

FORGIVE ME FOR CONTINUING WITH PETER'S RESPONSE TO MY RESPONSE TO [REDACTED] TWO POSTS.

I HAVE LEARNED DIRECTLY FROM PETER BUT MORE OFTEN INDIRECTLY—HE HAS FORCED ME TO THINK THROUGH MATTERS AND **IDENTIFY EXACTLY WHERE HE IS WRONG.**

I AM FINISHED WITH THAT NOW. LIFE IS SHORT AND MINE IS GETTING SHORTER BY THE DAY, SO I WILL REPEAT MY PIECE AND PETER'S RESPONSE TO IT (IN YELLOW) **AND THEN MY CURRENT RESPONSE—IN CAPITAL LETTERS.**

I AM ALSO ADDING TWO NAMES TO [REDACTED] LIST. DAVID HAIG WHO IS A BRILLIANT EVOLUTIONARY GENETICIST AT HARVARD AND JEFFREY EPSTEIN WHO IS A BRILLIANT FUND AND INVESTMENT MANAGER (PALM BEACH, NYC, US VIRGIN ISLANDS) WITH BROAD SCIENTIFIC INTERESTS.

Dear Gruterites

Gordon has now brought the argument full circle and given the project a larger meaning. The most powerful nation on earth, with the greatest power to vent harm—or, in theory, confer benefits—is ruled by an organism that fits the definition of a psychopath—of the narcissistic kind—or a malevolent narcissist. This presents serious dangers that need to be addressed.

Peter Richerson has made several valuable points:

1—Causality could go entirely in the other direction than the one I suggested—people avoid more psychopathic relatives the more experience they have had due to closer relatedness. And the paper I attached does not allow discrimination. The fact that psychopaths show only a weak and insignificant tendency to migrate further from place of birth is mildly interesting but has nothing to do with who is causing any difference in migration.

As far as I can think it through, selection pressures on psychopaths and relatives of psychopaths should be roughly equal and therefore equally likely. Peter is biased toward reaction by others, perhaps because of his bias toward “cultural” explanations. First, psychopaths always have the first move in the co-evolutionary struggle and relatives getting out of the way is the next move. Secondly, it is very easy for a psychopath to simply discriminate against harming his relatives but harder for them to study and react. Peter claims that they are often spotted early in life which I heartily doubt.

<<On why cultural explanations are important: It is, at root, a simple, fundamental Darwinian point. Evolution works on heritable variation. Human culture is much more variable than human genes, so the scope for cultural evolution is much greater than for genetic evolution. A simple example is the cultural adaptive radiation of humans in the Holocene. We recently spoke about 7,000 languages, most of them associated with more or less distinctive social and subsistence systems. A few languages—Spanish, English, Chinese—are spoken in societies with a great deal of internal social and economic diversity. Culturally we are sort of like thousands of species, but genetically we are only 1. To understand this adaptive radiation without understanding cultural evolution is impossible Boyd and I and our colleagues argue. On the longer time scale the whole human adaptation is all about exploiting cultural evolution to adapt to spatial and temporal variation. See Boyd's and my Not By Genes Alone: How Culture Transformed Human Evolution (Chicago, 2005) for the argument in full. Putting scare quotes around culture is simply whistling past the graveyard. If you are a Darwinian you ought to follow the variation, no?

WELL, IS CULTURAL ARGUMENTATION SUFFICIENT WITHOUT GENETIC LOGIC? FOR EXAMPLE, WE KNOW THAT LANGUAGE AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY PER UNIT AREA IS POSITIVELY ASSOCIATED WITH INTENSITY OF PARASITE SELECTION. THE STRONGER SUCH SELECTION, THE MORE YOU ARE SELECTED TO AVOID STRANGERS WHO MAY BE CARRYING PARASITES TO WHICH THEY ARE ADAPTED BUT NOT YOURSELF.

IN GENERAL PETER—AS WITH HIS ILK—SEEMS OBLIVIOUS TO THE POWERFUL EFFECTS OF CO-EVOLVING PARASITES ON HUMAN SOCIAL EVOLUITON IN THE PAST 40,000 YEARS. FOR EXAMPLE, PHONEME DIVERSITY HAS BEEN SHOWN TO OBEY THE SAME RULE AS GENETIC DIVERSITY—AS “WE” MOVED OUT OF ARICA IN THE LATEST WAVE ABOUT 100,000 YEARS AGO—SERIAL FOUNDER EFFECTS REDUCED GENETIC DIVERSITY AND ALSO PHONEMIC DIVERSITY STEADILY FROM THE COMPLEX CLICK-SOUNDS OF THE !KUNG BUSHMEN TO SOUTH AMERICAN LANGUAGES. A VERY RECENT PAPER SHOWS THE MATTER IS MORE COMPLEX IN AN INTERESTING WAY.

“It is, at root, a simple, fundamental Darwinian point. Evolution works on heritable variation. Human culture is much more variable than human genes, so the scope for cultural evolution is much greater than for genetic evolution.”

THIS IS PURE BULLSHIT

THERE IS NO UNIT OF HERITABLE CULTURAL VARIATION. THIS IS JUST A METAPHOR. CAN YOU NAME A UNIT THAT REMAINS CONSTANT OVER AN INDIVIDUAL'S LIFETIME AND THEN IS INHERITED UNCHANGED, ABSENT

RECOMBINATION? OF COURSE NOT. BUT THAT WOULD A TRULY **DARWINIAN** SYSTEM...

INCIDENTALLY CANCER DOES EVOLVE IN US BUT IT IS A ONE-GENERATION WONDER, BEING ONLY PASSED ON IN ONLY A COUPLE OF SPECIES OF THE DOG FAMILY (where it has become a sexually transmitted disease). IN OURSELVES IT EVOLVES GENETICALLY IN ONE LIFETIME AND WE KNOW THE UNITS THAT ARE SELECTED FOR. PROBLEM IS THAT THERE ARE AN ALMOST INFINITE VARIETY OF CANCERS AND AS WE LEARN TO TREAT ONE, OTHERS COME TO THE FORE.

The evidence for early onset of psychopathic and related symptoms is fairly convincing. See:

Frick, P. J., & White, S. F. (2008). Research Review: The importance of callous-unemotional traits for developmental models of aggressive and antisocial behavior. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 49(4), 359-375. doi:10.1111/j.1469-7610.2007.01862.x

The current paper reviews research suggesting that the presence of a callous and unemotional interpersonal style designates an important subgroup of antisocial and aggressive youth. Specifically, callous-unemotional (CU) traits (e.g., lack of guilt, absence of empathy, callous use of others) seem to be relatively stable across childhood and adolescence and they designate a group of youth with a particularly severe, aggressive, and stable pattern of antisocial behavior. Further, antisocial youth with CU traits show a number of distinct emotional, cognitive, and personality characteristics compared to other antisocial youth. These characteristics of youth with CU traits have important implications for causal models of antisocial and aggressive behavior, for methods used to study antisocial youth, and for assessing and treating antisocial and aggressive behavior in children and adolescents.

NONSENSE—THE AUTHORS ARE NOT EVEN TALKING ABOUT PSYCHOPATHIC BEHAVIOR BUT RATHER ‘AGGRESSIVE AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR’

I don't know of any real data that can be used to estimate how selection falls on psychopaths and their relatives, only anecdotes. Anecdotally, psychopaths make lousy mates and parents, suggesting that relatives do indeed suffer from having a psychopathic relative. In simple societies individuals who seem like psychopaths are often exiled or assassinated often with the assent of their families. If psychopathy is in a frequency dependent equilibrium, selection on family members that might share genes (or culture) for psychopathy would be part of the selection against it. pjr>>

TRUMP IS NOT THE PERFECT MATE BUT IS HE REALLY A ‘LOUSY FATHER’?—ASK HIS CHILDREN, IVANKA, DONALD JR ETC—THEY SURE DON'T ACT LIKE THEY HATE HIM. HOW ABOUT VICTIMS OF HINDU AND MUSLIM HONOR KILLINGS WHO ARE ‘ASSASSINATED’ ‘WITH THE ASSENT OF THEIR FAMILIES’—ARE THE VICTIMS PSYCHOPATHS OR ARE THEIR KILLERS? FOR THE **EVOLUTIONARY GENETICS** OF HONOR KILLINGS—SEE BELOW. NOTE THAT CULTURAL PEOPLE HAVE OFFERED LITTLE OR NOTHING OF VALUE ON THIS SUBJECT BUT EVOLUTINARY GENETICS AT ONCE SUGGESTS AN INTERESTING AND VERY STRONG EFFECT.

2— His suggestion that chimpanzee dominance hierarchies consist of a version of psychopathy is utterly novel to me and most interesting. I had always thought of dominance hierarchies as being associated with tyranny and despotism—but are these not often associated with psychopathy?!

<<Yes, dominants seem to be pretty callous, lacking in empathy, and out for themselves. Human evolution involves getting something like psychopathy from near fixation down to a low roar. See my former students and my 2016 BBS paper. It is on my web site. pjr>>

“NEAR FIXATION”—SEZ WHO? OH YOU AND YOUR STUDENTS—NOW THAT’S A SURPRISE.

Consider the “Butcher of Bagdad” Saddam Hussein or the sadistic Basir Assad. The only thing they didn’t do is specialize in rape, although Saddam’s son Uday did and we can be sure each had greater than average reproductive success but note how sensitive each is to degree of relatedness writ large. Saddam was most biased toward people that came from his place of birth, along the Tigris River, then people in the surrounding province and then Sunnis over Shia.

Since he was willing to kill others on a large scale—200,000 Shia slaughtered when the idiotic first Bush allowed Saddam to retain his Airforce after we had marched to Bagdad after flinging Saddam’s troops out of Kuwait. Or for that matter, Saddam’s attack on Shia Iran which claimed more than a million lives on both sides.

<<Psychiatrists discourage the diagnosis of leaders without proper clinical interviews, especially on the part of layfolk. I would not defend the above guys, but I think it is important to understand that the fractious, low trust, multi-ethnic, multi-confessional turf they ruled would lead to psychopath-like behavior even if those leaders were clinically sane. GW Bush’s (and Obama’s re Gaddafi and drone assassinations) big mistake was assuming that once the bad leaders were toppled the problem was mainly solved. In Afghanistan, Libya, and Iraq, decapitating the bad guys hasn’t worked very well even when we go at it wholesale as in drone assassinations. Getting Assad out of the way in Syria will not solve the bitter Sunni/Shia/Kurdish/secular feuding there. The American attempts to do good, if that is even the correct characterization, in the Middle East has been a fiasco. We need to learn from our errors I reckon. One general definition of insanity is doing the same thing again and again and expecting a different result. US attempts to police bits of Asia (small, poor bits at that) have not succeeded since the stalemate in Korea. And yet we keep thinking that we can make the apparently unworkable work. pjr>>

I FEEL CERTAIN I HAVE HAD FAR MORE EXPERIENCE WITH PSYCHIATRISTS THAN PETER HAS. AM I A "LAY PERSON"? WHO KNOWS? IF ALL NON-PSYCHIATRISTS ARE LAY PEOPLE THEN PSYCHIATRISTS ARE MERELY PUFFING THEMSELVES UP AND ROPING THEMSELVES OFF, SOMETHING THEY HAVE BEEN DOING SINCE THE TIME OF FREUD.

"One general definition of insanity is doing the same thing again and again and expecting a different result."

NOT REALLY—THIS IS A FAMOUS JOKE OF EINSTEIN'S BUT, HEY, WHO'SE COUNTING?

TRUMP AS AN ORGANISM—AS SEEN BY A "LAY PERSON"

STRONGLY BIASED TOWARD CLOSE FAMILY
STRONGLY BIASED AGAINST DISTANT RELATIVES—A RACIST OF THE FIRST RANK
EXTREME NARCISSIST
A STRATEGY OF RANDOM MOVES—TO FOOL OTHERS? AND/OR KEEP ATTENTION PERPETUALLY FOCUSED ON HIM?—INCREDIBLE HOW HE WILL GO AGAINST THE NRA ONE DAY AND INVITE IN THEIR LEADERS THE FOLLOWING DAY
LYING CONTINUOUSLY--VERY CREATIVE AND OBSTINATE—PRODUCING AN ENTIRE ALTERNATE UNIVERSE, PERMITTING HIM TO REVERSE COURSE AND COVER TRACKS AT THE SAME TIME

Minor matters:

Peter points out that Mealy (1995) was the first reference he knows of on psychopathy being under frequency dependent selection. An earlier paper, cited in the one I attached, developed the same argument—Harpending and Sobus 1987.

Peter characterizes sickle cell anemia as a "crude adaptation to malaria". Crude? In what sense?

A single copy of the sickle gene gives you anemia, in which the normal shape of the red blood cell—a flat round pill—changes under low oxygen tension into a sickle shape which crushes the malarial Plasmodium inside it. The low oxygen tension is caused by the parasite itself, since it consumes oxygen in the red blood cell. The cell then quickly flips back into normal shape as the oxygen tension returns to normal levels. A sickle individual without malaria suffers no cost at all, since all red blood cells have oxygen tension well above the level that would cause sickling.

Sickle cell DISEASE by contrast refers to an individual with two sickle genes and this is a serious condition since there is extensive sickling in a person who is otherwise normal and lacks, for example, malaria. The survival rate of such individuals in Jamaica (where 10% of the population have a sickle gene and 1% two copies) is 57 years, a good 10+ years below normal—nor is life pleasant or easy. This is the only crudity in the same, the failure to ameliorate the negative effects of two copies.

It is correct as Peter says, that relatively recent human invasion by malaria (~10,000 years ago) was probably in response to large population increases due to agriculture and so on. This short time period has also prevented much selection to ameliorate the sickle cell disease. It is not true, however, that “it and many other crude adaptations” result from the “ability of the malarial parasites to outwit the immune system”. First of all, other “adaptations” are no more crude than the sickle trait. For example, the Duffy antigen, a surface protein on red blood cells, is designed to spot Plasmodium and prevent entry. And the parasite does not “outwit the immune system”. It is one of the very few Protozoa (or for that matter bacteria) that live WITHIN cells and thus escape the immune system entirely (except see below). Viruses live inside cells, precisely why we can’t use antibiotics against them.

And here is a joke for you. Bacteria, as we know, are rapidly evolving resistance to almost all antibiotics but on many tips of the branches of the bacterial bush, species are evolving that DEPEND on antibiotics for their food—stop treating them with antibiotics and they die of hunger!

Plasmodium reproduces within its red blood cell and the offspring are released into the blood as the cell bursts. Now the immune system responds strongly and all hell breaks loose, fever and chills, bed-ridden and sometimes dead. When given a choice, mosquitos preferentially bite sick people, perhaps because they are too weak to swat the mosquitos away. Once in a mosquito, they do nothing to harm it other than congregate in its mouth near the biting organ, the better to arrive new human.

<<A more sophisticated adaptation could be had by duplicating the hemoglobin gene and selecting for haplotypes that have one normal and one sickling allele at the duplicated loci. This haplotype could evolve to fixation because everyone would functionally be the analog of a heterozygote. The production of hemoglobin from each locus would have to halved at the same time so as not to overproduce it. Perhaps the reason this adaptation has not yet evolved is due to the problem of needing the conjunction of two rare events, the duplication and downregulation, at one time.

In general, I think maladaptations are common and interesting. After all, Darwinian's strongest plank in the argument against creationism is the relative crudity of the materialistic evolutionary process. An Omniscient Designer would have duplicate and downregulated the hemoglobin gene in the face of malaria rather than wait for hundreds or thousands of generations for natural selection to get on with it. pjr>>

MY, MY—SO NOW WE ARE IN THE BUSINESS OF TELLING THE WORLD HOW GOD WOULD HAVE HANDLED THE WHOLE MATTER. I BARELY UNDERSTAND MY LITTLE CORNER OF THE WORLD MUCH LESS THE MIND OF THE OMNISCIENT CREATOR. WHO SAYS SHE OR HE IS BIASED TOWARD HUMANS? PERHAPS SHE HAS AN AFFECTION FOR PLASMODIUM, AS IN HALDANE'S FAMOUS JOKE TO WHEN ASKED BY A CLERIC WHAT A LIFETIME STUDY OF EVOLUTION HAD TAUGHT HALDANE ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE CREATOR—"AN INORDINATE FONDNESS FOR BEETLES"—AT THAT TIME, 1/3RD OF ALL ANIMAL SPECIES—300,000—WERE BEETLES.

I enjoyed Brian Mannix's comment, most especially "Pseven". His argument for cooperation is the same as that of Adam Smith in the Wealth of Nations. Once a medium of exchange is introduced into a system of barter, itself a reciprocal relationship, it can be vastly extended, with specialization such that one individual no longer produces ten pencils/day, but ten people are specialized to produce a single pencil—and thus a thousand/day. I too share an aversion to cultural/group selection though perhaps for other reasons. But I side with Peter in feeling that male self-domestication is more important in damping male psychopathy than female choice—Richard Wrangham vs Sarah Hrdy among evolutionary anthropologists.

<<I don't think scientists should have aversions to hypothesis. They should be cool analysts of data and models rather than depend on emotional hunches. I think our BBS paper at least establishes that cultural group selection is a viable explanation for human cooperation. If you think otherwise we describe how you can kill the hypothesis: show that (1) culture does not act as an inheritance system, or that (2) between group cultural variation is too low as it generally is for genetic variation, or that (3) cultural variation is not consequential for human competition, or that (4) human competition does not have a group-organized component. The trouble for your aversion is that the pretty plain evidence is that all four of these statements are counterfactual. pjr>>

Peter's argument on reduction of inter-birth interval in humans again veers off into culture-land when one does not need it—paternal investment, grandmother investment and older sibling investment are all expected on genetic grounds. The authority on the subject is David Haig at Harvard.

<<Humans are such funny old things! We create cultural institutions to manage things for which you and Haig say can, *in theory*, be managed by kinship and reciprocity. Marriage and kinship systems are a great example. Why do societies generally have one or a few marriage contracts and kinship systems on offer even tho marriage and kinship are quite variable cross-culturally?

Why the devil do we bother with cultural institutions when plain old evolutionary biology ought to do the trick? There is at least arguably some slip between “in principle” and “in fact” that ought to make an evolutionist curious. I like this argument (see Rob’s or Sarah’s web site):

Mathew, S., Boyd, R., & Van Veelen, M. (2013). Human cooperation among kin and close associates may require enforcement of norms by third parties. In P. J. Richerson & M. Christiansen (Eds.), *Cultural Evolution* (pp. 45-60). Cambridge MA: MIT Press. pjr>>

IF THIS IS TRUE—THAT “HUMAN COOPERATION AMONG KIN” and also AMONG “CLOSE ASSOCIATES”—“**MAY REQUIRE ENFORCEMENT OF NORMS BY THIRD PARTIES**”, THEN I HAVE WASTED 40 YEARS OF MY LIFE ON THESE TOPICS.

THE MORE GENERAL PROBLEM WITH PETER’S BIAS IS THAT SO LITTLE OF INTEREST HAS EMERGED FROM CULTURAL ARGUMENTATION. CONTRAST GENETIC. FOR EXAMPLE, WE NOW KNOW THAT WHEN **MATERNAL** GRANDMOTHERS INVEST IN THEIR CHILDREN’S CHILDREN, BOTH GRANDDAUGHTERS AND GRANDSONS BENEFIT, WHILE WHEN **PATERNAL** GRANDMOTHERS DO THE INVESTING, GRANDDAUGHTERS BENEFIT WHILE GRANDSONS ARE HARMED. THIS WAS PREDICTED BASED ON THE DIFFERENT WAY IN WHICH THE GRANDMOTHER’S X CHROMOSOME IS INHERITED IN THE TWO SYSTEMS. NO “CULTURAL” ARGUMENTATION HAS COME ANYWHERE CLOSE.

OR TAKE THE LOGIC OF SO-CALLED HONOUR KILLINGS, WHICH I HAVE NOW WORKED ON INTENSIVELY FOR TWO YEARS. NOTHING OF USE FROM CULTURAL “THEORY” BUT A POWERFUL ARGUMENT BASED ON THE EFFECTS OF REPEATED FIRST COUSIN MARRIAGES IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES—AND IN HINDU SOCIETIES ENDOGAMOUS CASTES IN COMPETITION WITH EACH OTHER. See my talk in Barcelona, Spain https://youtu.be/F_4Lr13rnx