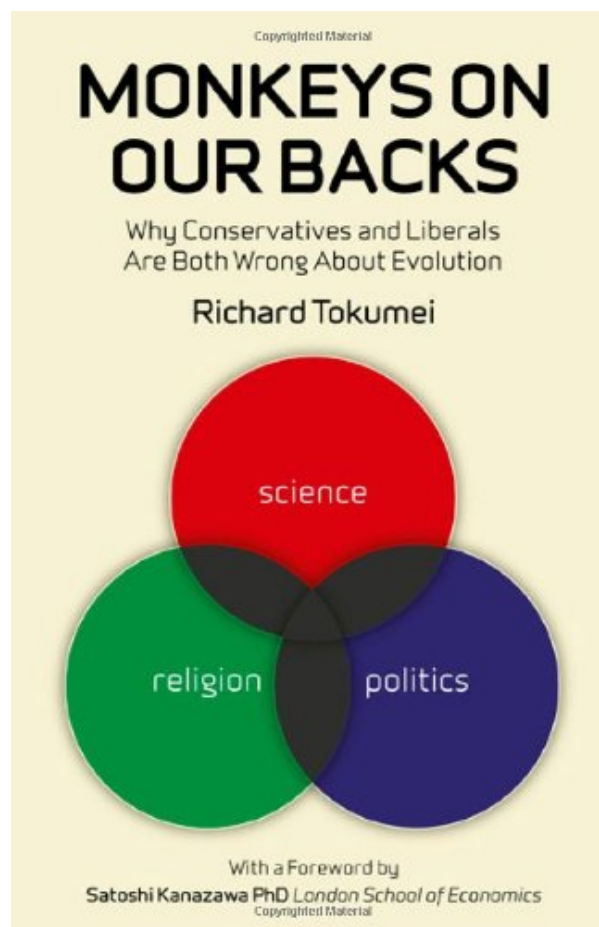


# **MONKEYS ON OUR BACKS: WHY CONSERVATIVES AND LIBERALS ARE BOTH WRONG ABOUT EVOLUTION BY RICHARD TOKUMEI**



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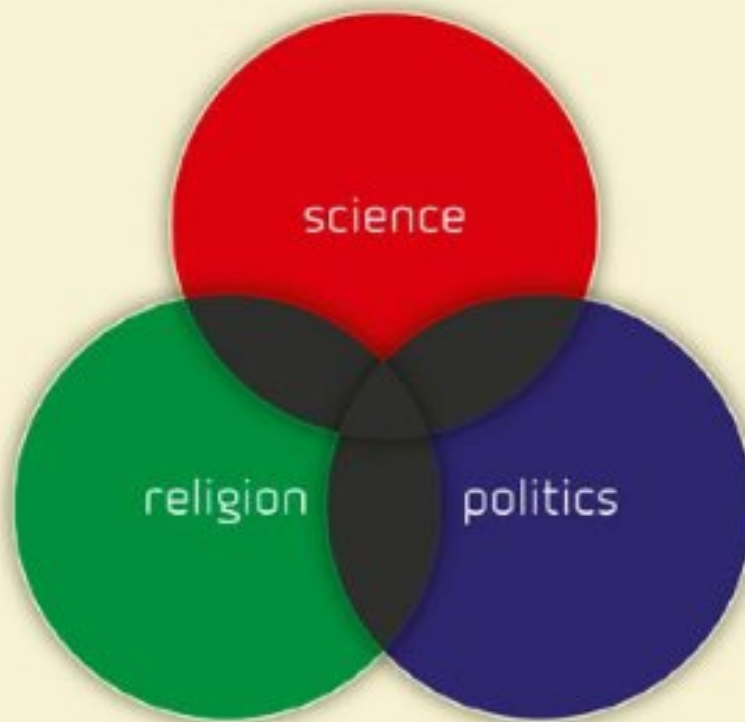


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# MONKEYS ON OUR BACKS

Why Conservatives and Liberals  
Are Both Wrong About Evolution

Richard Tokumei



With a Foreword by

Satoshi Kanazawa PhD *London School of Economics*

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## Review

Tokumei's book is a provocative study of the debate over the moral and political implications of Darwinian science. (Larry Arnhart, Presidential Research Professor of Political Science, Northern Illinois University, author of *Darwinian Conservatism*) Richard Tokumei asks all the right questions and as far as I am concerned provides all the right answers. At the very least his book should serve to remind us that these days there is nothing so rare as common sense. (Burt Prelutsky, Author of *Liberals: America's Termites*)

## About the Author

Richard Tokumei is the pen name of a full-time writer and editor in Southern California. He has degrees in Humanities and Psychology from the University of California at Berkeley.

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The current debate on how to overhaul the American health care system assumes that a healthy society depends on good medical care. So it may come as a shock to learn that controversially medical care does not make a society healthier and actually does just the opposite! Like the Freakonomics books *Monkeys* examines common issues in uncommon ways and discusses the unexpected unintended and even paradoxical consequences of various social policies. As the title indicates this book attempts to show how ironic it is that the proposed social policies of the Left are in conflict with evolution and how the beliefs of the Right are not so different from what evolution teaches us about how life and societies evolve. *Monkeys on Our Backs* may cause controversy or even rage but it is sure to be read and discussed.

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## Most helpful customer reviews

12 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

A Fine Primer on Evolution for Conservatives and Why They Need to Accept It

By John Kwok

I must disagree vehemently - but also respectfully - with my friend Greg Laden, a physical anthropologist who espouses a political point of view radically different than mine, since I regard "*Monkeys on Our Backs*"

as a fine political polemic written to persuade fellow Conservatives as to why biological evolution should be accepted as valid science, and why Darwinian thought is politically more consistent with their political worldview than it is with liberals. It is not a book on science, nor is it meant to be, as both author Richard Tokumei and evolutionary psychologist Satoshi Kanazawa emphasize in its introductory sections (Tokumei, who had this published under this pseudonym, does identify himself as a Conservative Democrat who believes his party has betrayed the very principles which President John F. Kennedy represented with regards to both foreign policy and economics). However, I will note that the chapter devoted to describing how Natural Selection works "A Short Summary of How Evolution Works" is an especially lucid introduction whose only glaring omission is noting how much Darwin was influenced by Adam Smith's thinking on free market economics (A point which another Conservative thinker, noted skeptic Michael Shermer, does emphasize in his "Why Darwin Matters: The Case Against Intelligent Design"). Another notable success is Tokumei's insistence that Darwinian thought does not promote amoral - or immoral - behavior, as many Conservatives, especially those within the Religious Right, might contend, but instead, argues persuasively that "...evolution has allowed us to evolve both the ability and the propensity to seek moral codes and also certain aspects of those moral codes that allow us to live peacefully and altruistically in society with others." Tokumei also succeeds in explaining how Conservative beliefs are substantially more consistent than those of Liberals with evolution from a strong selectionist view, and by that, I do mean that Natural Selection is seen as the primary mechanism responsible for biological evolution. For these reasons "Monkey on Our Backs" is worthy of a wide readership, especially by fellow Conservatives; it is of sufficient brevity that it should be of interest even to prominent Conservative critics of evolution like Ann Coulter and Michele Bachmann.

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Nothing new here

By Barbara Mcauliffe

I expected more from this. I thought that with all the work done on the human genome recently, he would make some mention of it. But no. What we get is really just some random musings of some guy, and frankly, I could get that in any bar in the country if I wanted to waste my time.

Although it may not sound like it, I actually agree with everything the author says. The problem as I see it is that he never addresses why the Left doesn't have any idea what evolution is all about. I think the answer is that evolution is often spoken of as "this happened in order to do that", like...the eye developed in order to see. Whereas the truth is, something (a proto-eye) developed and, happy accident, the creature that possessed it was able to find more food. This way of thinking leads people to think that evolution is heading somewhere: a fairer world, a world without violence or whatnot. In fact evolution just wants lots of babies.

I wouldn't bother with this, if you are interested in evolution, you won't learn a thing.

3 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

It is no wonder that the author chose to use a pseudonym

By Gregory T. Laden

Richard Tokumei has written a book that is so bad he is ashamed to put his own name on it. "Richard Tokumei" is the pen name of a 'writer/editor in Southern California [with] degrees in Humanities and Psychology from the University of California Berkeley" and he has produced a book designed to anger everyone who hears of it in order to create needless sensation and thus, sell copies. Which, once people get their hands on, will make rather low quality toilet paper.

Monkeys On Our Backs: Why Conservatives and Liberals Are Both Wrong About Evolution includes an inexplicable mix of "correct" statements about evolution and how to think about evolution along with misuses, abuses, and misunderstandings of evolution that those very statements guard against. "Tokumei"

warns against the naturalistic fallacy, but uses it as the basis for his arguments whenever convenient. He repeats statements made by evolutionary biologists that make it clear that evolution is not teleological or goal directed, but assumes it is, and requires goal directness for important parts of his arguments to work. He presents the entirety of evolutionary or biological models, research, discussion, and data regarding human behavior as a simplified and naive "Pinker-esque" view, and this allows him to indicate why liberals hate Evolution. He also presents evolution, or more accurately, Darwinism, using the exact model pushed these days by the Discovery Institute as a straw man for disdain by conservatives. "Tokumei" makes the very annoying statement that Evolution is pretty easy to understand and then proceeds to misunderstand, sometimes willfully sometimes not, it would appear, the process. He hates socialism with utter disdain and never fails to link the term with Liberal policies and 'prove' that these policies are evil. Despite the thinly veiled attempt to paint this book as an even-handed fact-based critique of both the left and the right, it is only an attack on the left, with the critique of the right having little more strength than a piece of used toilet paper left to languish in an unflushed toilet. Which is where this book belongs.

I didn't like it.

But Satoshi Kanazawa did, I assume, because he wrote the forward! Go figure!

In case you are wondering, Tokumei has very few anagrams. Try letter substitution if you want to identify him that way. Waste of time, though. Off hand, the following results could signify: Andrews, Baldwin, Bismark, and Codfish. The book appears to be self published.

See all 4 customer reviews...

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