

PREJUDICE

Passage 1. *The Economist* argues that evolution has influenced the way we treat others.

- 1 Why do many people hate others merely for having different coloured skin? Traditionally, the answers to such a question have been sought in philosophy, sociology, and even religion. But the answers that have come back are generally unsatisfying because they ignore the forces that made people what they are: the forces of evolution.
- 2 Anne Campbell, a psychologist at Durham University, in England, believes that evolution stops at the neck: that human anatomy evolved, but human behaviour is culturally determined. The corollary to this is that with appropriate education, indoctrination or social conditioning, people can be made to behave in almost any way imaginable. The evidence, however, is that they cannot. Unless it is realised that the room for shaping behaviour is actually quite limited and the underlying biology of the behaviour to be shaped is properly understood, attempts to manipulate it are likely to fail. 5 10
- 3 Evolutionary biologists are hoping to change conventional wisdom of what race actually is to allow people of different backgrounds to live in reasonable harmony. Many thought that just as man was a risen ape, so white, European man was the zenith of humanity, and that people from other parts of the world were necessarily inferior. The consequences were terrible. It gave a veneer of intellectual respectability to the eugenic horrors which culminated in the Nazi death camps. But evolutionary biology is making amends. Its first observation is a bleak one: that xenophobia is a deeply ingrained human characteristic. Its second observation is that the traditional definition of race—the tendency of people living in different parts of the world to have different skin colour, hair colour and physiognomy—has no wider ramifications in areas like intelligence. Racial prejudice, then, is just that: prejudice. 15 20
- 4 What is proposed instead, by Darwinists, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby of the University of California, Santa Barbara, is a theory of ethnicity that explains the mishmash of categories anthropologists have tried to fit into the general class of “race”. Social psychologists have long observed that race has biological meaning since people automatically classify each other by sex, age and race. But Dr Cosmides and Dr Tooby pointed out that before long-distance transport existed, only two of those would have been relevant. People of different ages and sexes would meet; people of different races would not. 25
- 5 The two researchers argue that modern racial discrimination is a response to what might be called an “alliance” detector in the human brain. In a tribe of a few hundred people, your neighbours and your other allies will normally look a lot like you, and act similarly. However, the study of modern hunter-gatherers and archaeological evidence pointed out that neighbouring tribes are often hostile. Though an individual might reasonably be expected to know many members of his tribe personally, he would probably not know them all. There would thus be a biological advantage in tribal branding. Potential allies would quickly identify what marked them out from others. 30 35
- 6 However, experiments conducted in racially mixed countries like America and Brazil suggest it is surprisingly easy to rebrand even people of different skin colour by making other badges of allegiance more significant—as happens when sportsmen clothe themselves in coloured team shirts. Moreover, Andrew Penner of the University of California, Irvine, and Aliya Saperstein of the University of Oregon have shown that perception of a person’s race can actually change in reality. Many people shift from being “white” to “black”, in response to unemployment, impoverishment or imprisonment. 40
- 7 There is nothing special about biologically based brands such as skin colour. If other brands of group membership can be strengthened, the traditional ones may diminish, even if they do not disappear completely. If this race theory is correct, it indicates that policies which encourage groups to retain their identity within a society will cause trouble, but those that encourage cultural integration will smooth things over. Darwinism does not provide all the answers. What is extraordinary is how rarely an evolutionary analysis is part of the process of policymaking. It is time to recognise and understand that human beings are evolved creatures. 45

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Passage 2. *Tessa Lewin thinks communication technology can change the lives of women around the world.*

- 1 Geeks and feminists have much in common. If feminism is about embracing and striving for some kind of utopian dream of human equality, then democratising knowledge is an important part of this process. Increasingly new technologies – and information and communication technologies in particular – have huge potential to democratise access to, creation of, and distribution of knowledge. 5
- 2 Digital storytelling is a specific methodology being used not just to extract information from people, or to build evidence for arguments, but to also allow people to tell their own story, on their terms. Participants come up with a three-minute audio narrative, which they illustrate with chosen imagery. For anyone who has had experience of this process, there is no denying the transformative power of opening up spaces for people's voices to be heard and taken seriously. 10
Then there is the added bonus of creating something beautiful from the process.
- 3 I was recently at a Feminist Technology Exchange (FTX), run as part of, and in the lead up to the Association of Women's Rights in Development. FTX was developed in response to calls from feminist and women's rights movements for greater understanding of emerging technologies, their potential and impact on the rights and lives of women. These new technologies – films, mobile phones, the internet - are particularly useful when working with previously marginalised groups (because they offer an instant global platform) and when working with vulnerable groups (because they offer speed of information transfer and anonymity). 15
- 4 Much of the expression of lesbian and gay identity, particularly in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, for example, happens online, where people are relatively protected by the anonymity afforded by the internet. However, there are other arenas of struggle which, although perhaps more subtle, are arguably as important. How, for example, do images of different women in different contexts shape the way we view the world, in terms of what we imagine exists and in terms of what we imagine can exist? One example is a film made by my colleagues in Bangladesh which shows women doing jobs traditionally regarded as "men's work". Many people have responded with a mixture of surprise and awe – often it has never occurred to them that it would be possible for women to occupy such roles. 20
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- 5 A strong argument for encouraging a more democratic use of media technologies is that it will enable us to change the way in which women are popularly represented. We need more images of women that challenge popular orthodoxies and narratives. Images of, for example, barefoot pregnant African women, reinforce un-nuanced, negative stereotypes of woman as victims. By ensuring women have access to these technologies, we can populate the media with grassroots knowledge and cultural artifacts from new perspectives. 30
- 6 What is interesting about the use of information and communication technologies is not just the creation of these new artifacts and the ways they are influencing change, but the process of their creation and the potential for the traditionally structurally disempowered to be in control of, and understand, the creation tools. 35
- 7 A more democratic approach to knowledge creation and distribution should allow us to be a lot more aware of the way in which we speak about issues and the metaphors we invoke in so doing. Artful use of information and communication strategies can re-engage the popular imagination, empower the disillusioned and reclaim political discourse. 40

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