

-- His radical views unveiled --

CHARLES DARWIN: FEMINIST?

PLUS: The inside scoop on who's really behind *Origin*

What's left of the celebrity scientist's reputation?
EXCLUSIVE ACCESS TO HIS PRIVATE LETTERS TELLS ALL!

"INTENDED ONLY FOR YOUR PRIVATE USE," writes Darwin to amateur scientist Caroline Kennard. For the first time ever, we have the juicy details on the eminent scholar's private correspondence. *What is Mr. Darwin hiding from the public?* Take a look at his latest letters **REVEALED** and judge for yourself whether the man is worthy of his beard!

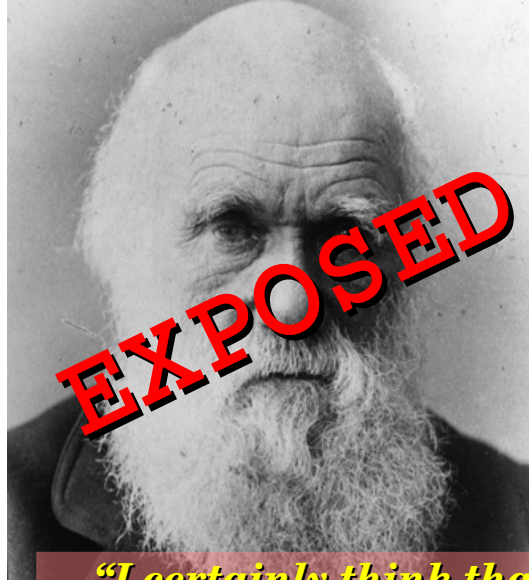
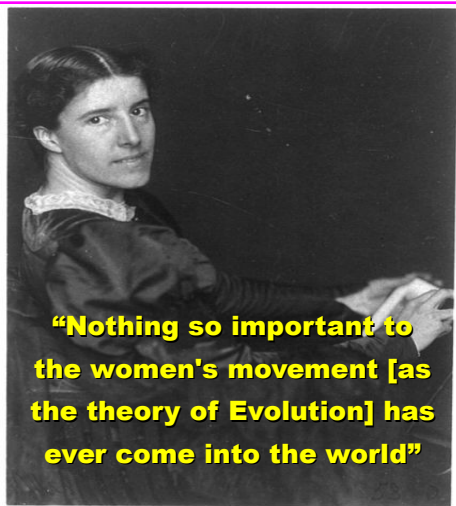
THE LETTERS HE NEVER MEANT FOR US TO SEE

"Your observations and experiments on the sexes of butterflies are by far the best, as far as known to me, which have ever been made... Assuredly you ought then to publish the result in some well-known scientific journal." So Darwin writes to aspiring naturalist Mary Treat, in an unprecedented display of confidence in women "scientists."

Check out these other revealing snippets:

"I certainly think that women [are] generally superior to men [in] moral qualities," writes Darwin again to Ms. Kennard. A simple act of flattery, or a declaration of war between the sexes??

"Susan has lately been working in a way, which I think truly heroic" -- he said *what??* The woman working in the public sphere -- what will he advocate next in his quest to dissolve the nuclear family?



"I certainly think that women [are] generally superior to men [in] moral qualities"

TRUE DARWIN: FUEL FOR THE FANATICAL FEMINISTS

Are these same radical ideas tainting Darwin's "objective" scientific writings? Look no further than the words of the rebel women themselves, and how they gloat in his theory.

"Nothing so important to the women's movement [as the theory of Evolution] has ever come into the world" exclaims the ever vocal **Charlotte Perkins Gilman**, figurehead of anti-traditionalist values. "The development of the theory of Evolution alone was enough to give glory to this age; practically the entire range of the Woman's Movement was within it."

Adds her equally inflammatory peer, **Eliza Burt Gamble**: "I first became impressed with the belief that the theory of evolution, as enunciated by scientists, furnishes much evidence going to show that the female among all the orders of life, man included, represents a higher stage of development than the male."

Did Darwin aim for his writing to usher in the age of female resistance? He hasn't returned our calls for comment, but in the meantime, we'll keep in mind one of his claims in *Descent of Man* that "the more vigorous and precocious females [are] selecting the more attractive and vigorous males."

Better watch your backs, gentlemen: In Darwinian society, women choose you.

IS DARWIN'S ROGUE DAUGHTER RUNNING THE SHOW?

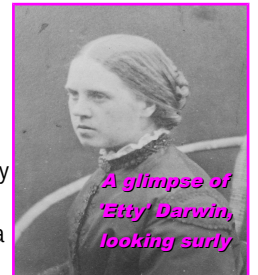
The answer will shock you!

The power behind the curtains you didn't know about: Henrietta 'Ett' Darwin, architect behind his famous books. Our Chuck writes to his favorite daughter quite a lot, and here's one of our favorites: "After reading once right through, the more time you can give up for deep criticism or corrections of style, the more grateful I shall be... You are a very good girl indeed to undertake the job."

Unbelievable! The scholar secretly trusts his daughter's "intellect" to critique and revise his work. Next he'll have her catalogue his specimens and

construct grand theories on bird beaks. We have the right to know: How much of Darwin's writing is directed by her covert influence and emotionally driven chatter?

And that's not all... a never-before-seen letter to son William reveals that Darwin refers to Henrietta as "The Boss." Sounds like a puppeteer to us.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ORIGIN OF SPECIES?

Will this mark the downfall of Darwin's eminent career? With his writing tainted by the emotional weakness of women, it's hard to say no. Not to mention...we've just had a first look at his poor judgment and sympathy evaluating female "scientists." AND we've followed his association with feminists at the fringes of reason. Can his objectivity be trusted?

Stay tuned for next week:

ALFRED RUSSELL WALLACE SAYS HE KNEW SOMETHING WAS WRONG ALL ALONG.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!

“Only for your private use”: A satire

Vanessa Tan

This anachronistic tabloid-style article is a reimagining of Darwin’s legacy in conjunction with the public revealing of his private correspondence. In this piece, I aim to reflect Victorian society’s gendered perceptions of scientific ability by portraying “feminist” leanings as ruinous to Darwin’s reputation. At the same time, this depiction of Darwin is a hyperbolic manifestation of how his work was “manipulable and eloquent beyond the author’s intent” (Deutscher 37); in particular, I exaggerate the feminist appropriation of his ideas, in what is indeed a perversion of the theses in Darwin’s published work.

Throughout the piece, I utilize tone to address gendered views of intellect both subtly -- through descriptors such as “amateur” or “aspiring” for female scientists -- and explicitly, in direct condemnations of a woman’s fitness to be “objective.” This backdrop of Victorian culture serves to highlight the lens under which Darwin’s work is examined. Through humorous *ad hominem* attacks on Darwin himself, my mock article explores what sort of gendered scrutiny could result if Darwin’s published work relied more heavily on certain observations in his letters.

Furthermore, my humorous portrayal of a “feminist” Darwin aims to dispel the notion that Darwinian sexual selection and feminist reformism constituted opposite ends of the spectrum. In reality, feminist writings reveal that the relationship was much more nuanced. For instance, certain assertions by Darwin of *complementarity* may seem antagonistic to women’s equality today, but did not necessarily clash with Victorian-era feminism. Certain feminists of the time embraced “benevolent” complementarity, as did Charlotte Perkins Gilman in her claim that “it was essential that the expansive force of masculine energy *be combined with the*

preservative and constructive forces of female energy” (Russett 97, emphasis added). Above all, the Darwin Correspondence Project, together with feminist responses, brings both Darwinian and feminist thought of the time closer to an overlapping center.

Finally, the themes of “secretive” private beliefs and “feminine” influences reflect a complexity in Darwin’s views that is not fully appreciable in *Descent of Man*, where Darwin is very explicit about “man's attaining to a higher eminence” (Darwin 564). Correspondence with his daughter, in particular, reveals private deference to her cognitive abilities (DCP 7124). Evidently, his respect for Henrietta’s intellect is so great that he is willing to entrust his prized book to her editorial discretion. Yet in order to avoid dissonance between these specific observations and his general claims -- that women in general are “inferior intellectually” -- Darwin must judge these cases to be outliers. The strength of his faith in Henrietta remains his private sentiment, as it cannot stand up in public to a deep-seated understanding of women and intelligence.

In tabloid tradition, the piece selectively emphasizes one clear-cut image of Darwin’s ideas, complete with out-of-context quotations. However, the goal of this satire is not to convince the reader of Darwin’s feminist leanings; rather, it is to highlight the power of Victorian societal norms to supersede the evidence of his personal interactions with women in his life.

Works Cited

Darwin Correspondence Project. Various Letters. <http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/>.

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