a view of Nature as selector. If we take Nature as purely instrumentalist in character, we find ourselves in the world of Darwinian evolutionary theory. In the hands of the Realists, this tends to be a conservative force, as Nature is apt to see the new as unfit, and to select it out.¹⁰ For the Liberals and Progressivists, however, Nature would seem to be a force for change and more especially for improvement. In both cases, the argument could be “survival of the fittest,” but the basic conclusions are quite opposite.

We should note at the outset that attention to evolutionary thinking does not necessarily commit us to a socio-biological approach as such (e.g., Thayer 2000), or to a focus simply on individuals. As much attention in the debate is focused on states and on other organizations, our interest may also be drawn to the evolution of these actors (with or without commitment to a unified rational actor model). Organizational evolutionary models and other alternatives exist that draw loosely rather than tightly on biological evolution, or which do not focus primarily on individuals (e.g., Beinhocker 2006). We shall draw here primarily on Campbell’s (1965) old distinction among variation, selection and retention in socio-cultural evolution, as modified by selected observations from biological evolutionary theories (see, e.g., Depew and Weber 1996; Mayr 2004; Kahler 1999).

To begin with, the old association between evolution and progress must be noted and discounted, as is now the case in biology. Achievements of “local optima” are not the same thing as the Whig theory of history (or, for that matter, Social Darwinism). However, a certain irony must be noted in the Realist use of evolutionary arguments to oppose Liberal/Progressivist thinking. Evolution is above all a theory of change, yet Realists use it to defeat claims of change in favour, apparently, of claims of stasis. Many things are packed into this. First, the choice is not between a specific Liberal/Progressive change and no change. That narrow construction is precisely the problem of this debate: one must not confuse claims of change and claims of progress. Second, to make such a claim against change in general, Realists would have to argue that the world as it currently exists is, in essence, a climactic formation, a particularly strong equilibrium. This is an open empirical question, however, and against its presumption must be the clear evidence of changes in entities (including their emergence and their extinction) and indeed of the co-evolution of entities and their environment. While it might be possible to resort to arguments of “punctuated equilibrium” to mitigate this, a still-considerable theoretical and

empirical claim is being advanced. Third, if the claim of “no change” is restricted merely to evolutionary mechanisms themselves, this is clearly insufficient to carry the weight: apparently fundamentally unchanging biological mechanisms have, it would seem, permitted very considerable changes in the entities concerned. Thus, if the final form of the claim is merely that, e.g., “the basics” of politics or “the basics” of the state have not changed – that Thucydides would be at home in the 21st Century -- we might still note that a lot of things of interest might still occur within the broad sweep of “the basics.”

Our basic model here will be Cambell’s “variation and selective retention:” variants are produced by whatever means, they are selected by the environment according to some criteria, and mechanisms are in place for the retention of those variants that are successful. Much of this turns out to be highly problematic, however. Whether in the Liberal/Progressive or the Realist case, as March and Olsen (1998) argue, much of the presumption for Nature as a selector – and much of its overlap with “objective” rationality as defined by Simon (above) – is tied to the notion of history as efficient – quickly and decisively selecting among variants and moving rapidly towards equilibrium when disturbed. As against this, however, they posit history (Nature) as inefficient, and as a meander. Processes of selection are “less automatic, less continuous, and less precise...The pressures of survival are sporadic rather than constant, crude rather than precise, and environments vary in the extent to which they dictate outcomes” (March and Olsen, 1998, 954-955). We will offer further commentary on this fundamental point.

First, historical adaptation may be slow relative to the pace of environmental change, so that there is a low probability of reaching equilibrium (the problem of polar bears facing rapid warming in the Arctic). In effect, if the environment changes rapidly, as compared to the entities adapting to it, the goal-posts are constantly shifting. Campbell points to an alternative possibility as well: that variants may be produced faster than the environment can winnow them. To this, in addition, we should note that not only do environments affect the entities within them, but the entities within them affect their environment – and are part of the environment for other entities. Thus, there is co-evolution of an entity and its environment (including other entities).

Second, there may be multiple equilibria and local optima. Not every rational choice situation has a single equilibrium (and indeed, the choice of a specific equilibrium point may be subject to contingent factors on top of this). There may be many possible solutions to given problems, at least within a given set of circumstances and time-scale for consideration. As for “local optima,” we may find that entities adapt not to global circumstances, but to particular local circumstances. If those local circumstances change, they may find it difficult to adapt to their new situation.

Third, there may be substantial “slack” in the environment, in terms of its willingness to tolerate variants. Far from being a highly-efficient selector at any given time, or in any short period of time, Nature may be a profligate, satisficing short-term consequentialist: if it works today, that is good enough for today. Nature may select the fit, not just the fittest.¹¹ Fourth, selection may occur simultaneously on different time-scales and levels and by differing criteria. A variant that would survive on one time-scale and by one

set of criteria might not survive on another time-scale and another set of criteria. We might therefore expect a number of variants to exist at any given time, subject to local as well as broader conditions. Unless we are clear about time-scales, criteria and conditions of selection, about the degree of slack in the environment, and about forces of co-evolution, we cannot say much that is useful for explanation, much less prediction, about the evolutionary mechanisms or any posited direction of evolution. To add still further to our difficulties, we must also cope with imperfect reproduction or even invasion (variants must come from somewhere, whether internally or from outside of a local situation) and with path dependence (we adapt with what we have, including what we learn). Finally, we must note that being “fit” and being desirable by any other criteria may be quite distinct things. Success in the very specific terms afforded us by an evolutionary approach does not clearly or easily seem linked to considerations of niceness or desirability by any other standard, though of course people might wish to advance such arguments.

Evolutionary arguments of the sort we might expect from Liberals and Progressivists, then, cannot actually readily promise movement in the terms they desire. Realists, on the other hand, in so far as they deny change in their desire to deny “progress in the world,” may also have a lot of explaining to do. To argue that the world is not developing and will not develop the way the Liberals and Progressivists might want it to, or might argue that it is moving, is not the same as saying that it is not moving at all in any significant aspect. Part of the problem here is an inherent desire to argue in terms of “evolution to”: to posit some objective or target that we are (or are not) moving towards. From a policy point of view, the appropriateness of this posing of the problem is clear; from an ideological point of view, both the temptations and the dangers are obvious.¹² From, an empirical theory point of view, however, it may be far better to begin with a presumption of “evolution from,” and only slowly and carefully work out from there. Here, of course, we clash as empirical theorists with the kind of demands placed on us as or by policy-makers, much less ideologues sure of their theories. None the less, we still, as empirical theorists, have a daunting and valuable task before us, if one that advises humility.

Conclusion

The elements of society, progress, rationality and evolution structure the basic arguments between the Liberal/Progressivist and Realist sides of the dominating debate in the North American International Relations literature. There may also be other differences, but these seem secondary to this fundamental ground of battle. There may be considerable variation in argument, methodology, phenomena appealed to, etc., in this debate, but much of this seems to arise in the form of handy weapons to use against the other side, not necessarily because they connect fundamentally to one side or another. One of the strengths, and one of the dangers, of this culture of argument is precisely its ability to draw new elements into the service of the old dispute and to seize upon and turn the arguments of the other side. This helps to keep the debate alive, to bring a degree of novelty and variation to it, and to extend its reach. However, by drawing in novel or additional elements so readily and absorbing them into its ongoing pattern, the debate may also hinder us from recognizing and exploiting the possibilities for an opening up of the terms of argument through an awareness of the problematic features of its basic elements.

It may too readily draw our thinking into its pattern precisely because it is so familiar, yet so broad and absorbing. It may also too readily draw us into its terms as others are unable to see an alternative to them, and insist on placing us in familiar contexts.

In a nutshell, the terms of this debate invite us too readily to structure our arguments on certain limiting premises. All debates must do this, of course, to give form and intelligibility to arguments. It is useful, however, to recognize these patterns, so that we do not take them for granted, so that we may make them problematical, and so that, as needed or desired, we may legitimately attempt to depart from them. What are some of these patterns?

1. The form of the argument is that one specific system-state is posed against another specific system-state – no society against a society of a particular desired type. Other societal types may be presented as arranged along a continuum of these two, to mark movement towards or away from the two posited ends. But the opposite of a point is not simply another point: it is everywhere else. In assuming only one direction of movement, one path of possibility or probability, we foreclose or constrain the consideration of a wider range of theoretical possibilities. Our choices are not limited to no society, or some version of a Liberal or Progressivist society, or various system-states considered as located between these two.
2. The form of the argument is that we are to choose fundamentally between no change and “progress in the world,” as defined according to the desired society. This omits the possibility of change regardless of any consideration of “progress in the world.” “Progress in the world” may be a valid concern for certain purposes, and the search for it may well drive and shape our efforts at empirical theory. However, it is not a theoretically-necessary category: even if we hope that our empirical theories give promise of “progress in the world,” we cannot require this of them of necessity. Indeed, doing so may lead us to cling to theories that cannot meet other tests, or abandon theories that do well in theoretical tests. Moreover, “progress in the world” is an inherently contestable category, and thus more suited to consideration from a policy-maker’s perspective, or an ideologue’s. From the point of view of an empirical theory, the key aspect is precisely that it *is* contested: the *contest* is what should be built into empirical theory.
3. Rationality as a driver of change and of “progress in the world” has some attractions, but it is also limited. As a driver of progress, it suffers from the problems of “progress in the world.” Rational action is a powerful and nuanced theoretical apparatus. Its application, however, as more than a language of decision analysis, points to problems in the realization of its role as a driver of progress. Critiques of rational action – instrumentally-rational – models from those who hold to a position of substantive rationality may step back from the technical limitations of the models, but they do not thereby avoid some of the broader problems. Rationality, whether substantive or instrumental, may be a useful tool and a useful premise, but it does not reliably point in any one direction without bringing in additional criteria.

4. Evolution, the system-level or environmental analogue of rationality, also turns out to be more diverse than it appears in this debate. Again, we need not choose between stasis (which is highly unlikely) and “evolution to” a particular end-state (a familiar but exploded Whig style of argument). The forces that guide evolution may be much more complex and contingent, and much more open to multiple directions than the basic mode of argument in the debate suggests. Certainly, as our time horizon extends, the better part of valour might be to adopt a viewpoint of “evolution from.” This does not mean that we forego all prediction – especially since figuring out why predictions go wrong may be a highly profitable theoretical enterprise. The failure of predictions may be less threatening in the realm of empirical theory than in the realms of policy and ideology.

One might be tempted to conclude that the best thing the Liberals and Progressivists could do, from the standpoint of the development of better empirical theory, is to forego their salvationist tendencies, and to conclude that the best thing the Realists could do, from the standpoint of the development of better empirical theory, is to forget about the Liberals and Progressivists. Then, each would be free to push their theoretical enquiries further, harder, and more freely, without the constant and limiting reference and orientation to the other. More soberly considered, such advice is unlikely, unfair and unprofitable. It is unlikely because the old quarrel is too well-established and too attractive. It is unfair because it ignores the actual improvements in empirical theory that have arisen through the debate. It is unprofitable because it would remove much of the impetus for that improvement. Perhaps, the better advice would be that the two sides should be more aware of their joint limitations – limitations which flow not from their differences with each other so much as from the ground they share.

The best advice, for those in the debate, for those contemplating entering it, and for those fearing to be drawn into it whether they will or no, may be that they all recognize the patterns of the argument, and the limitations of those patterns, and accept that there may be other approaches, worthy of exploration and development, that fall outside of these. There are more things in heaven and earth, and in theory, than dreamed of in these philosophies.

Endnotes

This argument went through a number of iterations over a long period of time. I am grateful to Barry Cooper, Patrick James and Shadia Drury for their comments on older versions, but they bear no responsibility for the results.

1. A number of distinctions might be made here. First, we may distinguish between empirical, prescriptive and normative theories. *Empirical* theories focus on the description, explanation and prediction of attributes, relationships, dynamics and outcomes of processes in the world. *Prescriptive* theories, which may be grounded in empirical theories, focus on acting within the world to achieve policy objectives. This may include telling us what objectives and means are feasible,

and how to combine them. *Normative* theory may refer to both empirical and prescriptive theory, but its focus is on what we “ought” to do, including what policy objectives we “ought” to pursue or what sort of world we “ought” to seek, and by what means. Its standards of judgement are not primarily pragmatic, though feasibility may certainly be a factor, but rather moral or ethical. The basic focus in this paper is on empirical theory.

Second, we might distinguish between the (empirical) theorist, the policy-maker or advisor and the ideologue. This distinction is based on the orientation of a person to the claims advanced by a theory: by what one *does* with its ideas and arguments. The empirical *theorist*, as such, is intent on producing an accurate and understandable descriptive account of the world, and his or her criteria of assessment will focus primarily on its descriptive, explanatory and predictive qualities: is it (within the recognizable and problematic limits of that term) “true”? Testing is crucial, and theories may be modified or abandoned in the face of the results. In the policy orientation, however, the concern is with the achievement of specific objectives. Theories may be drawn upon to guide the *policy-maker or advisor*, but to that degree are more or less taken as at least tentatively true as a base position. However, theory may also be used to judge the desirability and feasibility of a policy objective – whether it makes sense, whether it is too costly, whether the means are sufficient or appropriate, etc. – and may lead to a line of policy and/or a policy objective being modified, pursued by other means, or abandoned in favour of a different policy. In this sense, the policy-maker or advisor is pragmatic. The *ideologue* may also base his or her position on a set of empirical claims, taking the empirical theory as given. However, like the policy-maker or advisor, the focus is on advancing certain lines of action in the world. Unlike the policy-maker or advisor in pragmatic mode, however, the ideologue is relatively inflexible (except perhaps tactically) in advancing his or her objectives. Testing the theory is not the point – action based on the theory is. The point of action is to remake the world or preserve it (not simply to advance one particular and specific policy objective) in accordance with a given theory of both empirical and normative character: to create in practice the world that can and ought to exist, and which is already present in potential in the existing world. Difficulties encountered in this endeavor may lead to some alteration in detail in the empirical and the prescriptive theory, and in policy practice, or to a simple redoubling of efforts, but the ultimate objective, which drives the effort, is less likely to be challenged.

Obviously these distinctions are rough and are matters of degree, and also may be found in various mixes in any particular theorist at any particular time. At one point, we write as empirical theorists; at another, we give advice on policy; at still another, we might ask how to make the world at large more acceptable. None the less, they may be useful in considering not only how any given person is acting in a given circumstance, but also in rescuing the theory-ideology distinction from those who would blur it into oblivion, leaving no distinction whatsoever and claiming everything for ideology.

2. Kratochwil (1989, 36-43, 212-248) explores at some length the functions of rhetoric in law and in practical reasoning. These include establishing the themes and styles of discussion and selecting criteria for assessment of arguments and situations.
3. The problem is familiar in agent-structure arguments. Here, one familiar style of approach is to emphasize that, while agents produce structures through their activities, they are also produced by these structures. The tendency is to see this circle as self-reinforcing and thus inherently conservative in nature and outcome. Similarly, in dependency theory, there was a tendency to argue that local change was constrained by the placement of the dependent state in the international economic system, and by the ability of the dominating forces to isolate, punish and defeat local attempts at change. Local change could only occur if there were many simultaneous local challenges that would overwhelm the system – “two, many Vietnams!” – and thus proposals for local change gave way to visions of global capitalist apocalypses.
4. And despite the fact that Hobbes’s anarchy, as it significantly includes an anarchy of meanings, provides clear ground for post-modernist and constructivist approaches. (See, e.g., Wolin 1960, 257-262.)
5. Mercer’s (1995) response to Wendt’s (1992) argument that “anarchy is what states make of it” is a sophisticated variant of this. Wendt, probing the place of anarchy in the Realist conceptual apparatus, argues that it cannot alone carry the weight of predicting to a self-help system. Thus, there is a possibility for another line of development to exist. Mercer’s response, which is not simply a reaffirmation of the domination of a Realist system structure, seems to be along the lines that, even if such a possibility exists, in fact the probability tends to favour self-help as the resulting system. There may be a chance to get to Wendt’s “there” from “here,” but that is not (to borrow from Damon Runyon) “where the smart money is.”
6. Adler (1991, 57-58) thus defines progress in terms of enhancing “security, welfare, and human rights across national borders.”
7. So, for example, Ricci (1984) suggests that American political science was initially motivated by a desire to show the superiority of democracy as an approach to government. Further study, however, also uncovered additional information, including some that challenged cherished beliefs about the nature and workings of democratic systems. At that point, the empirical theorist’s criteria of sound theory came into conflict with the ideologue’s desire to maintain a strongly-held belief.
8. Niou and Ordeshook (1994) have suggested that both neoliberals and neorealists may be considered special cases on a broader continuum of equilibrium possibilities. The natural response to this would seem to be to shift attention to the variables that affect placement on and movement along that continuum, rather than

- treating the two cases as the only two choices: whether, how and to what degree the two exist becomes an empirical question rather than one of competing theoretical absolutes.
9. This leaves open the possibility that not all Realists need be “rationalists,” either. Barkin’s (2003) and Sterling-Folker’s (2002) attention to constructivism thus becomes all the more intriguing.
 10. See March (1991) for an elaboration on and modification of this theme.
 11. Mayr (2004, 136) notes that evolution through the elimination simply of the unfit permits a lot more variation, and “provides an explanation for the haphazardness of much of evolutionary change.”
 12. As Depew and Weber (1996, 420) note, “The problem is that directional ideas about evolution have always come trailing clouds of transcendent and teleological glory.”

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