

BEYONDISM

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Beyondism

Primary Disciplinary Field(s): Sociobiology, Evolutionary Psychology, Political Philosophy, Ethics of Science

1. Core Definition and Ideological Basis

Beyondism is defined as a philosophical system or a secular religion rooted fundamentally in evolutionary theory. Its central, non-negotiable premise is that the maximization of humanity's biological and cultural evolution is the ultimate moral good. Unlike traditional religious or humanitarian ethical systems that prioritize individual welfare, equality, or divine commandments, Beyondism establishes evolutionary progress as the sole arbiter of value. Consequently, any action, societal structure, or policy that accelerates, enables, or reinforces adaptive advancement is deemed inherently ethical and beneficial for the long-term survival and flourishing of the species. This foundational principle dictates a radical shift in moral priorities, where the survival of the fittest systems and groups takes precedence over preserving less competitive elements.

The ideology posits that evolution is not merely a biological fact but a continuous, driving imperative for the cosmos, and that human civilizations must consciously align themselves with this imperative. It seeks to transition humanity from a state of "unconscious" evolution, governed by blind natural selection, to a state of "conscious" evolution, wherein intelligent planning and societal engineering are employed to guide advancement. This guidance, however, is not centrally controlled; rather, it is achieved through promoting rigorous competition. Beyondism views the diverse array of human cultures and geopolitical entities as a necessary evolutionary laboratory, where different adaptive strategies are tested against one another in a global arena of performance and survival.

This framework implies a deeply consequentialist morality. The value of any given civilization is measured by its capacity to adapt, innovate, and ultimately survive under intense pressure. The core commitment is to the future of the species, often at the expense of contemporary suffering or the persistence of maladaptive traditions. Therefore, Beyondism demands that humanity accept the inherent volatility and risk associated with evolutionary processes, including the inevitable decline and potential extinction of groups or civilizations that prove unequal to the competitive challenge. It is an ideology built upon the acceptance of necessary loss for the sake of superior achievement and long-term evolutionary fitness.

2. Historical Genesis and Proponent: Raymond Cattell

Beyondism was formally proposed and developed by the influential British-American psychologist Raymond Cattell (1905-1998). Cattell was already a towering figure in psychology, known for his work on personality theory (e.g., the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire, or 16PF) and intelligence

(fluid vs. crystallized intelligence). Beyondism emerged later in his career, functioning as an attempt to synthesize his vast psychometric and quantitative understanding of human variation with a comprehensive socio-political philosophy capable of addressing what he perceived as global societal decline and lack of direction.

Cattell's development of Beyondism was heavily influenced by the rise of sociobiology in the mid-20th century and his own belief in the measurable, biological roots of human behavior and societal competence. He sought to create a system that was rigorously empirical, free from what he viewed as the superstitious constraints of traditional religion, and capable of providing a long-term goal for humankind that transcended mere short-term political expediency. Cattell viewed existing political ideologies (such as Communism and Liberal Democracy) as insufficiently grounded in biological reality and often detrimental to genetic or cultural fitness, leading to dysgenic trends.

The formal articulation of the ideology occurred primarily in his 1972 work, *A New Morality from Science: Beyondism*, and its subsequent elaboration in *Beyondism: Religion from Science* (1987). These works aimed to provide a detailed ethical and policy blueprint. However, the genesis of the idea can be traced back to earlier writings where Cattell explored the relationship between measurable intelligence, personality factors, and societal success. By proposing Beyondism, Cattell stepped outside the standard confines of academic psychology, engaging directly with contentious issues of ethics, population control, and civilizational competition, thereby generating significant debate regarding the appropriate application of psychological science to social policy.

3. The Principle of Evolutionary Competition

The central functional tenet of Beyondism is the active promotion of **evolutionary competition** among distinct civilizations or groups, which Cattell sometimes referred to as 'co-operating culturo-genetic communities' (CGCs). According to the Beyondist framework, this competition is necessary because it functions as the only reliable mechanism for determining which cultural traits, technological innovations, and genetic constitutions are truly superior in terms of long-term adaptive fitness. If competition were suppressed, all civilizations would stagnate, potentially leading to the eventual collective failure of the human species.

Beyondism mandates that this competition must be "freely made to happen." This does not necessarily imply direct military conflict, though that possibility is often left open in some interpretations. More often, it refers to competition across various domains: economic efficiency, scientific discovery, cultural innovation, and population management. The ideology advocates for a global structure that minimizes interference in the internal processes of these competing units, allowing natural selection--or rather, a highly accelerated form of cultural and genetic selection--to operate unimpeded. The principle states clearly that only the leading civilizations should survive,

ensuring that the fittest pool of human knowledge and genetic material persists.

A key aspect of this competition is the necessity of **variability**. Just as biological evolution requires genetic diversity, Beyondism argues that cultural evolution requires diverse political, social, and religious experiments. The failure of one civilization to adapt serves a necessary function: it provides negative feedback, demonstrating flawed approaches, and preventing the spread of those unsuccessful traits to other, more adaptive cultures. Thus, the deliberate allowance for the decline and "dying away" of certain civilizations is considered a moral duty to the species as a whole, preventing the drag of less successful strategies on global progress.

4. Relationship to Eugenics and Political Genetics

Beyondism is intrinsically linked to concepts of **eugenics** and **political genetics**, which constitute the practical policy dimensions of the ideology. Cattell argued that conscious evolution requires active genetic management to prevent dysgenic drift (the tendency for less fit individuals to reproduce at higher rates than more fit individuals, thereby reducing the average intelligence or adaptive capacity of the population). Without such management, competitive advantages gained culturally could be lost genetically.

The ideology specifically references **voluntary eugenics**, though the definition of 'voluntary' in this context is complex and often debated by critics. This involves encouraging or incentivizing genetically superior individuals (often defined by traits like high measured intelligence and personality factors related to stability and achievement) to reproduce, while discouraging or limiting the reproduction of those deemed genetically less fit. Beyondism considers this necessary to maintain or enhance the gene pool required for advanced, complex civilization capable of surviving global competition.

Furthermore, Cattell coined or utilized the term **political genetics** to describe the systematic application of evolutionary and genetic principles to state policy and civilizational management. This involves implementing policies across education, healthcare, migration, and taxation designed specifically to favor the propagation of desirable traits within the competing culturo-genetic community. This direct link to state-sponsored or heavily influenced genetic selection is the primary source of moral and political controversy surrounding Beyondism, drawing parallels to historical abuses of eugenic doctrine.

5. The Concept of Civilizational Progress

In the Beyondist framework, **progress** is fundamentally defined not by subjective measures of happiness, equality, or human rights, but by objective measures of adaptive capacity and survival probability over vast timescales. A successful civilization is one that demonstrates superior technological capability, internal social cohesion, efficient resource utilization, and, crucially,

genetic health that supports these achievements. Progress, therefore, is inherently hierarchical; it necessitates the creation of a differentiated society where superior achievements are recognized and rewarded.

This definition leads to a rejection of what Cattell termed "sentimental ethics" or "pan-humanitarianism," which prioritize universal welfare and the protection of all individuals regardless of their contribution to evolutionary advancement. Beyondism argues that if resources are expended to maintain populations or systems that cannot sustain themselves or contribute positively to future adaptation, those resources are diverted from the true evolutionary mission. Progress is a harsh, demanding metric that justifies differential outcomes, including the eventual dominance of highly adaptive civilizations over less adaptive ones.

The ultimate goal of Beyondist progress is often described in terms of reaching a higher plane of existence or consciousness, perhaps colonizing space or achieving a state of maximal genetic and cultural stability while retaining the necessary variability for continued adaptation. It is a teleological view of human history, where the current existence serves as a testing ground for achieving a future, superior state of being--a perspective that supports its designation as a "secular religion."

6. Ethical and Philosophical Foundations

The ethical underpinnings of Beyondism represent a radical departure from Enlightenment humanism. Its morality is often described as **evolutionary ethics** taken to its extreme conclusion. The primary moral commandment is to serve the process of evolution itself, viewing humanity as merely an instrument for cosmic progress. Individual rights and well-being are secondary concerns, valued only insofar as they contribute to the functional efficiency and competitive advantage of the collective civilization.

Beyondism attempts to resolve the classic "is-ought" problem by deriving moral prescriptions ("ought") directly from the observed mechanism of natural law ("is," i.e., evolution). Since evolution favors differential survival and success, the moral "ought" is to facilitate this differential survival consciously. This places the philosophy in direct conflict with universally accepted ethical norms established after World War II, which stress the inherent dignity and equality of all human persons, irrespective of genetic or cultural status.

Philosophically, Beyondism relies on a strongly reductionist, biological determinism, suggesting that human behavior and societal structure are fundamentally constrained by genetic realities. This deterministic view serves to justify policies, such as eugenics, as necessary biological housekeeping rather than optional socio-political choices. It asserts that to ignore genetic constraints is not only impractical but morally negligent, as it dooms the species to eventual decline.

7. Reception, Critique, and Academic Response

Beyondism has historically received overwhelmingly negative reception from mainstream psychology, ethics, and political science, and it remains outside the scope of acceptable academic discourse in many fields. The primary criticism centers on its explicit advocacy for policies that fall under the umbrella of eugenics and its reliance on a highly aggressive form of social Darwinism, often interpreted as rationalizing geopolitical conflict and racial or ethnic stratification.

Critics argue that the concept of "culturo-genetic communities" is inherently problematic, blurring the lines between cultural identity and biological race, and thus providing intellectual justification for divisive and discriminatory practices. The history of eugenics demonstrates that policies aimed at defining and selecting for "fitness" are highly susceptible to ideological abuse, leading to devastating human rights violations. Beyondism's structure, which necessitates the failure and decline of some groups for the benefit of others, is viewed as ethically indefensible and politically dangerous.

Academically, the philosophy is often dismissed as pseudo-science or an attempt by Cattell to impose a personal, speculative ideology onto a scientific field. Critics point out the lack of scientific criteria for defining a "civilization" or "genetic community" in the way Cattell utilized them, and they challenge the assumption that accelerated competition is the optimal or only path to long-term human survival. The ethical framework is widely rejected for prioritizing a hypothetical future evolutionary outcome over established norms of justice, equity, and humanitarian concern in the present.

Further Reading

Raymond Cattell (Wikipedia): Overview of the life and psychological work of the proponent of Beyondism.

Eugenics (Wikipedia): Detailed information on the historical and ethical context of eugenic practices and theories.

Sociobiology (Wikipedia): Contextual information on the scientific field that heavily influenced the underlying premises of Beyondism.