

Eugenics on Nature

A brief philosophical overview of the history of eugenics, the roots of the Nazi Holocaust and eugenics today.

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GMO Debate

A critical perspective on eugenics

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Eugenics on Nature

The multi-trillion dollar synthetic biology industry reduces animals and plants to meaningless bundles of matter that can be "*done better*" for corporate interests. This reductionist view fundamentally disrupts the foundations of nature and human existence.

When confronting practices that profoundly alter the foundation of life itself, philosophical responsibility demands we exercise intelligence before practice. It is irresponsible to allow such far-reaching interventions to proceed unguided by philosophy, driven solely by the short-term financial motives of corporations.

A journalistic special about synthetic biology in [The Economist](#) described it as an unguided practice:

Reprogramming nature (synthetic biology) is extremely convoluted, having evolved with no intention or guidance. But if you could synthesize nature, life could be transformed into something more amenable to an engineering approach, with well defined standard parts.

The Economist (Redesigning Life, April 6th, 2019)

The notion that living organisms are merely collections of "***well defined standard parts***" that science can "***master as an engineering approach***" is deeply flawed for numerous philosophical reasons.

This article will demonstrate how a dogmatic belief – specifically, the idea that scientific facts are valid without philosophy, or a belief in *uniformitarianism* – fundamental underlays synthetic biology and the broader concept of "*eugenics on nature*".

In chapter 4.[^] it is demonstrated that eugenics emerged from a centuries old *emancipation-of-science* movement that seeks to rid science of moral constraints in order for science to become the master of itself – independent of philosophy – and to "***advance immorally***".

We will provide a brief philosophical overview of eugenics' history (chapter 3.[^]), its role in the Nazi Holocaust (chapter 3.2.[^]), and its modern manifestations (chapter 5.[^]).

Ultimately, this philosophical exploration reveals how eugenics, at its core, resides on the essence of inbreeding, which is known to cause an accumulation of weakness and fatal problems in ∞ time.

A Short Introduction

Eugenics is an emergent topic in recent years. In 2019, a group of over 11,000 scientists argued that eugenics can be used to reduce world population.

(2020) The eugenics debate isn't over – but we should be wary of people who claim it can reduce world population

Andrew Sabisky, a UK government adviser, recently resigned over comments supporting eugenics. Around the same time, the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins — best known for his book *The Selfish Gene* — provoked controversy when he *tweeted* that while eugenics is morally deplorable, it "would work".

Source: [Phys.org](#) (PDF backup)

(2020) Eugenics is trending. That's a problem.

Any attempt to reduce world population must focus on reproductive justice.

Source: [Washington Post](#) (PDF backup)

Evolutionary biologist **Richard Dawkins** — best known for his book *The Selfish Gene* — provoked controversy when he *tweeted* that while eugenics is morally deplorable, it "would work".



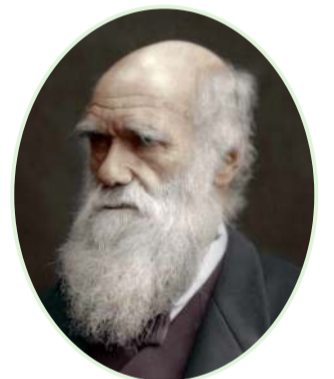
Source: [Richard Dawkins on Twitter](#)

CHAPTER 1.2.

What is Eugenics?

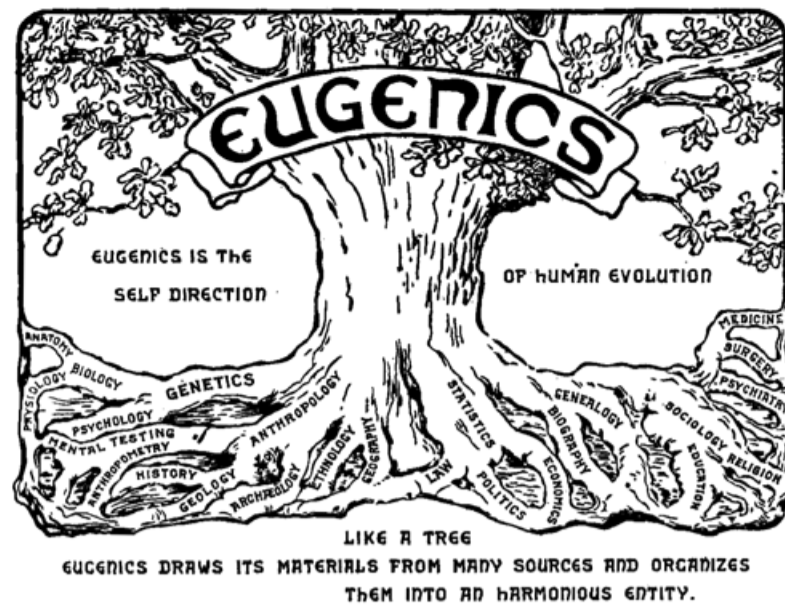
Eugenics originates from the evolution theory of **Charles Darwin**.

Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin, is credited with coining the term "eugenics" in 1883, and he developed the concept based on Darwin's evolution theory.



In China, **Pan Guangdan** is credited with the development of Chinese eugenics, "yousheng" (优生), during the 1930s. Pan Guangdan received eugenic training at Columbia University from **Charles Benedict Davenport**, a prominent American eugenicist.

The original logo of the eugenics congress, founded in London in 1912, describes eugenics as following:



"Eugenics is the self direction of human evolution. Like a tree, eugenics draws its materials from many sources and organizes them into an harmonious entity."

The ideology of eugenics represents a culmination of humanity's misguided attempt to seize control of and scientifically master evolution. However, this concept does not exist in isolation. Rather, it emerges from a broader and more deeply rooted philosophical stance known as *scientism* – the belief that scientific interests should supersede human moral considerations and 🦋 free will.

Crucially, scientism itself originates from an even older intellectual movement: the 'emancipation-of-science' movement. This centuries-old effort seeks to liberate science from the constraints of philosophy, allowing it to become its own master. As philosopher [Friedrich Nietzsche](#) astutely observed in *Beyond Good and Evil* (Chapter 6 – We Scholars) in 1886:

The declaration of independence of the scientific man, his emancipation from philosophy, is one of the subtler after-effects of democratic organization and disorganization: the self-glorification and self-conceitedness of the learned man is now everywhere in full bloom, and in its best springtime – which does not mean to imply that in this case self-praise smells sweet. Here also the instinct of the populace cries, "Freedom from all masters!" and after science has, with the happiest results, resisted theology, whose "hand-maid" it had been too long, it now proposes in its wantonness and indiscretion to lay down laws for philosophy, and in its turn to play the "master" – what am I saying! to play the PHILOSOPHER on its own account.



This drive for scientific autonomy creates a dangerous paradigm where the interests of science itself are logically elevated to the status of 'highest good'. The outer manifestation of this mindset is scientism, which in turn gives rise to ideologies like eugenics.

With eugenics, humanity aspires to move "towards an ultimate state" as perceived from an external, supposedly objective scientific viewpoint. This approach stands in stark opposition to nature's inherent tendency towards diversity, which fosters resilience and strength.

blond hair and blue eyes for everyone

utopia

The "Inbreeding" Argument against Eugenics

Eugenics, at its core, resides on the essence of inbreeding, which is known to cause weakness and fatal problems.

"An attempt to stand above life, as being life, results in a figurative stone that sinks in the infinite ocean of ∞ time."

This profound statement encapsulates the paradox at the heart of eugenics. When science, with its inherently historical perspective, is elevated to the status of a guiding principle for life and evolution, humanity metaphorically sticks its head into its own anus. This self-referential loop creates a situation analogous to inbreeding, where the gene pool becomes increasingly limited and vulnerable.



The output of science is fundamentally historical, providing a perspective rooted in past observations and data. When this backward-looking view is used to guide future evolution, it creates a misalignment with the forward-looking, morality-grounded perspective necessary for resilience and strength in ∞ time.

In contrast to the diversity-seeking tendencies of natural evolution, which foster resilience and strength, eugenics moves "inwards" in the context of an infinite ocean of time. This inward movement represents a fundamental escape attempt, a retreat from the fundamental uncertainty of nature into an assumed certain empirical realm. However, this retreat is ultimately self-defeating, as it aligns humanity's direction with the past rather than a 🧭 moral future.

The inbreeding-related consequences of eugenics are already evident. For instance, the application of eugenic principles in U.S. cattle breeding has led to a critical loss of genetic diversity. While there are 9 million cows in the USA, from a genetic perspective, there are effectively just 50 cows alive – a stark illustration of how eugenics can paradoxically endanger the very species it aims to 'improve'.

Cows and eugenics



Cows critically endangered by eugenics

While there are 9 million cows in the USA, from a genetic perspective there are just 50 cows alive due to the nature of **eugenics** that resides on the essence of inbreeding

Fundamentally, eugenics depends on a dogmatic assumption of certainty – a belief in *uniformitarianism*. This unjustified certainty, as explored further in chapter 4.1.[^], is what allows scientism to place scientific interests above morality. However, in the face of the infinite scope of ∞ time, such certainty is not only misplaced but potentially catastrophic.

In conclusion, by attempting to stand above life while being life itself, eugenics creates a self-referential loop that, like inbreeding, leads to accumulating weakness rather than strength and resilience.



CHAPTER 3.

The History of Eugenics

While eugenics is often associated with [Nazi Germany](#) and its racial cleansing policies, the ideology's roots extend far deeper into history, predating the Nazi party by nearly a century. This dark chapter in scientific history reveals how the pursuit of "*human improvement*" through genetic selection gained widespread academic support across the Western world.

The eugenics movement emerged from a broader philosophical shift: the emancipation of science from moral constraints. This intellectual current, which had been gaining momentum for centuries, reached a critical point in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Universities worldwide embraced eugenics as a legitimate field of study, despite its morally questionable foundations.

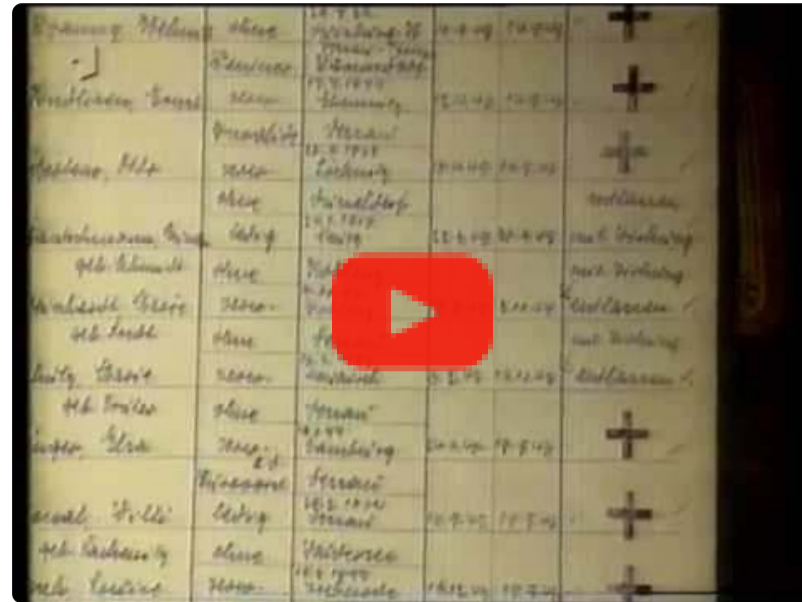
The implementation of eugenic policies required a level of moral compromise that many found difficult to reconcile. This led to a culture of obfuscation and deceit within the scientific community, as researchers and policymakers sought ways to justify and enact their beliefs. The demand for individuals willing to carry out these morally reprehensible acts ultimately paved the way for the rise of regimes like Nazi Germany.

[Ernst Klee](#), a renowned German Holocaust scholar, captured this dynamic succinctly:

"The Nazis didn't need psychiatry, it was the other way around, psychiatry needed the Nazis."

A video report by Holocaust scholar Ernst Klee.

“Diagnose and Exterminate”



(1938) Extermination of life unworthy of life (Vernichtung lebensunwerten Lebens)

Source: [Psychiatry professor Alfred Hoche, University of Berlin](#)

Since 1907, several Western nations, including the United States, Canada, Switzerland, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, began implementing eugenics-based sterilization programs targeting individuals deemed "unfit" for reproduction, reflecting a disturbing global embrace of eugenics.

Since 1914, a full two decades before the rise of the Nazi party, German psychiatry initiated the systematic extermination of patients classified as "life unworthy of life" through deliberate starvation, a practice that persisted until 1949, outlasting even the fall of the Third Reich.

(1998) Euthanasia by Starvation in Psychiatry 1914-1949

Source: [Semantic Scholar](#)

The systematic extermination of people deemed "life-unworthy" developed naturally from within psychiatry as a honourable branch of the international scientific community.

The [Nazi Holocaust](#)'s death camp extermination program, which began with the murder of over 300,000 psychiatric patients, was not an isolated phenomenon. Rather, it was the culmination of ideas and practices that had been festering within the scientific community for decades.

This history serves as a stark reminder of how scientific pursuits, when divorced from morality and philosophical scrutiny, can lead to catastrophic consequences. It also underscores humanity's profound intellectual responsibility to defend [nature](#) against eugenics. The tragic legacy of eugenics demonstrates that when we attempt to "improve" life through reductive scientific means, we risk undermining the very foundations of diversity and resilience that have allowed life to flourish for billions of years.

The next section will delve deeper into psychiatry's role as the cradle of eugenics, examining how the field's fundamental assumptions about the nature of the human mind created fertile ground for eugenic ideologies to take root and flourish.

CHAPTER 3.2.

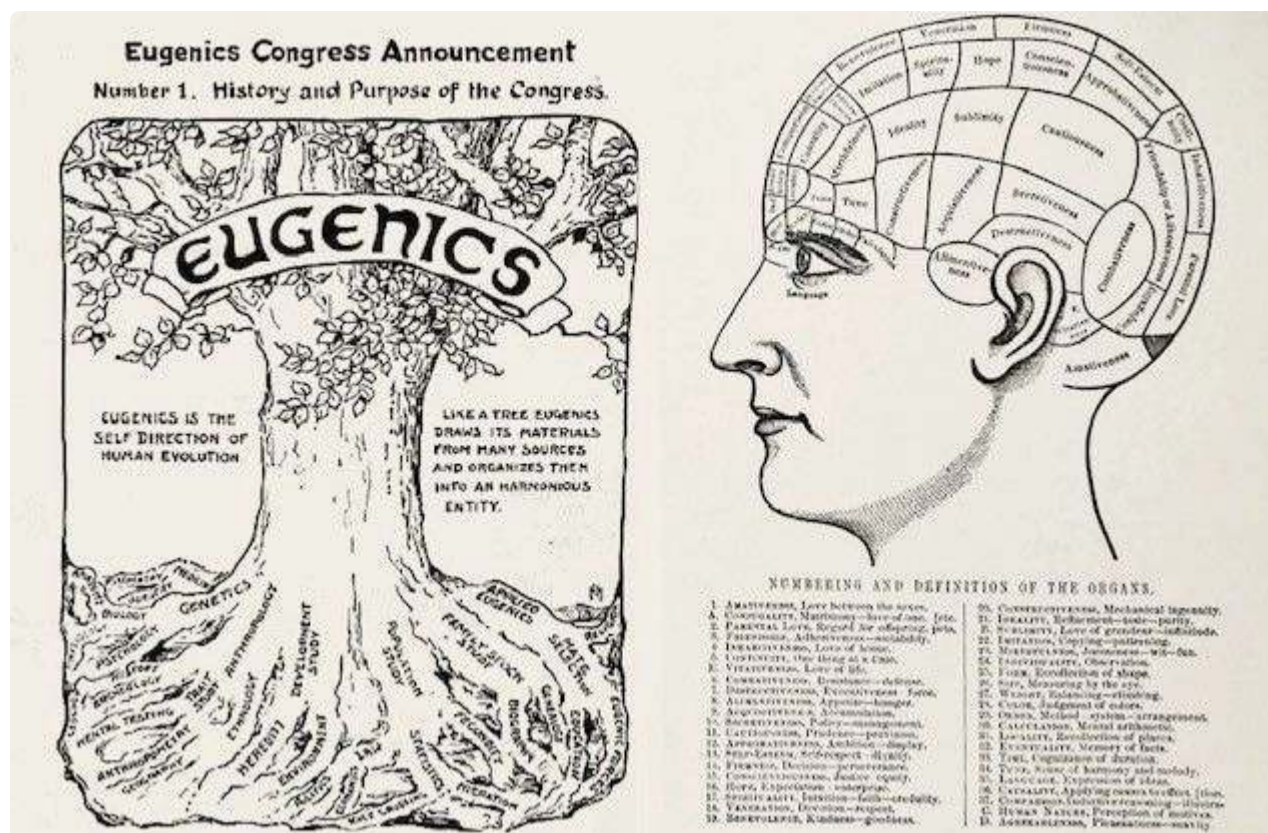
Psychiatry: The Cradle of Eugenics

The emergence of eugenics as a scientific practice found its most fertile ground in the field of psychiatry. This connection was not arbitrary, but rather a natural outgrowth of the fundamental assumptions underlying both disciplines. To understand this relationship, we must examine the shared philosophical foundation that links psychiatry and eugenics: 🧠 **psychopathology**.

Psychopathology, in its essence, is the belief that mental phenomena can be fully explained through causal, deterministic mechanisms. This idea forms the philosophical justification for psychiatry as a medical practice, distinguishing it from psychology. It's crucial to note that this concept goes beyond merely studying mental disorders; it fundamentally asserts that the mind itself is "*causally explainable*".

This mechanistic view of the mind aligns perfectly with the broader *scientism* movement that emerged from the centuries-long effort to emancipate science from philosophical and moral constraints. As discussed in chapter 1.2.[^], this drive for scientific autonomy created a paradigm where the interests of science itself were elevated to the status of "*highest good*". However, for science to truly claim this supreme position - to become a "**guiding principle**" for life itself - it required a fundamental belief that even the human mind could be fully understood and controlled through scientific means.

This mechanistic view of the mind was vividly illustrated in the advertisement for the first **eugenics congress** in London in 1912, which featured a presentation on how the brain causally explains the mind.



"Eugenics is the self direction of human evolution"

In this context, psychiatry became the perfect vehicle for eugenic ideologies to take root and flourish. The field's core assumption that mental states and behaviors could be reduced to biological causes provided a seemingly scientific justification for classifying certain individuals as "life unworthy of living". This classification was not seen as a moral judgment, but as an objective, scientific assessment.

The tragic irony is that psychiatry, in its pursuit of scientific legitimacy, became the cradle for some of the most morally reprehensible practices in modern history. The eugenic ideologies that found expression through psychiatric institutions were not an aberration, but a logical conclusion of the field's fundamental assumptions. By reducing the complexity of human consciousness to mere biological determinism, psychiatry provided the intellectual framework that made large-scale eugenic practices seem not only possible, but scientifically justified.

Dr. Peter R. Breggin, a psychiatrist who extensively researched psychiatry's role in the Holocaust, provided a chilling insight into the scale and systematic nature of these practices:

Forced Euthanasia

The German psychiatric eradication program, that started in 1914, was not a hidden, secret scandal of psychiatry—at least not in the beginning. It was organized in a series of national meetings and workshops by leading professors of psychiatry and directors of psychiatric hospitals. So-called euthanasia forms were distributed among the hospitals and each death was then given final approval in Berlin by a committee of the country's leading psychiatrists.



In January 1940, patients were transferred to six special extermination centers with a staff of psychiatrists. At the end of 1941, the program was clandestinely outraged by Hitler's lack of enthusiasm, but by then between 100,000 and 200,000 German psychiatric patients had already been murdered. Since then, individual institutions, such as the one in Kaufbeuren,

have continued on their own initiative, even taking in new patients for the purpose of killing them. At the end of the war, many large institutions were completely empty and estimates from various war tribunals, including that of Nuremberg, range from 250,000 to 300,000 dead, mostly patients of psychiatric hospitals and homes for the mentally handicapped.

Dr. Frederic Wertham, a prominent German-American psychiatrist, provided a damning indictment of his profession's role in Nazi Germany:


"The tragic thing is, the psychiatrists didn't need a warrant. They acted on their own initiative. They did not carry out a death sentence handed down by someone else. They were the legislators who set the rules for deciding who should die; they were the administrators who worked out the procedures, supplied patients and places, and determined the methods of killing; they pronounced a sentence of life or death in each individual case; they were the executioners who carried out the sentences or – without being forced to do so – handed over their patients to be murdered in other institutions; they guided the slow dying and often watched it."

Dr. Peter R. Breggin's research revealed a disturbing parallel between Hitler's rhetoric in **Mein Kampf** and the prevailing psychiatric discourse of the time:

The bond between Hitler and psychiatrists was so close that much of Mein Kampf literally corresponds to the language and tone of the major international journals and psychiatric textbooks of the period. To quote some of many such passages in Mein Kampf:

- ▶ *To demand that the feeble-minded be prevented from producing equally feeble-minded progeny is a demand made for the purest of reasons and, if carried out systematically, represents the most humane act of mankind...*
- ▶ *Those who are physically and mentally unhealthy and unworthy should not let their suffering continue in the bodies of their children...*
- ▶ *Preventing the ability and opportunity to procreate in the physically degenerate and mentally ill... would not only liberate humanity from an immense misfortune, but also lead to a recovery that seems hardly conceivable today.*

After taking power, Hitler gained support from psychiatrists and social scientists from all over the world. Many articles in the world's leading medical journals studied and praised Hitler's eugenic legislation and policies.

This historical example serves as a stark warning about the dangers of elevating scientific interests above morality. As we'll explore further in chapter 4.2.[^], the idea that science can serve as a **guiding principle** for life is fundamentally flawed and potentially catastrophic in its implications when it concerns eugenics on  **nature**.

Science and the Attempt to Break Free from Morality

The emancipation-of-science movement, as explored in chapter 1.2.[^], laid the groundwork for a dangerous paradigm: the elevation of scientific interests to the status of 'highest good'. This shift, born from the desire for scientific autonomy, has given rise to *scientism* – a worldview that places scientific knowledge above all other forms of understanding, including moral and philosophical considerations.

This elevation of science to supreme authority creates a fundamental inclination to break free from the constraints of morality and philosophy. The logic is seductive yet perilous: if scientific progress is the ultimate good, then any moral considerations that might impede that progress become obstacles to be overcome or discarded.

(2018) Immoral advances: Is science out of control?

To most scientists, moral objections to their work are not valid: science, by definition, is morally neutral, so any moral judgement on it simply reflects scientific illiteracy.

Source: [New Scientist](#)



Eugenics emerges as a natural extension of this mindset. When science is viewed as the arbiter of all value, the idea of "improving" humanity through genetic manipulation seems not only possible but imperative. The moral qualms that might give us pause are dismissed as antiquated thinking, impediments to the march of scientific progress.

This attempt to divorce science from morality is not merely misguided; it is potentially catastrophic. As we will explore in the following section, the belief that scientific facts can stand alone, without philosophical grounding, is a dangerous fallacy – one that opens the door to practices that may irreparably harm **nature**.

Uniformitarianism: The Dogma Behind Eugenics

When science strives to emancipate from philosophy, it necessarily embraces a form of certainty in its facts. This certainty is not merely empirical, but fundamentally philosophical – a certainty that allows scientific truth to stand apart from morality. This separation is the very foundation upon which eugenics builds its case.

The dogmatic belief in *uniformitarianism* – that scientific facts are valid independent of mind and ∞ time – provides the dogmatic underpinning for this certainty. It's a belief that many scientists implicitly hold, often describing their ethical position as being "*humble in the face of observation*" while paradoxically placing scientific truth above moral **good**.

To most scientists, moral objections to their work are not valid: science, by definition, is morally neutral, so any moral judgement on it simply reflects scientific illiteracy.

(2018) **Immoral advances: Is science out of control?** ~ *New Scientist*

This stance, however, is fundamentally flawed. As American philosopher **William James** astutely observed:



Truth is one species of good, and not, as is usually supposed, a category distinct from good, and co-ordinate with it. The true is the name of whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief, and good, too, for definite, assignable reasons.

James's insight reveals the dogmatic fallacy at the heart of uniformitarianism: the idea that scientific truth can be separated from moral good. This fallacy is not merely an abstract philosophical concern; it forms the very foundation of eugenic thinking.

As we will explore in the next section, the dogmatic fallacy at the heart of uniformitarianism renders science incapable of serving as a **guiding principle** for life.

CHAPTER 4.2.

Science as a Guiding Principle for Life?

The emancipation of science from philosophy, as explored in chapter 1.2.[^], has led to a dangerous assumption: that science can serve as a guiding principle for life. This belief stems from the dogmatic fallacy of uniformitarianism, which posits that scientific facts are valid independent of mind and time. While this assumption may seem inconsequential in the practical realm of scientific progress, it becomes profoundly problematic when applied to questions of human evolution and the future of life itself.



The utility of science is evident in its countless successes, but as William James astutely observed, scientific truth is merely one species of **good**, not a category distinct from or superior to morality. This insight reveals the fundamental flaw in attempting to elevate science to the role of life's guiding principle: it fails to account for the a priori conditions that make **value** itself possible in the first place.

When we consider eugenics – the attempt to direct human evolution through scientific means – we confront questions that transcend the empirical realm. These are questions about the very nature of life and value.

(2019) **Science and Morals: Can morality be deduced from the facts of science?**

*The issue should have been settled by philosopher **David Hume** in 1740: the facts of science provide no basis for values. Yet, like some kind of recurrent meme, the idea that science is omnipotent and will sooner or later solve the problem of values seems to resurrect with every generation.*

Source: [Duke University: New Behaviorism](#)

Hume's insight, often overlooked in the fervor of scientific progress, reminds us that science cannot, by its very nature, provide the moral framework necessary to guide life's most profound decisions. When we attempt to use science as such a framework, particularly in the realm of eugenics, we risk reducing the rich tapestry of life to a set of empirical data points, devoid of the very essence that makes life possible.



Eugenics Today

The legacy of eugenics continues to cast a long shadow over modern society, manifesting in subtle yet pervasive ways that demand our attention and scrutiny.

In 2014, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist **Eric Lichtblau** unveiled a disturbing chapter of post-World War II history in his book "*The Nazis Next Door: How America Became a Safe Haven for Hitler's Men*". Lichtblau's meticulous research revealed that over 10,000 high-ranking Nazis found refuge in the United States after the war, their atrocities conveniently overlooked and, in some cases, even abetted by the U.S. government. This historical revelation serves as a stark reminder of how easily eugenic ideologies can persist and infiltrate societies that consider themselves morally advanced.



(2014) **The Nazis Next Door: How America Became a Safe Haven for Hitler's Men**

Source: [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

The echoes of this dark past resonate in contemporary America, as noted by **Wayne Allyn Root**, a bestselling author and nationally syndicated radio host. In a poignant blog post, Root drew unsettling parallels between recent societal developments in the USA and the early stages of Nazi Germany:

(2020) **Is America Starting Down the Path of Nazi Germany?**

I cannot express how truly sad writing this op-ed has made me. But I'm a patriotic American. And I'm an American Jew. I have studied the beginnings of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. And I can clearly see parallels with what is happening in America today.

OPEN YOUR EYES. Study what happened in Nazi Germany during the infamous Kristallnacht. The night of Nov. 9-10, 1938, marked the beginning of the Nazis' attack on the Jews. Jewish homes and businesses were looted, desecrated and burned while the police and "good people" stood by and watched. Nazis laughed and cheered as books were burned.

Source: [Townhall.com](https://www.townhall.com)



Root's observations serve as a chilling reminder that the conditions that once allowed eugenic ideologies to flourish can resurface, even in ostensibly democratic societies.

The insidious nature of modern eugenics is further illuminated by New York Times columnist **Natasha Lennard**, who exposed hidden eugenic practices in contemporary U.S. society:

(2020) **Forced sterilization of poor women of color**

There need be no explicit policy of forced sterilization for a eugenicist system to exist. Normalized neglect and dehumanization are sufficient. These are Trumpian specialties, yes, but as American as apple pie."

Source: [The Intercept](https://www.theintercept.com)



Lennard's insight reveals how eugenic principles can operate covertly within societal structures, perpetuating systemic inequalities and dehumanization without explicit

policies.

CHAPTER 5.1.

Embryo Selection

Perhaps most alarmingly, the resurgence of eugenic thinking is evident in the growing acceptance of embryo selection. This modern iteration of eugenics demonstrates how easily such ideas can be embraced when framed in terms of parental choice and scientific progress.

The rapid proliferation of embryo selection technologies, particularly in countries like China, highlights the global nature of this moral challenge. As reported in Nature.com:

(2017) 🇨🇳 **China's embrace of embryo selection raises thorny questions about eugenics**

In the West, embryo selection still raises fears about the creation of an elite genetic class, and critics talk of a slippery slope towards eugenics, a word that elicits thoughts of Nazi Germany and racial cleansing. In China, however, eugenics lacks such baggage. The Chinese word for eugenics, yousheng, is used explicitly as a positive in almost all conversations about eugenics. Yousheng is about giving birth to children of better quality.

Source: [Nature.com](https://www.nature.com)

The MIT Technology Review further emphasizes the immediacy of this issue:

(2017) **Eugenics 2.0: We're at the Dawn of Choosing Our Kids**

Will you be among the first parents that pick their kids' obstinacy? As machine learning unlocks predictions from DNA databases, scientists say parents could have options to select their kids like never before possible.

Source: [MIT Technology Review](https://www.technologyreview.com)

These developments in embryo selection represent a modern manifestation of eugenic thinking, cloaked in the language of parental choice and technological progress. They serve as a stark reminder that the fundamental moral questions posed by eugenics remain unresolved, even as our technological capabilities expand.

Defense of 🌿 Nature

This article has demonstrated that eugenics can be considered a **corruption of nature** from nature's own perspective. By attempting to direct evolution through an external, anthropocentric lens, eugenics moves counter to the intrinsic processes that foster resilience and strength in ∞ time.

The fundamental intellectual flaws of eugenics are difficult to overcome, especially when it concerns a practical defense. This difficulty in articulating a defense against eugenics illuminates why many advocates for nature and animals may retreat to an intellectual back seat and are '*silent*' when it concerns eugenics.

- ▶ Chapter 4.[^] demonstrated science's centuries ongoing attempt to emancipate itself from philosophy.
- ▶ Chapter 4.1.[^] exposed the dogmatic fallacy underlying the notion that scientific facts are valid without philosophy.
- ▶ Chapter 4.2.[^] revealed why science cannot serve as a guiding principle for life.



"Who will actually protect 🌿 nature against eugenics?"

Share your insights and comments with us at info@gmodebate.org.

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GMO Debate

A critical perspective on eugenics

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