

before, in his own country, Comte's historical method was recognised or practised at all. It had to be explained and recommended by careful thinkers like Mill in England before it was, as it were, reintroduced into France in a more sober and practical form. But nothing contributed more to make Comte's *esprit d'ensemble*, or his co-ordinating process, popular than the special application of it which came from a quite unexpected quarter, but exactly from those sciences which had given Comte his original suggestion. This was the revolution which the biological sciences underwent through the publication of Darwin's great work in the year 1859, two years after Comte's death. This revolution has by historians of science and by the followers of Darwin been traced, in a one-sided way, to the discovery of what is called the law of natural selection. There is no doubt that this constituted the most startling among Darwin's discoveries; that it was, in fact, a signal instance of a co-ordination such as Comte desired to introduce into the study of biological as well as social phenomena. As a brilliant example of this more general process of reasoning, as a splendid fruit of a more universal method, it did, in a large realm of research, as much or more than Hegel's method had done in a very different region.¹

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Relation to
Darwin's
discovery.

But the discovery of Darwin, like other discoveries of his own and his followers, was really the outcome of that

¹ As an example of the latter we may refer, *e.g.*, to the celebrated work of David Strauss, the 'Life of Jesus,' which attempts to explain the main features of the sacred

narrative as an outcome of an intellectual feature, the "mythenbildende Phantasie," or myth-forming propensity of the human imagination.