**Title:** Book Review: *Evolution Science and Ethics in the Third Millennium: Challenges and Choices for Humankind* by Robert Cliquet and Dragana Avramov.

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**Evolution Science and Ethics in the Third Millennium: Challenges and Choices for Humankind**, by Robert Cliquet and Dragana Avramov, Springer Nature, 2018, (538 pp., CAD 149.00 ISBN: 978-3-319-73089-9 (Hardcover), CAD 109.00 ISBN: 978-3-319-73090-5 (eBook).

*Evolution Science and Ethics in the Third Millennium* is one of the most lucid academic texts on the subject of evolutionary morality to be published in the last decade. While the book does have some problematic aspects, discussed below, it nonetheless provides what is none other than a comprehensive and rational basis to substantiate the notion that evolutionary science can provide a foundation for the understanding of morality. Cliquet and Avramov take a wholly interdisciplinary approach, encroaching within and forming connections between philosophy, biology, anthropology and sociology among others in their exploration of a rationalized and humanistic approach to moral universalism. They not only take a meta-ethical approach to the investigation of morality in evolutionary science, but they provide a thorough speculative project on potential beneficial future pathways that thinkers and policymakers can employ in making decisions; which is something that is typically sidelined in a topic text such as this.

The book is wholly organized not only in a logical fashion, exploring the origins of morality, the influence of evolutionary biology and its implications of socio-cultural structures and institutions, but the clarity of thought in which the otherwise complex discourses that are implicated are astounding, the text is nothing other than an unprecedented scholarly feat! As such, the book is chock-full of evidence, arguments and narratives that are designed to not only be read by scholars and graduate students but the general public and policymakers as well. The holistic enterprise that the authors have embarked on is an approach that is hard to undertake and harder still to execute, both of which have been done with a style and prose that makes such seem effortless.

Although some readers may complain that such a text deals with the topic of morality and its implications in such broad and sprawling way - the main text is over 400 pages long – I do not share this view. The authors are quite self-reflective and transparent in their thesis and provide what is undoubtedly a thoroughly developed intellectual proposition. Simply put, the authors’ attempt to foundationalize evolutionary science as a basis for universal morality, this leads them on an evolutionary narrative of sorts that calls for fully matured and explored study.

The key at the centre of this project is the ethical challenges that the authors claim are linked to the significant biosocial sources of human variation: individual variation, inter-personal variation, inter-group variation, and inter-generational variation. Chapters Six, Seven and Eight deal directly with these topics, taking up more than a third of the total text. At the heart of the text's approach is an evolutionary based ‘naturalized' account for producing a normative framework for ecological sustainability and the sustainability of modernization. The issues surrounding the very conception of ‘nature,' ‘sustainability' and ‘modernity' are abundant in the existent anthropological, sociological and philosophical literature. However, what is not clear is why the authors take their views of modernization and sustainability as given without tangling with the concepts themselves.

There is a curious lack of appeal towards the scholarship that has tangled with these topics. No mention of the eminent scholars on these topics such as Bruno Latour, Donna Haraway or Timothy Morton is ever evoked, nor are the broad discourses on posthumanism is ever drawn upon. The authors seem to begin their project with an accepted assumption of modernity as being the case a priori and aim to build their morality project from that presupposition. Strong arguments to the contrary, mainly from socio-cultural anthropology have done just that.

Taking that into account, the project as a whole seems like a defence of modern neoliberalism despite the ecological dialogue in the concluding chapter. The conception of ‘sustaining’ is sustaining what? The authors suggest modernization, but they themselves argue for what the dialogue of sustainability has arisen in the first place; as a consequence of modern thought and politics. Similarly, and related to this critique is the strange passivity to nonhuman actors within the assemblages of interdisciplinary that the authors argue to discuss. Like the rich existent literature critiquing modernity and the sustenance of modernization, there too exists a growing body of scholarship on the importance of nonhuman animals and other intelligent agents as being enrolled and implicated within contemporary ethics and politics, albeit historically ignored and sidelined. The authors dance around this by explicitly focusing on the process of hominization, making the human the central figure and thus making this text a classical humanist project. Although in and of itself this may seem like a self-contained project, the implications and policy recommendations that this text can induce may ultimately do more harm than good, given its anthropocentric underpinnings.

Overall, *Evolution Science and Ethics in the Third Millennium* is an intriguing, well-researched and written text with many moments of insight. Not only does the text merit reading, but provides a classical example of contemporary humanist thought that will undoubtedly appeal to transhumanist and related groups. Because of this, however, the texts seems timely in that it is an affirmation of classical enlightenment thought of human superiority, rationality and global dominance. Although never explicitly articulated as such, the authors project logically lead to these ends. For a text that claims to be providing a holistic approach to foundationalizing morality, such an endeavour should account the significant and growing body of literature that aims to do precisely not that if it wants to stand the test of time.

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