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052157434X - Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1945: Nature as Model and Nature as Threat - Mike Hawkins

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This compelling and wide-ranging new study focuses upon the heated controversies that have surrounded the meaning and shifting significance of Social Darwinism.

Through a careful survey of the enormous secondary literature on the subject, Mike Hawkins clarifies the nature of Social Darwinism and its complex relationship to the theories of Darwin, Lamarck and Herbert Spencer. In the first comprehensive comparison of the myriad European and American developments of these theories, the author explores their use in a number of crucial ideological debates and social movements, including eugenics and Fascism. Dr Hawkins shows how so many political positions – from anarchism and cooperation to socialism, imperialism, liberalism, Fabianism, democracy and anti-democracy – could draw on the Darwinian tradition. The study finishes with a topical discussion of late twentieth-century sociobiology in order to assess the continuing vitality of Social Darwinism.

Historians and social scientists from across many disciplines will enjoy this cogent and subtle analysis of Social Darwinism and will find it an invaluable guide through an often complex subject.

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To my parents, Alec and Joan Hawkins

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[More information](#)

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>page x</i>
Part I: Defining Social Darwinism	
Introduction: the identity of Social Darwinism	3
1 Defining Social Darwinism	21
2 The distinctiveness of Social Darwinism	39
Part II: Pioneers	
3 The emergence of Social Darwinism	61
4 Herbert Spencer and cosmic evolution	82
5 Social Darwinism in the USA	104
6 Social Darwinism in France and Germany	123
Part III: Case studies	
7 Reform Darwinism	151
8 Races, nations and the struggle for existence	184
9 The eugenic conscience	216
10 Social Darwinism, nature and sexual difference	249
11 Nazism, Fascism and Social Darwinism	272
Postscript: Social Darwinism old and new: the case of sociobiology	292
<i>Bibliography</i>	314
<i>Index</i>	335

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