

**Review: David Berlinski, *Human Nature*, Discovery Institute Press,
Seattle, WA, 2019**

Pages: 320

Arts Education in a Book

What this books offers:

- An incisive history lesson and critical analysis of the causes of World War I.
- Mathematical exposé of the ‘declining’ homicidal tendencies of man over the past eight hundred years.
- Demolition of affirmative action and moral relativism.
- English and universal grammar lesson.
- Anecdotes of human behaviour and morality hard to interpret under an evolutionary psychological worldview.

If you have the language proficiency there is even a chapter in French!

Each sideswipe against the Darwinian worldview adds up to a broadside by the end. Moreover, all is done with humour and panache (the humour helps to ride through the more comprehensive parts).

Introduction (pp. 1-16)

Universal civilisation requires an elaborate bureaucracy to enforce contract law, a scientific elite, science as a god, and free markets.

If the universal theory admits of no interpretation it remains ineffable, but if it admits some interpretation then something must be left out.

I) The First World War (pp. 19-39)

The First World War was caused by the assassination of Austrian Archduke Frank Ferdinand and his wife Sophie, the Duchess of Hohenberg at Sarajevo on June 28, 1914. The assassin was nineteen-year-old Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip.

Neither Conrad nor Berchtold thought to satisfy Tisza by preparing an ultimatum designed to be rejected.

Austria declared war on Serbia on July 28, 1914.

Alfred von Schlieffen of the Schlieffen plan across 1891 to 1914 said to strike at Russia. Germany would first have to attack France which meant violating Belgium neutrality, in turn bringing the UK into the war.

Nine million soldiers and six million civilians died.

An armistice was made on November 11, 1918.

When attempts were made to subordinate national interests to the League of Nations, it was found that states which had common interests had no reason to use it and those without no reason to fear it.

Affairs between great nations were never subject to the law of proportionality.

II) The Best of Times (pp. 40-68)

Two hundred and thirty-one million died violently in the twentieth century.

The thesis is that there has been an 800-year decline in homicide, based on twenty-one data points from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Historians and criminologists always exclude genocide (mass murder) from twentieth-century homicide rates.

III) The Cause of War (pp. 69-77)

Lewis Fry Richardson studied the frequency and intensity of warfare from 1820 to 1950 and found the data fitted a Poisson distribution. However, the Poisson parameter λ may change over time creating a Cox distribution.

The current long 'peace' pattern would have to endure for another 100 to 150 years before a genuine trend would be evident.

Any data point can be approximated by *some* Cox process.

So long as memories exist, the present will never be independent of the past, thus violating one of the underlying assumptions of the Poisson distribution.

WWI didn't end in peace, rather, it was a twenty year cessation of hostilities.

IV) Relativism A Fish Story (pp. 81-94)

Affirmative action benefits those who have not been injured and injure those who have not benefited.

As diversity demand spaces grow, supply is stretched.

V) The Dangerous Discipline (pp. 95-103)

Pious Jewish matrons of Yehuoetz covered their heads with kerchiefs.

VI) Necessary Nature (pp. 105-118)

Essentialism holds there are innate differences between men and women.

A set is completely defined by its members.

If humans had an unlimited change capacity they could not form a species.

Noam Chomsky argued there was a one-time brain-changing mutation in one individual in the past which created language and spread rapidly in the population (!).

VII) Disgusting, No? (pp. 119-121)

Freedom of thought is considered a virtue by those preparing to deny it.

VIII) Majestic Ascent: Darwin on Trial (pp. 123-128)

IX) Memories of Ulaanbaatar (pp. 129-132)

X) Innkeepers (pp. 133-135)

A set is any collection that coheres as an object of thought.

XI) The Social Set (pp. 139-148)

A *morphospace* represents possible phenotypic variations of an animal.

The genetic apparatus is under enzymatic control and is therefore causally circular.

XII) Godzooks (pp. 149-164)

If the brain is a computer then it must be a formal system.

Dataism promises a scientific Holy Grail.

Deep Learning originates in Frank Rosenblatt's "perceptrons" of layers one neuron deep.

XIII) A Flower of Chivalry (pp. 167-169)

Hitchens once called the Christian heaven a "celestial North Korea".

XIV) Giuseppe Peano (pp. 171-175)

The late nineteenth century tried to create a universal language (Esperanto).

XV) Sonja Kovalevsky (pp. 177-181)

XVI) A Logician's Life (pp. 184-187)

The two great eras of logic were Ancient Greece and 19-20th century Europe.

XVII) Chronicle of a Death Foretold (pp. 189-190)

XVIII) The Recovery of Case (pp. 193-226)

Psychologists use to believe children acquired native language by discipline and training.

Universal Grammar is a linguistic hypothesis. One principle is that all languages are composed of a finite number of words and are atomic.

In the *E. coli* genome an operon produces a messenger with inhibitory regulatory loops composed of regulatory genes, repressors, and operator. A network selects DNA segments for transcription based on cytoplasm and environmental conditions.

A complementizer (COMP) appears as “that”, “whether”, “if”, “whither”, or “whereupon”.

Adjectives can belong to both +N and +V categories.

Chomsky’s modern Hebrew morphonemic masters thesis had rule ordering down twenty-five levels.

Double COMPs are rare.

Vergnaud’s letter proposed a three-case structure for English: subjective, genitive, and governed. These are largely invisible and aren’t formed by word inflections.

Latin has seven cases: nominative, accusative, dative, genitive, ablative, vocative, and locative.

Verbs and prepositions often act as accusative case assigners.

XIX) Prague, 1998 (pp. 229-240)

XX) Old Hose (pp. 241-252)

XXI) Vienna, 1981 (pp. 253-266)

XXII) A Conversation With *Le Figaro* (pp. 269-276)

XXIII) A Conversation With *Evolution News* (pp. 277-288)

Endnotes (pp. 289-320)

Princip was aided by the Serbian terrorist cell the Black Hand.

The Russian Holodomor famine of 1932-1933 killed many.