

Introduction

Conservatives need Charles Darwin. They need him because a Darwinian science of human nature supports conservatives in their realist view of human imperfectibility and their commitment to ordered liberty as rooted in nature, custom, and prudence. The intellectual vitality of conservatism in the twenty-first century will depend on the success of conservatives in appealing to advances in the biology of human nature as confirming conservative thought.

Oh, yes, I know, these first few sentences will be enough to provoke many conservative readers to toss this book away, because they think the very idea of Darwinian conservatism is silly. A few years ago, when I proposed this idea in *First Things*, one of the leading journals for religious conservatives in the United States, Michael Behe responded: “I’m sorry to be blunt, but the notion that Darwinism supports conservatism is absurd.”¹

Behe is a biologist who criticizes Darwinian science for failing to explain the “irreducible complexity” in the living world that points to an “intelligent designer” as the cause of life. Behe and others defend “intelligent design theory” as superior to Darwinism. Many conservatives — particularly in the United States — have adopted this argument as part of a political campaign to challenge the teaching of Darwinian science in public schools. This continues a controversy over the public-school teaching of evolution that began early in the twentieth century when William Jennings Bryan supported legislation in the state of Tennessee prohibiting any teaching of evolution as denying the biblical doctrine that human beings were created by God.

The debate here is not just over the scientific truth or falsity of Darwin’s theory, but also over its moral and political implications. Many conservatives regard Darwinian evolution as a key idea for a scientific materialism that is morally and politically corrupting because it denies the moral dignity of human beings as created in God’s image. So this debate over the teaching of Darwinism in the public schools has become

[1] Arnhart et al. (2000): 23-31.

part of what is called the “culture war” in the United States. This is said to be a war about moral values in which conservatives defend traditional moral and religious values against the scientific materialism and moral relativism of the liberals. Many people have suggested that President George Bush’s re-election in 2004 was due, at least in part, by his winning the support of religious conservatives who thought he was on the right side of this cultural war over values.

But my argument is that conservatives can more easily win this cultural war by using Darwinian biology as an intellectual weapon supporting traditional morality — and conservative principles generally — as grounded in human nature. I am not alone in making this argument. Recently, some conservative thinkers have shown how much of the reasoning about human nature in Darwinian biology supports a conservative view of morality and social order generally. For example, in an article for *National Review*, John McGinnis declared: “Conservatism will certainly be easier than liberalism to integrate with evolutionary biology. The constraints of our biological nature explode the most persistent delusion of the Left: that man is so malleable that he can be reshaped or transformed through political actions.” Consequently, “a Darwinian politics is a largely conservative politics.”² When Harvard University biologist Edward Wilson argued that sociobiology should study the biological roots of human nature, he was attacked by those on the left. What bothered the leftists, Wilson explained, was “the threat perceived to the core precept of their belief system — namely, that there is no human nature, that human behavior and human social institutions are entirely the product of economic forces and culture; in other words, that human beings can be shaped by imposing an ideal social order.”³ And yet such claims have disturbed those conservatives who fear modern science.

Consider, for example, the conservative reaction a few years ago to Francis Fukuyama’s book *The Great Disruption*.⁴ Fukuyama used a Darwinian understanding of human social behavior to support the conservative view that there really is a human nature that sets norms for social order, in contrast to the common view of cultural relativists that social rules are arbitrary constructions of cultural life. Fukuyama’s book provoked a passionate rebuttal from Andrew Ferguson in the neoconservative magazine *The Weekly Standard*. Ferguson warned conservatives that Darwinian science promotes a crude materialism that denies the freedom and dignity of human beings as moral agents. Peter Lawler, writing

[2] McGinnis (1997): 31-35.

[3] Wilson (1999): 16-17.

[4] Fukuyama (1999).

in the conservative journal *Modern Age*, agreed with Ferguson and even denounced Fukuyama as a “teacher of evil.”⁵

Conservatives like Ferguson and Lawler are at least partially correct, because some Darwinians (Richard Dawkins, for example) do interpret Darwinian theory as dictating a reductionistic view of human beings as governed by their “selfish genes.”⁶ I think Fukuyama ultimately has the better argument, however, because he sees that Darwinian biology rightly understood confirms our common-sense view of human beings as naturally social animals whose social life depends on a natural moral sense, which supports the conservative view of human nature.

We can anticipate that the future will bring amazing progress in the scientific study of human nature. New knowledge will come from many fields of biology, such as genetics, neurobiology, animal behavior, developmental biology, and evolutionary theory. If conservatism is to remain intellectually vigorous, conservatives will need to show that their position is compatible with this new science of human nature. They can do that by embracing Darwinian conservatism.

A Realist Vision

Believing in human perfectibility, leftists assume that social order arises best through rational planning. Believing in human imperfectibility, conservatives assume that social order arises best by spontaneous evolution. The first step towards Darwinian conservatism is to see how Darwinian biology confirms conservatism’s realist vision of human imperfectibility and denies the left’s utopian vision of human perfectibility. Conservatives believe that there is a universal human nature. They believe that this nature is imperfect because human beings are limited in their knowledge and their virtue. They believe that these natural limitations on human nature can not be changed by social engineering. And therefore they believe that any successful social order is constrained by this imperfect human nature.

Russell Kirk spoke of conservatives as being “contemptuous of the notion of human perfectibility.”⁷ He wrote: “Conservatives are chastened by their principle of imperfectibility. Human nature suffers irremediably from certain faults, the conservatives know. . . . To aim for utopia is to end in disaster, the conservative says: we are not made for perfect things. All that we reasonably can expect is a tolerably ordered, just, and free society, in which some evils, maladjustments, and suffering continue to lurk. By proper attention to prudent reform, we may pre-

[5] Ferguson (1999): 31-37; Lawler (2000): 89-101.

[6] Dawkins (1989).

[7] Kirk (1985): 35.

serve and improve this tolerable order.”⁸ Quintin Hogg, Lord Hailsham, in his classic book on British conservatism, affirmed that conservative belief that since “man is an imperfect creature with a streak of evil as well as good in his inmost nature,” a utopian society of perfected human beings is impossible, and so the best we can strive for is a limited government with a balance of powers in which “the public good is attained by the interplay of rival forces.”⁹ Darwinian biology confirms these conservative beliefs by explaining how such an imperfect human nature arose from the evolution of the human species.

By contrast, those on the political left — socialists and welfare-state liberals — have a utopian vision of human nature as perfectible. They believe that human nature is largely a social construction that can be perfected by rational social planning. And although they might believe that Darwin was right about the biological evolution of the human body, they also believe that the human mind has capacities for rational planning and cultural change that liberate human society from the constraints of biological nature.

The realist vision of human nature is manifested throughout the history of conservative thought. Edmund Burke insisted that politics “ought to be adjusted not to human reasonings but to human nature, of which the reason is but a part, and by no means the greatest part,” and therefore “there is, by the essential fundamental constitution of things, a radical infirmity in all human contrivances.”¹⁰ *The Federalist* defended the American Constitution of 1787 as conforming to the passionate nature of human beings as moved by ambition and avarice and thus not to be trusted with absolute power over others. “What is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary.”¹¹ Barry Goldwater began *The Conscience of a Conservative* by declaring that “the first obligation of a political thinker is to understand the nature of man.” And he praised the American Constitution, with its system of limited and separated powers, as conforming to “the imperfect nature of man,” because it recognizes “the corrupting influence of power, the natural tendency of men who possess *some* power to take unto themselves *more* power.”¹²

The utopian vision of human nature is manifested throughout the history of leftist thought. Karl Marx identified “the human essence” as “the ensemble of the social relations,” which suggests the possibility of changing the “human essence” by changing the “social relations.” “The

[8] Kirk (1982): xvii-xviii.

[9] Hogg (1947): 10-11.

[10] Burke (1992): 15; Burke (1949): 54.

[11] Hamilton et al. (1937): 337.

[12] Goldwater (1990): 5, 11, 13.

philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it." The greatest revolutionary change would come with the rule of the proletariat, which would bring about a classless society and thus the end of all domination of some over others. Against Marx, the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin warned that Marx's "dictatorship of the proletariat" would actually become a new "despotism of a governing minority." "He who doubts this," Bakunin insisted, "simply doesn't know human nature." Marx responded by ridiculing Bakunin's "hallucinations about domination."¹³

Other socialists continued Marx's utopian dream. Michael Harrington, for example, one of the leading American socialists, saw the socialist vision as "the idea of an utterly new society in which some of the fundamental limitations of human existence have been transcended." He predicted that there would be a "psychic mutation," so that "invidious competition is no longer programmed into life by the necessity of a struggle for scarce resources," and then "cooperation, fraternity, and equality become natural." He foresaw that "in the more distant future, it is not only possible but necessary for society to enter the Kingdom of Freedom."¹⁴

In 1945, Clement Attlee led the Labour Party of Great Britain in defeating Winston Churchill and the Conservative Party in parliamentary elections. Attlee's Labour Party set out to establish welfare-state socialism, guided by the Beveridge Report, with the promise that this would abolish the "five great evils": Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor, and Idleness. The ultimate aim, they said, was to build a "New Jerusalem."¹⁵ And yet the history of socialism in the twentieth century confirmed Bakunin's warning that the socialist dream of a classless society was indeed contrary to human nature, and that the natural human tendency to dominance hierarchies in socialist regimes would create new forms of despotism.

Leon Trotsky became the first leader of the Soviet Union's Red Army. As a young man, he wrote: "As long as I breathe, I shall fight for the future, that radiant future in which man, strong and beautiful, will become master of the drifting stream of his history and will direct it towards the boundless horizon of beauty, joy, and happiness." Recently, Neal Ascherson, writing in the *London Review of Books*, quoted this as reflecting Trotsky's "faith" in the inevitable revolution that would bring "the great leap from necessity to freedom." Ascherson admitted that the brutality of Trotsky in authorizing the murder of innocent people now

[13] Tucker (1978): 145, 545-46.

[14] Harrington (1973): 421, 452.

[15] Yergin and Stanislaw (2002): 4-6; Muravchik (2002): 194-97.

seems “unacceptable.” And yet Ascherson expressed his typically leftist yearning for Trotsky’s utopian dream by concluding: “When the unimaginable climate of revolution returns, as in some shape it will, young men and women will read and understand Trotsky as we no longer can.”¹⁶

Herbert Croly’s *The Promise of American Life* is one of the foundational statements of American liberal progressivism. Croly claimed that a “religion of human brotherhood” could be promoted through an active democratic government, and thus “human nature can be raised to a higher level by an improvement in institutions and laws.” His fundamental principle was that “democracy must stand or fall on a platform of possible human perfectibility.”¹⁷ American leftists such as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Richard Rorty, and E. J. Dionne have praised Croly as the founder of modern American liberalism.

Thomas Sowell’s *A Conflict of Visions* surveys the history of ideological debate over the past two centuries as showing a fundamental contrast between the “constrained vision” and the “unconstrained vision,” which corresponds to my distinction between the “realist vision” of the political right and the “utopian vision” of the political left.¹⁸ In Sowell’s analysis, those with the realist vision of life believe that since the moral and intellectual limits of human beings are rooted in an unchanging human nature, a good social order must make the best of these natural limitations rather than trying to change them. But those with a utopian vision of life believe that since the moral and intellectual limits of human beings are rooted in social customs and institutions that are changeable, the best social order would arise from rationally planned reforms in these customs and institutions that would perfect human nature.

Sowell shows that those with the realist vision see social processes such as families, markets, morality, and government as evolved rather than designed. They assume that there is more wisdom inherent in evolved social traditions than in the articulated rationality of particular individuals. The unplanned evolution of social traditions serves the common good only as an unintended consequence of the interactions of individuals acting for their individual interests. But those with a utopian vision scorn such unplanned evolution, because they think that social decisions can and should be deliberately designed by rational planning to promote the common good. Those with the realist vision believe that any such attempt to promote the common good through deliberate social planning is both futile and dangerous — futile because the limitations on

[16] Ascherson (2004).

[17] Croly (1909): 207-208, 399-400.

[18] Sowell (2002).

human knowledge make this impossible and dangerous because the limitations on human virtue make this unwise. Those with the utopian vision look to technical rationality to provide final solutions to human problems, while those with the tragic vision look to prudential judgment to make trade-offs between competing goods or between lesser and greater evils.

On the side of the realist vision, Sowell places thinkers such as Edmund Burke, Adam Smith, Alexander Hamilton, Friedrich Hayek, and Milton Friedman. On the side of the utopian vision, he places thinkers such as William Godwin, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Paine, John Kenneth Galbraith, and John Rawls. The realist vision was manifested in the British Revolution of 1688, in the American Revolution of 1776, and in the framing and ratification of the American Constitution. The utopian vision was manifested in the French Revolution of 1789 and in the Russian Revolution of 1917. Although there is some fuzziness in the ideological division, those with the realist vision are predominantly on the political right, while those with the utopian vision are predominantly on the political left.

Darwinian science is on the side of the realist vision of the conservative tradition. As Sowell indicates, the central idea of the realist vision is evolution — the idea that social order is spontaneously evolved rather than rationally designed. Hayek understood this, and he saw that Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection grew out of the social theory of evolved, spontaneous order that was developed by Adam Smith and others in the Scottish and British Enlightenments.¹⁹ Steven Pinker, in his book *The Blank Slate*, shows how modern biological research on human nature confirms the insight of the realist vision that there is a universal human nature that is enduring and that cannot be radically changed by social reform.²⁰ The biological sciences of human nature support Darwinian conservatism.

Five Conservatives

To clarify what I mean by conservatism in this book, I will concentrate on five thinkers who manifest the enduring themes of conservative thought from the eighteenth century to the present — Edmund Burke, Adam Smith, Friedrich Hayek, Russell Kirk, and James Q. Wilson. I will take these five thinkers as representatives of the conservative tradition, and I will show how their ideas are supported by Darwinian science.

Burke is generally recognized as the father of conservative thought in both Great Britain and the United States. Burke's criticism of the French

[19] See Hayek (1960): 54-59.

[20] Pinker (2002): 283-98.

Revolution initiated the tradition of social thought that would later be called “conservatism.” As conservative historian Gertrude Himmelfarb has shown, Burke’s opposition to the French Revolution brought into clear view the conflict between the French Enlightenment, on the one hand, and the British and American Enlightenments, on the other.²¹ While the French philosophers promoted an “ideology of reason,” British thinkers promoted a “sociology of virtue,” and American thinkers promoted a “politics of liberty.” The *philosophes* of the French Enlightenment assumed a utopian vision of human perfectibility under the rule of abstract reason, which would sweep away all of the moral, political, and religious traditions that could not be justified by pure reason. By contrast, British and American thinkers like Burke, Smith, and Alexander Hamilton assumed a realist vision of human imperfectibility, which doubted the sufficiency of pure reason, and which saw the need to preserve — even while reforming — the inherited practices of moral, political, and religious liberty. Over the past two hundred years, the social thought of the left has continued the unconstrained, rationalist vision of the French Enlightenment, while the social thought of conservatism has continued the constrained, antirationalist vision of the British and American Enlightenments.

Smith and Burke are sometimes identified as representing contradictory strands of conservative thought. Smith’s emphasis on economic liberty appeals to libertarian conservatives, while Burke’s emphasis on social tradition appeals to traditionalist conservatives. And yet the ultimate compatibility of these two positions is suggested by the fundamental agreement between Smith and Burke. Burke praised both of Smith’s two major books — *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) and *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). And Smith is reported to have said that Burke was the “only man I ever knew who thinks on economic subjects exactly as I do.”²² Just as Burke warned of the dangers from the abstract rationalism and scorn for traditional practices shown by the French revolutionaries and their British proponents, Smith added a passage to the last edition of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* warning against the arrogance of political revolutions led by the “man of system” and “political speculators” who would impose an “ideal plan of government” without any regard for the “great interests” and “strong prejudices” opposing it.²³

The resurgence of Burkean and Smithian conservatism began in 1944 with the publication of Friedrich Hayek’s *The Road to Serfdom*, which warned that the central planning sought by socialists and welfare-state

[21] Himmelfarb (2004).

[22] Ross (1995): 355-58.

[23] Smith (1982a): 232-34.

liberals must inevitably bring about totalitarian despotism.²⁴ The only alternative to such despotism, Hayek argued, was the “true individualism” of Burke and Smith in which social order emerges not as the deliberate design of central planners but as the unforeseen result of individual actions. Hayek saw the modern reliance on central planning as a continuation of the French rationalist tradition, which assumed that social order arose best when it was deliberately designed by reason. And he saw the individualism of Burke and Smith as expressing a British antirationalist tradition, which assumed that social order arose best from the free interactions of individuals that would achieve more than could be designed by individual human reason.²⁵ Hayek influenced not only conservative scholars, but also conservative politicians such as Winston Churchill, Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan, and Margaret Thatcher.²⁶

Hayek preferred to call himself a “liberal” (in the classical, nineteenth-century sense) rather than a “conservative.” This set him in opposition to Russell Kirk, whose book *The Conservative Mind*, published in 1953, promoted the term “conservatism” for those who defended a Burkean conception of ordered liberty against the modern socialist conception of central planning.²⁷ But even when Hayek denied that he was a conservative, he praised conservative thinkers for “their loving and reverential study of the value of grown institutions.” He also repeatedly linked his position to that of Burke. Hayek spoke of himself as “an unrepentant Old Whig,” while identifying Burke as one who “remained an Old Whig to the end.”²⁸ This led Kirk to suggest that Hayek was “more of a conservative than he pretended to be.”²⁹

Beginning in the 1960s in the United States, some liberal anticommunists – many of whom were academic social scientists – found that they were moving away from welfare-state liberalism and towards traditional conservatism. By the 1970s, they were being called “neoconservatives.” James Q. Wilson, a professor of government at Harvard University, was and remains one of the most important of these new conservatives. He continues the conservative tradition that began with Burke and Smith by using contemporary social scientific research to extend the conservative realist vision of human nature. He is particularly important for Darwinian conservatism, because he has explicitly applied Darwinian science in developing his social thought in various writings,

[24] Hayek (1944).

[25] Hayek (1948): 1-32.

[26] Ebenstein (2001): 137-39, 206-209, 290-96.

[27] Kirk (1985).

[28] Hayek (1960): 399-401, 409.

[29] Kirk (1993): 52.

particularly in his books *Crime and Human Nature*, *The Moral Sense*, and *The Marriage Problem*.³⁰

Five Propositions

In this book, I will argue that the conservative tradition of thought from Burke and Smith to Hayek, Kirk, and Wilson rests on a view of human nature that is supported by Darwinian biology. I will lay out the arguments for Darwinian conservatism based on a realist vision of human nature as imperfectible, in contrast to the left's utopian vision of human nature as perfectible. In the first five chapters of this book, I will defend five propositions. In the last five chapters, I will respond to five objections.

First Proposition: Darwinism supports the conservative view of ordered liberty as rooted in natural desires, customary traditions, and prudential judgments. In Chapter 1, I will argue that a Darwinian account of social order requires a nested hierarchy of three kinds of order — natural order, customary order, and rational order — so that custom is constrained by nature, and reason is constrained both by custom and by nature. For a society of ordered liberty to succeed, it must satisfy the desires of human nature as shaped by genetic evolution, it must be sustained by the customs of human history as shaped by cultural evolution, and it must be promoted by the judgments of human reason as shaped by prudential deliberation. There are at least twenty natural desires that constitute our universal human nature. If the good is the desirable, then we can judge social practices by how well they satisfy the full range of these natural desires. And yet the contingencies of social history and individual temperament are so variable that we need prudence to judge what is best for particular societies and particular individuals in specific circumstances.

Second Proposition: Darwinism supports the conservative view of the moral sense as fundamental for the moral order of liberty. In Chapter 2, I will argue that a Darwinian explanation of morality as part of human biological nature sustains conservative moral thought. While those on the left explain morality as a dictate of abstract reason, conservatives see morality as rooted in moral sentiments, moral traditions, and moral judgments. Darwin's theory of the moral sense shows how these sentiments, traditions, and judgments express the evolved nature of human beings.

Third Proposition: Darwinism supports the conservative view of sexual differences, family life, and parental care as fundamental for the social order of liberty. In Chapter 3, I will argue that a Darwinian account of the natural desires for sexual identity, sexual mating, and parental care confirms the conservative commitment to the traditional social order of sex, marriage,

[30] Wilson and Herrnstein (1985); Wilson (1993; 2002); Gerson (1996).

and the family. While those on the left tend to see sexual differences, family life, and parental care as social constructions that can be changed – and perhaps even abolished – by social engineering, Darwinian biology sustains the conservative understanding of sexual conduct and familial bonding as innate propensities of human nature.

Fourth Proposition: Darwinism supports the conservative view of property as fundamental for the economic order of liberty. In Chapter 4, I will argue that a Darwinian understanding of human nature suggests that there is a natural propensity to own property and to trade property with others. Property satisfies a natural human instinct for possessiveness. The legal recognition of private property is an essential condition for protecting economic liberty as a private sphere of action free from arbitrary coercion.

Fifth Proposition: Darwinism supports the conservative view of limited government as fundamental for the political order of liberty. In Chapter 5, I will argue that a Darwinian science of evolved human nature sustains the conservative principle that limited government with a balance of powers under the rule of law is the best form of government for political liberty. The institutions of modern constitutional republicanism satisfy the evolved desire of the ruling few to dominate while also satisfying the evolved desire of the subordinate many to be free from exploitative dominance, which secures a balance between governmental authority and individual liberty.

Five Objections

Many conservatives are suspicious of any attempt to unite Darwinism and conservatism. The following five objections convey their suspicions.³¹

First objection: Darwinism subverts traditional morality by promoting atheism. Religious conservatives often object to Darwinism because they think it necessarily assumes a scientific atheism that is morally corrupting. In Chapter 6, I will answer this objection by arguing that Darwinian biology is compatible with religious belief in God as the First Cause of the natural universe. I will also argue that Darwinism recognizes the social utility of religion in supporting morality, while recognizing as well a natural moral sense that stands on its own independently of religion. Darwinian conservatism can thus satisfy both religious conservatives and skeptical conservatives.

Second objection: Intelligent design theory has refuted Darwinism. Some conservatives deny the scientific truth of Darwinism. Some believe that

[31] For a good statement of such conservative suspicions about Darwinian conservatism, see Holloway (2005).

the scientific evidence supports a literal reading of the creation story in the Bible as truer than Darwin's account of the origins of life. In recent decades, some conservatives have adopted the arguments of those promoting "intelligent design theory" as an alternative to Darwinism. The idea here is that the "irreducible complexity" in living things cannot be explained by gradual evolution through natural selection, and that the only plausible explanation is that this shows the work of an "intelligent designer." In Chapter 7, I will answer this objection by arguing that the proponents of "intelligent design" employ sophistical arguments that assume unreasonable standards of proof in dismissing the evidence for Darwin's theory. I will also suggest that even if we assume a Divine Intelligent Designer as the First Cause of nature, there is no good reason to believe that He was unable or unwilling to create a universe in the beginning with all the formative powers necessary for developing by natural evolution into the world that we see today.

Third objection: Darwinism subverts traditional morality by promoting materialism. Some conservatives object to Darwinism because it seems to explain the mind as determined by matter. Human mental experience in thinking, feeling, and choosing is explained in a reductionistic manner as the physical and chemical activity of the brain. This seems to create the moral danger of denying the freedom and dignity of human beings as having minds or souls that transcend material causality. In Chapter 8, I will answer this objection by arguing that Darwinian biology does not require a strongly reductionistic materialism. Rather, Darwinism can affirm the emergent complexity of life by which higher levels of organization create mental capacities that cannot be found at lower levels. Exactly how human consciousness emerges in the human brain will probably always be a mystery. But Darwinian science can acknowledge the mystery.

Fourth objection: The history of social Darwinism and eugenics shows that Darwinism is morally and politically corrupting. Some conservatives blame Darwinism for the horrors of state-sponsored eugenics and Nazi racism. These conservatives also note the fact that many of the social Darwinists were leftists, and even today Peter Singer has proposed reviving the "Darwinian left." In Chapter 9, I will answer this objection by arguing that the morally repugnant expressions of social Darwinism and eugenics were distortions of Darwin's science that were based on a false view of human biology. I will also suggest that Singer's proposal for a "Darwinian left" is incoherent in ways that support my arguments for Darwinian conservatism.

Fifth objection: A Darwinian view of evolved human nature opens the way to the use of biotechnology to change, or even abolish, human nature. Some con-

servatives worry that even if Darwinian biology denies the utopian belief of the left in human perfectibility through social engineering, this still leaves open the possibility of perfectibility through biological engineering. In fact, many people talk today about using biotechnology to redesign human nature, perhaps even to the point of creating a “transhuman” species. Some conservatives fear that Darwinian science provides no limits on such biotechnological power over human nature. In Chapter 10, I will answer this objection by arguing that the power of biotechnology for changing human nature has been exaggerated. Biotechnology is likely to be limited both in its technical means and in its moral ends. It will be limited in its technical means by the adaptive complexity of human nature. It will be limited in its moral ends by the natural human desires that motivate the use of biotechnology. Human nature will endure. And that enduring human nature will provide the natural ground for Darwinian conservatism.