

THE CAMBRIDGE HANDBOOK OF EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN BEHAVIOR

The transformative wave of Darwinian insight continues to expand throughout the human sciences. While still centered on evolution-focused fields such as evolutionary psychology, ethology, and human behavioral ecology, this insight has also influenced cognitive science, neuroscience, feminist discourse, sociocultural anthropology, media studies, and clinical psychology. This handbook's goal is to amplify the wave by bringing together world-leading experts to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date overview of evolution-oriented and influenced fields. While evolutionary psychology remains at the core of the collection, it also covers the history, current standing, debates, and future directions of the panoply of fields entering the Darwinian fold. As such, *The Cambridge Handbook of Evolutionary Perspectives on Human Behavior* is a valuable reference not just for evolutionary psychologists, but also for scholars and students from many fields who wish to see how the evolutionary perspective is relevant to their own work.

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THE CAMBRIDGE HANDBOOK OF EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN BEHAVIOR

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We would like to dedicate this handbook to Ethel and Bill Reader, Philip and Betty Barkow, and George and Margret Workman. And finally we would also like to pay special tribute to Anne Campbell – a true pioneer of evolutionary approaches.

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Preface

With the publication of the *Origin of Species*, Darwin realized that his theory of evolution by natural selection would have clear repercussions for the development of academic areas outside of biology. In particular, he predicted that our understanding of human behavior would be transformed as psychology dealt with the repercussions of evolutionary theory:

[I]n the distant future I see open fields for more important researches. Psychology will be based on a new foundation, that of the necessary acquirement of each mental power and capacity by gradation.

(Darwin, 1859, p. 458)

By “the necessary acquirement of each mental power and capacity by gradation,” Darwin was suggesting that, in addition to physical features, human behavior and internal states can be seen as adaptations that were shaped by natural and sexual selection. In these two sentences Darwin introduces the concept of “evolutionary psychology”; that is, human psychological abilities arose to aid survival and reproduction in the deep ancestral past and, if we wish to understand human nature, then we need to consider how and why it evolved. Note, however, that he also used the phrase “in the distant future.” Darwin was certainly prophetic in suggesting we would have to wait some time for this development. While there were a number of relatively unsuccessful attempts to integrate evolutionary thinking into psychology, the scientific development of evolutionary psychology only began in earnest during the 1990s (Barkow, Cosmides, & Tooby, 1992; Buss, 1995; Pinker, 1994). Such developments in the 1990s led, in turn, to a transformative wave of Darwinian insight during the early years of the twenty-first century. Today, this wave continues to expand throughout the human sciences. While still centered on evolution-focused fields such as evolutionary psychology, human behavioral ecology, ethology, and sociobiology, its influence is now being felt in cognitive, social, and developmental psychology, neuroscience, feminist theory, and sociocultural anthropology, as well as in psychiatry and media studies. The list continues to grow. The aim of this handbook is to aid the wave by providing comprehensive coverage of evolution-oriented and influenced fields through the writings of a mixture of world-leading experts and up-and-coming scholars.

Although the contributors to this handbook all share an interest in the relationship between evolution and the human condition, they come from a wide variety of backgrounds and certainly do not have a unitary view on all of the issues explored here. Some contributors are happy to call themselves evolutionary psychologists or human behavioral ecologists; others would shy away from, or even reject, such labels. But while they may not all speak with one voice, their voices all come from a Darwinian source, and it is fair to say that all have been swept up by this transformative wave. Maybe there will come a time, perhaps in the not too distant future,

when to preface one's research area with the term "evolutionary" will be unnecessary: the new foundation will become the orthodoxy. We hope this handbook will provide one small step on the way to that state of affairs.

While the core of the handbook is the field of evolutionary psychology, our intention is to provide an up-to-date, comprehensive source of advanced literature covering evolutionary thought and the history, current standing, debates, and future directions of the panoply of fields within or entering the Darwinian fold. It is anticipated that *The Cambridge Handbook of Evolutionary Perspectives on Human Behavior* will become a reference tool not just for evolutionary psychologists and their graduate students, but also for scholars from many fields who wish to see how the evolutionary perspective is relevant to their own work.

The handbook is divided into 10 sections covering: the comparative approach; sociocultural anthropology; neuroscience; social psychology; cognitive psychology; developmental issues; sexual selection; psychopathology; applied issues; and, finally, the relationship between evolutionary theory and the media.

We have provided a brief introduction to each section. Each of these is designed to allow the reader to gain a broad grasp of the content of a given section and, for those unfamiliar with the subject matter, a brief glimpse into the work of the contributors. We have purposely kept these introductory sections brief as we did not want readers to wade through an essay before reading a series of essays.

Enjoy.

Lance Workman, Will Reader, and Jerome H. Barkow

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