Culture And The Evolutionary Process

Culture and the Evolutionary Process - Robert Boyd 1988-06-15 How do biological, psychological, sociological, and cultural factors combine to change societies over the long run? Boyd and Richerson explore how genetic and cultural factors interact, under the influence of evolutionary forces, to produce the diversity we see in human cultures. Using methods developed by population biologists, they propose a theory of cultural evolution that is an original and fair-minded alternative to the sociobiology debate.

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Not By Genes Alone - Peter J. Richerson 2006-06-01 Humans are a striking anomaly in the natural world. While we are similar to other mammals in many ways, our behavior sets us apart. Our unparalleled ability to adapt has allowed us to occupy virtually every habitat on earth using an incredible variety of tools and subsistence techniques. Our societies are larger, more complex, and more cooperative than any other mammal's. In this stunning exploration of human adaptation, Peter J. Richerson and Robert Boyd argue that only a Darwinian theory of cultural evolution can explain these unique characteristics. Not by Genes Alone offers a radical interpretation of human evolution, arguing that our ecological dominance and our singular social systems stem from a psychology uniquely adapted to create complex culture. Richerson and Boyd illustrate here that culture is neither superorganic nor the handmaiden of the genes. Rather, it is essential to human adaptation, as much a part of human biology as bipedal locomotion. Drawing on work in the fields of anthropology, political science, sociology, and economics—and building their case with such fascinating examples as kayaks, corporations, clever knots, and yams that require twelve men to carry them—Richerson and Boyd convincingly demonstrate that culture and biology are inextricably linked, and they show us how to think about their interaction in a way that yields a richer understanding of human nature. In abandoning the nature-versus-nurture debate as fundamentally misconceived, Not by Genes Alone is a truly original and groundbreaking theory of human behavior in terms of culture somehow disproves the suggestion that human behavior can be explained in Darwinian evolutionary terms. Fortunately, we now have a book to which they may be directed for enlightenment . . . . It is a book full of good sense and the kinds of intellectual rigor and clarity of writing that we have come to expect from the Boyd/Richerson stable."—Robin Dunbar, Nature "Not by Genes Alone is a valuable and very readable synthesis of a still embryonic but very important subject straddling the sciences and humanities."—E. O. Wilson, Harvard University

Cultural Evolution - Alex Mesoudi 2011-07-30 Charles Darwin changed the course of scientific thinking by showing how evolution accounts for the stunning diversity and biological complexity of life on earth. Recently, there has also been increased interest in the social sciences in how Darwinian theory can explain human culture. Covering a wide range of topics, including fads, public policy, the spread of religion, and herd behavior in markets, Alex Mesoudi shows that human culture is itself an evolutionary process that exhibits the key Darwinian mechanisms of variation, competition, and inheritance. This cross-disciplinary volume focuses on the ways cultural phenomena can be studied scientifically—from theoretical modeling to lab experiments, archaeological fieldwork to ethnographic studies—and shows how apparently disparate methods can complement one another to the mutual benefit of the various social science disciplines. Along the way, the book reveals how new insights arise from looking at culture from an evolutionary angle. Cultural Evolution provides a thought-provoking argument that Darwinian evolutionary theory can both unify different branches of inquiry and enhance understanding of human behavior.

Evolution, Culture, and the Human Mind - Mark Schaller 2011-03-17 An enormous amount of scientific research compels two fundamental conclusions about the human mind: The mind is the product of evolution; and the mind is shaped by culture. These two perspectives on the human mind are not incompatible, but, until recently, their compatibility has resisted rigorous scholarly inquiry. Evolutionary psychology documents many ways in which genetic adaptations govern the operations of the human mind. But evolutionary inquiries only occasionally grapple seriously with questions about human culture and cross-cultural differences. By contrast, cultural psychology documents many ways in which thought and behavior are shaped by different cultural experiences. But cultural inquirers rarely consider evolutionary processes. Even after decades of intensive research, these two perspectives on human psychology have remained largely divorced from each other. But that is now changing - and that is what this book is about. Evolution, Culture, and the Human Mind is the first scholarly book to integrate evolutionary and cultural perspectives on human psychology. The contributors include world-renowned evolutionary, cultural, social, and cognitive psychologists. These chapters reveal many novel insights linking human evolution to both human cognition and human culture - including the evolutionary origins of cross-cultural differences. The result is a stimulating introduction to an emerging integrative perspective on human nature.
Cultural Transmission and Evolution (MPB-16), Volume 16-Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza 2020-03-31 A number of scholars have found that concepts such as mutation, selection, and random drift, which emerged from the theory of biological evolution, may also explain evolutionary phenomena in other disciplines as well. Drawing on these concepts, Professors Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman classify and systematize the various modes of transmitting "culture" and explore their consequences for cultural evolution. In the process, they develop a mathematical theory of the non-genetic transmission of cultural traits that provides a framework for future investigations in quantitative social and anthropological science. The authors use quantitative models that incorporate the various modes of transmission (for example, parent-child, peer-peer, and teacher-student), and evaluate data from sociology, archaeology, and epidemiology in terms of the models. They show that the various modes of transmission in conjunction with cultural and natural selection produce various rates of cultural evolution and various degrees of diversity within and between groups. The same framework can be used for explaining phenomena as apparently unrelated as linguistics, epidemics, social values and customs, and diffusion of innovations. The authors conclude that cultural transmission is an essential factor in the study of cultural change.

Cultural Evolution-Peter J. Richerson 2013-11-01 Leading scholars report on current research that demonstrates the central role of cultural evolution in explaining human behavior. Over the past few decades, a growing body of research has emerged from a variety of disciplines to highlight the importance of cultural evolution in understanding human behavior. Wider application of these insights, however, has been hampered by traditional disciplinary boundaries. To remedy this, in this volume leading researchers from theoretical biology, developmental and cognitive psychology, linguistics, anthropology, sociology, religious studies, history, and economics come together to explore the central role of cultural evolution in different aspects of human endeavor. The contributors take as their guiding principle the idea that cultural evolution can provide an important integrating function across the various disciplines of the human sciences, as organic evolution does for biology. The benefits of adopting a cultural evolutionary perspective are demonstrated by contributions on social systems, technology, language, and religion. Topics covered include enforcement of norms in human groups, the neuroscience of technology, language, diversity, and prosociality and religion. The contributors evaluate current research on cultural evolution and consider its broader theoretical and practical implications, synthesizing past and ongoing work and sketching a roadmap for future cross-disciplinary efforts. Contributors Quentin D. Atkinson, Andrea Barochnelli, Robert Boyd, Briggs Buchanan, Joseph Bulbulia, Morten H. Christiansen, Emma Cohen, William Croft, Michael Csouk, Dan Dediu, Nicholas Evans, Emma Flynn, Pieter François, Simon Garrod, Armin W. Geertz, Herbert Gins, Russell D. Gray, Simon J. Greenhill, Daniel M. B. Haun, Joseph Henrich, Daniel J. Hruschka, Marco A. Janssen, Fiona M. Jordan, Anne Kandler, James A. Kitts, Kevin N. Laland, Laurent Lehmann, Stephen C. Levinson, Elena Lieven, Sarah Mathew, Robert N. McCauley, Alex Mesoudi, Ara Norenzayan, Harriet Over, Ju rgen Renn, Victoria Reyes-Garcia, Peter J. Richerson, Stephen Shennan, Edward G. Sinkerland, Dietrich Stout, Claudio Tennie, Peter Turchin, Carel van Schaik, Matthijs Van Veelen, Harvey Whitehouse, Thomas Widlok, Pöly Wiessner, David Sloan Wilson

The Origin and Evolution of Cultures-Robert Boyd 2005-01-20 The Origin and Evolution of Cultures presents articles based on two notions. That culture is crucial for understanding human behavior; and that culture is part of biology. Interest in this collection will span anthropology, psychology, economics, philosophy, and political science.

Culture Evolves-Andrew Whiten 2012 Culture and cultural evolution are uniquely significant phenomena in evolutionary biology: they are products of biological evolution, yet they supplement genetic transmission with social transmission, thus achieving a certain independence from natural selection. However, cultural evolution nevertheless expresses key Darwinian processes itself and also interacts with genetic evolution. Just how culture fits into the grander framework of evolution is a big issue though, yet one that has received relatively little scientific attention compared to, for example, genetic evolution. Culture Evolves is the outcome of a major interdisciplinary meeting held by The Royal Society and the British Academy which explored new discoveries and controversies regarding cultural evolution - from the roots of culture in the animal kingdom to investigations of the cognitive adaptations shaping our special cultural nature. The book contains papers written by leading experts from the fields of ethology, behavioural ecology, primatology, comparative psychology, archaeology, anthropology, evolutionary biology and developmental psychology.

Evolutionary Process and the Ecology of Culture-Brian Hazlehurst 1989

Pattern and Process in Cultural Evolution-Stephen Shennan 2009 This volume offers an integrative approach to the application of evolutionary theory in studies of cultural transmission and social evolution and reveals the enormous range of ways in which Darwinian ideas can lead to productive empirical research, the touchstone of any worthwhile theoretical perspective. While many recent works on cultural evolution adopt a specific theoretical framework, such as dual inheritance theory or human behavioral ecology, Pattern and Process in Cultural Evolution emphasizes empirical analysis and includes authors who employ a range of backgrounds and methods to address aspects of culture from an evolutionary perspective. Editor Stephen Shennan has assembled archaeologists, evolutionary theorists, and ethnographers, whose essays cover a broad range of time periods, localities, cultural groups, and artifacts.


Beyond the Meme-Alan C. Love 2019-09-03 Interdisciplinary perspectives on cultural evolution that reject meme theory in favor of a complex understanding of dynamic change over time How do cultures change? In recent decades, the concept of the meme, posited as a basic unit of culture analogous to the gene, has been central to debates about cultural transformation. Despite the appeal of meme
theory, its simplification of complex interactions and other inadequacies as an explanatory framework raise more questions about cultural evolution than it answers. In Beyond the Meme, William C. Wimsatt and Alan C. Love assemble interdisciplinary perspectives on cultural evolution, providing a nuanced understanding of it as a process in which dynamic structures interact on different scales of size and time. By focusing on the full range of evolutionary processes across distinct contexts, from rice farming to scientific reasoning, this volume demonstrates how a thick understanding of change in culture emerges from multiple disciplinary vantage points, each of which is required to understand cultural evolution in all its complexity. The editors provide an extensive introductory essay to contextualize the volume, and Wimsatt contributes a separate chapter that systematically organizes the conceptual geography of cultural processes and phenomena. Any adequate account of the transmission, elaboration, and evolution of culture must, this volume argues, recognize the central roles that cognitive and social development play in cultural change and the complex interplay of technological, organizational, and institutional structures needed to enable and coordinate these processes. Contributors: Marshall Abrams, U of Alabama at Birmingham; Claes Andersson, Chalmers U of Technology; Mark A. Bedau, Reed College; James A. Evans, U of Chicago; Jacob G. Foster, U of California, Los Angeles; Michel Janssen, U of Minnesota; Sabina Leonelli, U of Exeter; Massimo Maiocchi, U of Chicago; Joseph D. Martin, U of Cambridge; Salikoko S. Mufwene, U of Chicago; Nancy J. Nersessian, Georgia Institute of Technology and Harvard U; Paul E. Smaldino, U of California, Merced; Anton Törnberg, U of Gothenburg; Petter Törnberg, U of Amsterdam; Gilbert B. Tostevin, U of Minnesota.

Cultural Evolution-Tim Lewens 2015 This title exposes and evaluates a set of conceptual disputes concerning what we might mean by culture, and how we should go about accounting for it. Its particular focus is a set of evolutionary approaches to the genesis of the human capacity for culture, to subsequent cultural change, and to the ways in which genetic and cultural change interact, or ‘co-evolve’. The book as a whole argues that there is little realistic hope that the social sciences might become unified around an evolutionary synthesis. Instead the defence of evolutionary approaches to culture must be more modest in scope

The Secret of Our Success-Joseph Henrich 2017-10-17 How our collective intelligence has helped us to evolve and prosper Humans are a puzzling species. On the one hand, we struggle to survive on our own in the wild, often failing to overcome even basic challenges, like obtaining food, building shelters, or avoiding predators. On the other hand, human groups have produced ingenious technologies, sophisticated languages, and complex institutions that have permitted us to successfully expand into a vast range of diverse environments. What has enabled us to dominate the globe, more than any other species, while remaining virtually helpless as lone individuals? This book shows that the secret of our success lies not in our innate intelligence, but in our collective brains—on the ability of human groups to socially interconnect and learn from one another over generations. Drawing insights from lost European explorers, clever chimpanzees, mobile hunter-gatherers, neuroscientific findings, ancient bones, and the human genome, Joseph Henrich demonstrates how our collective brains have propelled our species’ genetic evolution and shaped our biology. Our early capacities for learning from others produced many cultural innovations, such as fire, cooking, water containers, plant knowledge, and projectile weapons, which in turn drove the expansion of our brains and altered our physiology, anatomy, and psychology in crucial ways. Later on, some collective brains generated and recombined powerful concepts, such as the lever, wheel, screw, and writing, while also creating the institutions that continue to alter our motivations and perceptions. Henrich shows how our genetics and biology are inextricably interwoven with cultural evolution, and how culture-gene interactions launched our species on an extraordinary evolutionary trajectory. Tracking clues from our ancient past to the present, The Secret of Our Success explores how the evolution of both our cultural and social natures produce a collective intelligence that explains both our species’ immense success and the origins of human uniqueness.

Darwin's Unfinished Symphony-Kevin N. Laland 2018-09-11 Humans possess an extraordinary capacity for culture, from the arts and language to science and technology. But how did the human mind—and the uniquely human ability to devise and transmit culture—evolve from its roots in animal behavior? Darwin’s Unfinished Symphony presents a captivating new theory of human cognitive evolution. This compelling and accessible book reveals how culture is not just the magnificent end product of an evolutionary process that produced a species unlike all others—it is also the key driving force behind that process. Kevin Laland tells the story of the painstaking fieldwork, the key experiments, the false leads, and the stunning scientific breakthroughs that led to this new understanding of how culture transformed human evolution. It is the story of how Darwin’s intellectual descendants picked up where he left off and took up the challenge of providing a scientific account of the evolution of the human mind.

The Evolution of Culture-Stefan Linquist 2017-03-02 Recent years have seen a transformation in thinking about the nature of culture. Rather than viewing culture in opposition to biology, a growing number of researchers now regard culture as subject to evolutionary processes. Recent developments in this field have shifted some of the traditional academic fault lines. Alliances are forming between researchers trained in anthropology, evolutionary biology, psychology and philosophy. Meanwhile, several distinct schools of thought have appeared which differ in their vision of what an evolutionary approach to culture should look like. This volume contains some of the most influential publications on these subjects from the past few decades. A theoretical background chapter and critical introduction identify the core issues at stake in the new study of cultural evolution. These chapters are followed by sections on each of the four dominant approaches: the phylogenetic approach, memetics, dual inheritance theory and niche construction. Following these are two chapters on closely related topics: the psychological mechanisms of culture and the existence of culture in non-human animals. Overall, this volume provides an up to date overview of some of the most exciting trends in contemporary evolutionary thought.

In the Light of Evolution-National Academy of Sciences 2017-01-01 Biodiversity—the genetic variety of life—is an exuberant product of the evolutionary past, a vast human-supportive resource (aesthetic, intellectual, and material) of the present, and a rich legacy to cherish and preserve for the future. Two urgent challenges, and opportunities, for 21st-century science are to gain deeper insights into the evolutionary processes that foster biotic diversity, and to translate that understanding into workable solutions for the regional and global crises that biodiversity currently faces. A grasp of evolutionary principles and processes is important in other societal arenas as well,
such as education, medicine, sociology, and other applied fields including agriculture, pharmacology, and biotechnology. The ramifications of evolutionary thought also extend into learned realms traditionally reserved for philosophy and religion. The central goal of the In the Light of Evolution (ILE) series is to promote the evolutionary sciences through state-of-the-art colloquia in the series of Arthur M. Sackler colloquia sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences and their published proceedings. Each installment explores evolutionary perspectives on a particular biological topic that is scientifically intriguing but also has special relevance to contemporary societal issues or challenges. This tenth and final edition of the In the Light of Evolution series focuses on recent developments in phylogeographic research and their relevance to past accomplishments and future research directions.

**Human Evolution Beyond Biology and Culture** - Jeroen C. J. M. van den Bergh 2018-10-18 A complete account of evolutionary thought in the social, environmental and policy sciences, creating bridges with biology.

**Innovation in Cultural Systems** - Michael John O’Brien 2010 Leading scholars offer a range of perspectives on the roles played by innovation in the evolution of human culture. In recent years an interest in applying the principles of evolution to the study of culture emerged in the social sciences. Archaeologists and anthropologists reconsidered the role of innovation in particular, and have moved toward characterizing innovation in cultural systems not only as a product but also as an evolutionary process. This distinction was familiar to biology but new to the social sciences; cultural evolutionists from the nineteenth to the twentieth century had tended to see innovation as a preprogrammed change that occurred when a cultural group “needed” to overcome environmental problems. In this volume, leading researchers from a variety of disciplines—including anthropology, archaeology, evolutionary biology, philosophy, and psychology—offer their perspectives on cultural innovation. The book provides not only a range of views but also an integrated account, with the chapters offering an orderly progression of thought. The contributors consider innovation in biological terms, discussing epistemology, animal studies, systematics and phylogeny, phenotypic plasticity and evolvability, and evo-devo; they discuss modern insights into innovation, including simulation, the random-copying model, diffusion, and demographic analysis; and they offer case studies of innovation from archaeological and ethnographic records, examining developmental, behavioral, and social patterns. 

**A History of Humanity** - Patrick Manning 2020-02-27 Humanity today functions as a gigantic, world-encompassing system. Renowned world historian, Patrick Manning traces how this human system evolved from Homo Sapiens’ beginnings over 200,000 years ago right up to the present day. He focuses on three great shifts in the scale of social organization - the rise of syntactical language, of agricultural society, and today’s newly global social discourse - and links processes of social evolution to the dynamics of biological and cultural evolution. Throughout each of these shifts, migration and social diversity have been central, and social institutions have existed in a delicate balance, serving not just their own members but undergoing regulation from society. Integrating approaches from world history, environmental studies, biological and cultural evolution, social anthropology, sociology, and evolutionary linguistics, Patrick Manning offers an unprecedented account of the evolution of humans and our complex social system and explores the crises facing that human system today.

**Embodiment in Evolution and Culture** - Gregor Etzelmüller 2016-11-01 From its beginnings, the theory of evolution has unsettled fundamental anthropological assumptions about the place of human beings in nature. The integration of human origins into natural history by Darwinism was countered by the philosophical anthropologies of the 20th century. Their attempts were to hold on to the special status of humans as beings ‘open towards the world’. Today, evolutionary and philosophical anthropology have moved closer together via the paradigm of embodiment. Building on embodied cognitive science, this volume aims to establish how far the human mind and human cultural cognition can be attributed to the structures of human existence, structures which have emerged in the course of evolution and have in turn been affected by culture. Contributors: Terrence Deacon, Marie-Eve Engels, Gregor Etzelmüller, Thomas Fuchs, Shaun Gallagher, Dullio Garofoli, Miriam Haide, Matthias Jung, Lambros Malafouris, Alexander Massmann, Erik Myin, Taller G. Ransom, Christian Spahn, Magnus Schlette, Mog Stapleton, Christian Twes, Annette Weissenrieder, Wolfgang Welsch, Christoph Wulf, Karim Zahidi, Jordan Zlatev

**Beyond the Meme** - Alan C. Love 2019 Interdisciplinary perspectives on cultural evolution that reject meme theory in favor of a complex understanding of dynamic change over time. How do cultures change? In recent decades, the concept of the meme, posited as a basic unit of culture analogous to the gene, has been central to debates about cultural transformation. Despite the appeal of meme theory, its simplification of complex interactions and other inadequacies as an explanatory framework raise more questions about cultural evolution than it answers. In Beyond the Meme, William C. Wimsatt and Alan C. Love assemble interdisciplinary perspectives on cultural evolution, providing a nuanced understanding of it as a process in which dynamic structures interact on different scales of size and time. By focusing on the full range of evolutionary processes across distinct contexts, from rice farming to scientific reasoning, this volume demonstrates how a thick understanding of change in culture emerges from multiple disciplinary vantage points, each of which is required to understand cultural evolution in all its complexity. The editors provide an extensive introductory essay to contextualize the volume, and Wimsatt contributes a separate chapter that systematically organizes the conceptual geography of cultural processes and phenomena. Any adequate account of the transmission, elaboration, and evolution of culture must, this volume argues, recognize the central roles that cognitive and social development play in cultural change and the complex interplay of technological, organizational, and institutional structures needed to enable and coordinate these processes. Contributors: Marshall Abrams, U of Alabama at Birmingham; Claes Andersson, Chalmers U of Technology; Mark A. Bedau, Reed College; James A. Evans, U of Chicago; Jacob G. Foster, U of California, Los Angeles; Michel Janssen, U of Minnesota; Sabina Leonelli, U of Exeter; Massimo Maiocchi, U of Chicago; Joseph D. Martin, U of Cambridge; Salikoko S. Mufwene, U of Chicago; Nancy J. Nersessian, Georgia Institute of Technology and Harvard U; Paul
Information and Meaning in Evolutionary Processes—William F. Harms 2004-04-26 This book is intended to help transform epistemology - the traditional study of knowledge - into a rigorous discipline by removing conceptual roadblocks and developing formal tools required for a fully naturalized epistemology. The evolutionary approach which Harms favours begins with the common observation that if our senses and reasoning were not reliable, then natural selection would have eliminated them long ago. The challenge for some time has been how to transform these informal musings about evolutionary epistemology into a rigorous theoretical discipline capable of complementing current scientific studies of the evolution of cognition with a philosophically defensible account of meaning and justification.

How Humans Evolved—Robert Boyd 2014-09-16 How Humans Evolved teaches the processes that shape human evolution with a unique blend of evolutionary theory, population genetics, and behavioral ecology. The new edition continues to offer the most up-to-date research—in particular, significantly revised coverage of how recent discoveries are shaping our history of human evolution—while now giving you the best tools to engage your students in and out of the classroom.

Embodied Visions—Torben Grodal 2009-03-17 Embodied Visions presents a groundbreaking analysis of film through the lens of bioculturalism, revealing how human biology as well as human culture determine how films are made and experienced. Throughout his study, Torben Grodal uses the breakthroughs of modern brain science to explain central features of film aesthetics and to construct a general model of aesthetic experience—what he terms the PECMA flow model—that demonstrates the movement of information and emotions in the brain when viewing film. Examining a wide array of genres—animation, romance, pornography, fantasy, horror—from evolutionary and psychological perspectives, Grodal also reflects on social issues at the intersection of film theory and neuropsychology. These include moral problems in film viewing, how we experience realism and character identification, and the value of the subjective forms that cinema uniquely elaborates.

Cognitive Gadgets—Cecilia Heyes 2018-04-16 How did human minds become so different from those of other animals? What accounts for our capacity to understand the way the physical world works, to think ourselves into the minds of others, to gossip, read, tell stories about the past, and imagine the future? These questions are not new: they have been debated by philosophers, psychologists, anthropologists, evolutionists, and neurobiologists over the course of centuries. One explanation widely accepted today is that humans have special cognitive instincts. Unlike other living animal species, we are born with complicated mechanisms for reasoning about causation, reading the minds of others, copying behaviors, and using language. Cecilia Heyes agrees that adult humans have impressive pieces of cognitive equipment. In her framing, however, these cognitive gadgets are not instincts programmed in the genes but are constructed in the course of childhood through social interaction. Cognitive gadgets are products of cultural evolution, rather than genetic evolution. At birth, the minds of human babies are only subtly different from the minds of newborn chimpanzees. We are friendlier, our attention is drawn to different things, and we have a capacity to learn and remember that outstrips the abilities of newborn chimpanzees. Yet when these subtle differences are exposed to culture-soaked human environments, they have enormous effects. They enable us to upload distinctively human ways of thinking from the social world around us. As Cognitive Gadgets makes clear, from birth our malleable human minds can learn through culture not only what to think but how to think it.

Evolutionary Ethnobiology—Ulysses Paulino Albuquerque 2015-09-23 Ethnobiology is a fascinating science. To understand this vocation it needs to be studied under an evolutionary point of view that is very strong and significant, although this aspect is often poorly approached in the literature. This is the first book to compile and discuss information about evolutionary ethnobiology in English.

How Humans Evolved—ROBERT. BOYD 2014-09-10 How Humans Evolved teaches the processes that shape human evolution with a unique blend of evolutionary theory, population genetics, and behavioral ecology. The new edition continues to offer the most up-to-date research—in particular, significantly revised coverage of how recent discoveries are shaping our history of human evolution—while now giving you the best tools to engage your students in and out of the classroom.

Wired for Culture: Origins of the Human Social Mind—Mark Pagel 2012-02-27 An evolutionary biologist explores the concept of culture and how it influenced our collective human behaviors from the beginning of evolution through modern times and offers new insights on how art, morality and altruism and self-interest define being human. 20,000 first printing.

Cultural Evolution—Ronald F. Inglehart 2018-03-31 Cultural Evolution argues that people's values and behavior are shaped by the degree to which survival is secure; it was precarious for most of history, which encouraged heavy emphasis on group solidarity, rejection of outsiders, and obedience to strong leaders. For under extreme scarcity, xenophobia is realistic: if there is just enough land to support one tribe and another tribe tries to claim it, survival may literally be a choice between Us and Them. Conversely, high levels of existential security encourage openness to change, diversity, and new ideas. The unprecedented prosperity and security of the postwar era brought cultural change, the environmentalist movement, and the spread of democracy. But in recent decades, diminishing job security and rising inequality have led to an authoritarian reaction. Evidence from more than 100 countries demonstrates that people's motivations and behavior reflect the extent to which they take survival for granted - and that modernization changes them in roughly
How Traditions Live and Die-Olivier Morin 2016 Of all the things we do and say, most will never be repeated or reproduced. Once in a while, however, an idea or a practice generates a chain of transmission that covers more distance through space and time than any individual person ever could. What makes such transmission chains possible? For two centuries, the dominant view (from psychology to anthropology) was that humans owe their cultural prosperity to their powers of imitation. In this view, modern cultures exist because the people who carry them are gifted at remembering, storing and reproducing information. How Traditions Live and Die proposes an alternative to this standard view. What makes traditions live is not a general-purpose imitation capacity. Cultural transmission is partial, selective, often unsuccessful. Some traditions live on in spite of this, because they tap into widespread and basic cognitive preferences. These attractive traditions spread, not by being better retained or more accurately transferred, but because they are transmitted over and over. This theory is used to shed light on various puzzles of cultural change (from the distribution of bird songs to the staying power of children’s rhymes) and to explain the special relation that links the human species to its cultures. Morin combines recent work in cognitive anthropology with new advances in quantitative cultural history, to map and predict the diffusion of traditions. This book is both an introduction and an accessible alternative to contemporary theories of cultural evolution.
The Will to Power and the Evolution of Morality-Nevitt Dean Reesor 2008 Against the prevalent psychological interpretation of the will to power, I textually substantiate the claim that Nietzsche sees it as a cosmological principle driving both biological and cultural evolution. I deploy this strong view in securing the coherence of On the Genealogy of Morals, long regarded as a hopelessly disjointed work. I show that for Nietzsche the historical development of values reflects the constructive activity of the will to power as it transforms the human species into a more powerful social organism. On my view, the Three Essays comprising the Genealogy address three different historical periods during the evolution of morality; I treat them in chronological order. The Second Essay presents Nietzsche's speculative account of the earliest stages of this process. He identifies several basic features of human nature and details how they evolved along with certain prehistoric social institutions. In the First Essay Nietzsche explains how religious leaders in the ancient world effected a value reversal in morality: they redefined the “good” of the noble ruling class as “evil” and created a new standard of good based on the needs and desires of the underclass. I argue that Nietzsche's explanation can be understood fully only by taking into consideration the features of human nature which evolved during the prehistoric era described in the Second Essay. Finally, the Third Essay reveals the ramifications for contemporary Western culture of this evolutionary process and the subsequent transformation of values.

Darwin's Unfinished Symphony-Kevin N. Laland 2018-09-11 Humans possess an extraordinary capacity for culture, from the arts and language to science and technology. But how did the human mind—and the uniquely human ability to devise and transmit culture—evolve from its roots in animal behavior? Darwin's Unfinished Symphony presents a captivating new theory of human cognitive evolution. This compelling and accessible book reveals how culture is not just the magnificent end product of an evolutionary process that produced a species unlike all others—it is also the key driving force behind that process. Kevin Laland tells the story of the painstaking fieldwork, the key experiments, the false leads, and the stunning scientific breakthroughs that led to this new understanding of how culture transformed human evolution. It is the story of how Darwin's intellectual descendants picked up where he left off and took up the challenge of providing a scientific account of the evolution of the human mind.
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