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Introduction

A wide-ranging discussion among cultural historians about the state of their field, in particular its relationship to social history and the social sciences more generally, has recently been fuelled by Peter Mandler’s survey of what he sees as a ‘problem’ with cultural history.¹ At the same time, social historians have been taking stock of the methodological assumptions of a cultural turn which may now be slowing.² These discussions have concentrated on the faultlines between ‘culture’ and ‘society’, and the most far reaching of Mandler’s ‘modest proposals’ calls on cultural historians to develop a ‘theory of meaning’ more clearly rooted in social-science theory. The goal of providing cultural history with a more solid theoretical grounding also leads Paula S. Fass’s to suggest that ‘Now, more than ever, cultural history needs exposure to the methods, ways of thinking and questions that social history can provide.’³ In the face of a declining interest in some forms of cultural theory, the search for new theoretical inspiration and innovative, methodologically sound approaches to the topic of culture is to be welcomed.⁴ (Re)anchoring cultural history in sociological methodology and (re)building bridges with the social sciences may be helpful. Yet, these efforts do not go far enough, ignoring critical questions which have been raised about sociology itself. While the time is ripe for establishing of a new methodological and theoretical synthesis, I think that cultural historians should be prepared to cast their conceptual nets more widely and reconsider some basic assumptions of cultural history as it is currently practiced.

However, despite continuing debates about the relationship between society and culture or ongoing battles around literary and linguistic theories, there is one threat on which most cultural historians seem to agree: ‘biology’. The literal meaning of ‘biological’

(referring to anything related to, caused by, or affecting living organisms), would seem unproblematic enough. However, for some, those disciplines which consider human behaviour in terms of genetics or evolutionary theory are seen as reductionist, determinist and, ultimately, irrelevant (or threatening) to historical studies. The ‘othering’ of biology was built into the current debate from the start, with Mandler envisioning a cultural history reinforced through social science as a bulwark against ‘biology envy’ and the ‘vast claims made by socio-biology and evolutionary psychology to have unlocked the secrets of human behaviour’.⁵ Carla Hesse’s response, though critical of Mandler’s other views, agrees on the position of cultural history vis-à-vis the natural sciences. For her, the ‘fundamental aim’ of psycholinguistics, sociobiology and evolutionary psychology is to ‘discover immutable laws of human behaviour’; their interests are ‘essentially at cross purposes with what historians want to know about “meaning”, “identity”, “needs”, “desires”, “discourse” and “narrative”’; and their levels of analysis are ‘deeply incommensurable with those of the historian’.⁶ But more often than provoking overt hostility, biology is simply ignored; for example, a recent, wide ranging and theoretical introduction to cultural history, despite its other merits, avoids a single reference to evolutionary or neuropsychological perspectives on culture.⁷

The lack of attention paid to natural science perspectives on culture means that cultural historians are being invited to move closer to social science without considering the most powerful critiques of it by evolutionary and cognitive psychology. This is unfortunate, as there has for some time been a broad and useful debate about the relationship between culture, society and biology. Unfortunately, such constructive discussions – with a few exceptions – have taken place outside of the field of history.⁸ Rather than raising disciplinary drawbridges, cultural historians should be contributing to understanding the ways that psychology, society and culture interact. Incorporating evolutionary perspectives on culture may include finding that there limits to ‘culture’ as an explanatory principle. Nonetheless, it also presents an opportunity for cultural scholars to increase the depth and relevance of their work and to connect it to an interdisciplinary rethinking of the human condition. What

follows is an argument for historians to engage not only with social science but also with natural science approaches to subjects which go to the heart of cultural concerns.⁹ First, I shall summarise evolutionary psychology and some of its thinking on culture. Second, some typical objections to Darwinist approaches to culture will be addressed, as part of a description of a possible *modus vivendi* between culturalist and naturalist theories. Finally, I shall use the issue of violence to suggest the opportunities for connecting cultural history, sociology and evolutionary psychology.

Evolutionary Psychology: A Method of Analysis

There have been a variety of recent efforts to unite ‘evolution’ and history.¹⁰ One, an ‘evolutionary theory of history’, sees culture ‘evolving’ in ways analogous to biological change.¹¹ ‘Units’ of cultural information – ‘cognitive units’, ‘memes’, ‘mentemes’ or ‘culturgens’ – are replicated and cultural selection pressures act upon them causing cultural phenomena to arise, thrive or go extinct.¹² While considering both cultural and genetic change as processes of replication and selection, culture and genetics are seen as separate realms. Others have theorised some form of ‘coevolution’ in which genes are uncoupled from culture but leave behind predispositions which act as a sort of ‘leash’ (or ‘elastic’) upon cultural development.¹³ ‘Cultural evolution’ and ‘gene-culture coevolution’ are intriguing and possibly useful theories; however, it is ‘evolutionary psychology’, which I think is most valuable to cultural historians, particularly the sophisticated, multifaceted and culturally aware approach developed by John Tooby and Leda Cosmides. Interest in what evolutionary psychologists have to say about culture has hitherto been largely confined to anthropologists, psychologists and sociologists. However, while there are differences in the assumptions and methods of history and evolutionary psychology, they nonetheless share a specific common interest in explaining how individuals within particular societies understand their environments and interact. Some evolutionary psychological arguments have even been

explicitly historical, making use of historical data on, for example, mate choice or homicide rates to bolster their arguments.¹⁴ The integration of historical data into evolutionary analyses of human behaviour suggests that an interdisciplinary exchange in the opposite direction is not only possible, but also necessary.

Moreover, it is not difficult to imagine how a better understanding of human psychology might be relevant to the study of culture. I agree with Mark Flinn, who argues, 'A historical theory of culture without psychology is as incomplete as is a psychological theory of culture without history.'¹⁵ This notion should not be alien to cultural historians, some of whom have long been able to incorporate a different theory of psychology: that of Freud.¹⁶ Admittedly, 'psychohistory' has always received a mixed reception; however, the even greater scepticism and hostility directed toward evolutionary psychology results in part from confusion about what these methods have to offer the study of culture. Of course, it would be too easy to suggest that such resistance is all down to a misunderstanding and to ignore genuine differences between the basic assumptions of evolutionary psychology and much of cultural historiography. Most importantly, many scholars in the humanities would vehemently reject the notion of an innate and powerful 'human nature' central to evolutionary psychology. Clearing out the thickets of debate, politics and misunderstanding which have grown around the concept of human nature is beyond the scope of this article¹⁷, and I am less interested in advocating a specific understanding of nature or evolved psychology than in encouraging a more general openness toward evolutionary perspectives and evaluating what they offer the study of culture. However, I would like to briefly summarise those elements of evolutionary psychology which I think are most relevant to cultural and social historians.

Cosmides and Tooby describe evolutionary psychology as an 'approach' to dealing with questions about the human psyche, as a 'way of thinking' about psychology rather than a specific field unto itself.¹⁸ It is not necessarily related to the aforementioned theories of cultural evolution or gene-culture coevolution, approaches which some of its practitioners

have addressed critically.¹⁹ Thus, evolutionary psychology does not assume a particular evolutionary mechanism for cultural units, nor is it focused on determining the specific degree to which particular behaviours are the result of genes or learning. Asserting the ‘fundamental unity’ of human psychology, evolutionary psychologists are interested in aspects of the psyche which all people share and which underpin all cultures.²⁰ The subject matter of evolutionary psychology is ‘the evolved architecture of the human mind, or the set of evolved mental mechanisms that comprise the human mind.’²¹ Psychology is thus seen as a biological phenomena subject to evolutionary development.²² Rather than a ‘blank slate’ or all-purpose thinking machine, the brain is composed of modular, evolved ‘regulatory circuits’ which ‘organize the way we interpret our experiences, inject certain recurrent concepts and motivations into our mental life, and provide universal frames of meaning that allow us to understand the actions and intentions of others’.²³ Thus, evolutionary psychology is to be differentiated from efforts to determine the impact of putative genetic differences – such as those based on race – on human behaviour. Instead, it is interested in determining how specific mechanisms in all normal brains manage mental processes and the beliefs and behaviours which result.²⁴ Some mechanisms are so ingrained as to operate beneath the level of consciousness; nevertheless, by studying behaviour patterns and theorising about the adaptive role of psychology in the evolutionary past, the outline of an innate psychological structure can emerge.²⁵

The behaviour caused by these mechanisms is not necessarily ‘adaptive’ (improving ‘inclusive fitness’, the reproductive success of oneself and one’s kin) in modern contexts.²⁶ Taking into account the slow process of evolution, the long-term existence of our species as hunter-gatherers, and the brief span of historical time, ‘the complex architecture of the human psyche can be expected to have assumed approximately modern form during the Pleistocene, in the process of adapting to Pleistocene conditions, and to have undergone only minor modifications since then’.²⁷ While there is no longer necessarily a direct connection between evolutionary ‘fitness’ and modern human behaviour and culture, the psychological

mechanisms that produce that behaviour (and shape that culture) were formed during those ancestral periods. These mechanisms continue to ‘govern’ certain aspects of human behaviour and culture. Thus:

Although specific modern behavior may or may not be *adaptively patterned*, both modern and past behavior is *evolutionarily patterned* and can only be understood by being placed in an evolutionary framework.²⁸

Due to this foundation of human psychology, ‘selection thinking’ (i.e., considering the evolutionary role of particular kinds of psychological adaptations) can provide insight into a wide range of human social behaviour.²⁹ To a large extent, evolutionary psychology ‘addresses not what the mind can do, but what it was designed to do’.³⁰ What makes evolutionary psychology relevant for historians is that its approach to mentality and behaviour has led to theories about patterns in – and the reasons for – a wide range of human abilities, concepts and behaviours such as altruism, attraction, sexuality, morality, violence and aesthetics.³¹ In short, it presents an argument for how culture is created.

Culture and Biology: Never the Twain Shall Meet?

Evolutionary psychology is often accused of ‘determinism’, allegedly seeing people as directly programmed by genetic instructions.³² Moreover, this presumed encoding is stereotypically seen as malevolent, promoting a pessimistic view of people as inherently rapacious, selfish and violent and justifying objectionable behaviour. However, evolutionary psychologists have repeatedly denied that there are fixed laws of behaviour and have emphasised the possibilities for beneficial improvement in social and individual behaviour.³³ Richard Dawkins long ago discussed the ‘myth’ of genetic determinism along with the easy misunderstandings arising when speaking of ‘a gene for’ certain kinds of behaviour.³⁴ Steven Pinker, while critical of social science’s rejection of human nature, devotes extensive

discussion to ‘bridging’ biology and culture.³⁵ Martin Daly and Margo Wilson place evolutionary psychology at the centre of their studies of violence; however, they reject genetic or biological determinism, address the issue of cultural variability in homicide and draw attention to ways of reducing violence.³⁶ Randy Thornhill and Craig Palmer open their controversial evolutionary psychological study of rape with a lengthy consideration of the interrelationship between culture and biology, concluding that, ‘every aspect of every living thing is, by definition, biological, and everything biological is a result of interaction between genes and environmental factors.’³⁷ Cosmides and Tooby present the issue as follows, effectively summarizing the views of many evolutionary psychologists:

*Every aspect of an organism's phenotype is the joint product of its genes and its environment. To ask which is more important is like asking, Which is more important in determining the area of a rectangle, the length or the width? Which is more important in causing a car to run, the engine or the gasoline? Genes allow the environment to influence the development of phenotypes.*³⁸

Culture – along with other ‘environmental’ factors – plays a crucial role in modern Darwinist perspectives on society and history. Framing the current debate as a struggle between biology *or* culture, between nature *or* nurture, is pointless.³⁹ However, defining what ‘culture’ *is*, explaining more specifically *how* it is formed and exploring what it contributes to human life remains an important issue and these topics define an intellectual task in which both cultural and evolutionary perspectives can fruitfully interact.

Of course defining ‘culture’ is no easy task.⁴⁰ As Peter Burke notes, the ‘common ground’ of cultural history can be described ‘as a concern with the symbolic and its interpretation’.⁴¹ This shared interest, however, conceals a number of different approaches. Some cultural historians emphasize ‘the importance of beliefs and assumptions and their causal role in group behavior’; others are ‘more interested in the history of representations than in structures or processes’ and some seem to have abandoned interest in materiality and

causality altogether.⁴² Establishing a single historiographical definition of ‘culture’ is likely futile. Similarly, there is no single ‘Darwinist’ perspective on culture, even though there are common features in outlook and conceptualisation. More than simply leaving some theoretical space for ‘culture’ to affect behaviour, evolutionary psychologists have developed complex perspectives on the ways that culture actually functions. For instance, they critique a view of culture – whether derived from the social sciences or post-structural theory – as an all-powerful, disembodied and ever-present force, independent of individual psychology, environment and material structures. Instead, culture is given a definite location:

It is generated in rich and intricate ways by information-processing mechanisms situated in human minds. These mechanisms are, in turn, the elaborately sculpted product of the evolutionary process.⁴³

From this perspective, ‘culture’ describes a consequence of the interaction between in-built psychological tendencies and dynamic relationships between individuals:

Group level cultural and social phenomena, while they have some emergent properties, are the consequence of the operation of evolved psychological (and morphological) mechanisms functioning in individuals who evolved to live in groups.⁴⁴

Cultural information, by definition, is learned, a favoured argument by those critical of evolutionary approaches; however, ‘learning’ is itself governed by mental mechanisms which shape the ways socially-learned information is absorbed. These mechanisms – variously known as ‘Darwinian algorithms,’ ‘epigenetic rules,’ ‘heuristics,’ ‘learning biases,’ ‘cultural aptitudes,’ and ‘constraints on learning’ – provide psychological ‘aptitudes’ for or ‘restrictions’ on culture.⁴⁵ Language, perhaps the most fundamental of a culture’s learned aspects, is guided by its own set of evolved psychological mechanisms.⁴⁶ Edward O. Wilson

describes the inherited regularities which result from evolved mental structures as ‘epigenetic rules’,

neurobiological traits that cause us to see the world in a particular way and to learn certain behaviors in preference to other behaviors. The genetically inherited traits are not memes, not units of culture, but rather the propensity to invent and transmit certain kinds of these elements of memory in preference to others.⁴⁷

This approach problematises the notion of culture itself, asking *why* particular cultural forms were developed in the first place and theorising patterns in the ways they change. By pointing to the inherited legacy of mental mechanisms creating a universal human psyche, evolutionary psychology inevitably focuses on the commonalities which result.

The great diversity of human social arrangements, belief systems, cultural forms and behaviour patterns creates, for some, an undeniable counterargument against the notion that culture is meaningfully influenced by a common evolved mentality. However, the mere existence of cultural diversity is not proof of how it came to be. Thus, the relationship between the generality and particularity of cultural forms and the issues of global diversity and historical change have been interests of evolutionary psychology. It may be helpful to differentiate the kinds of ‘culture’ being examined, as Tooby and Cosmides have done. First, a ‘metaculture’, which is the most direct expression of the universal psychic architecture’s interaction with ‘the recurrent structure of the social or non-social world’, i.e., to the kinds of universally recurring and long-term problems faced by our ancestors.⁴⁸ There are also various ‘evoked’ cultures, emerging from particular interactions with local environments. These are accompanied by ‘reconstructed culture’ or ‘adopted culture’: i.e., ‘representations or regulatory elements that reappear in chains from individual to individual – “culture” in the classic sense.’⁴⁹ Here is the form of culture with which historians are most familiar, in which evolutionary psychology emphasises the active role of the observer/listener in making sense of the culture which they are taught or observe (hence the notion of culture which is actively

‘reconstructed’ or ‘adopted’ rather than merely ‘transmitted’). Interacting with the transmitted elements of culture by means of evolved psychological mechanisms, individuals assemble their own ‘private cultures’ – an ‘individually tailored adaptive system’ – out of a variety of sources, including the behaviour and attitudes of the surrounding social group; these are the building blocks of group cultures.⁵⁰ Essential to such a theory of culture is understanding of how the elements of ‘private cultures’ (ideas, technologies, behaviours, etc.) spread, influencing ever-larger groups of people. One enlightening approach has examined the ‘epidemiology of representations’, i.e. the propagation of culture within (and between) populations.⁵¹ What appears to be a uniform ‘culture’ is thus actually a roiling pattern of constant cultural transmission and reinterpretation. The more successful (i.e., widespread) particular ideas or other cultural elements are, the more likely they are to be identified as ‘culture’; nonetheless, ‘there is no natural dividing point’ between that which is or is not ‘culture’ ‘along a continuum of something shared between two individuals to something shared through inferential reconstruction by the entire human species’.⁵²

Adding complexity and subtlety to this model, the role of evolved predispositions varies, deeply affecting some aspects of behaviour while playing little or no role in others.⁵³ (Thus, debating whether an ‘evolved psychology’ affects ‘culture’ misses the point: neither is a monolithic structure.) Furthermore, the evolutionary psychological perspective tends toward a functional view of culture.⁵⁴ Pinker, for instance, sees culture as a ‘tool for living’.⁵⁵ Because there are various, competing psychological mechanisms and because the environments people face – geographical, geological, meteorological, technological, economic, etc. – are different, cultural variation results. One important part of the developmental environment is, of course, pre-existing culture. ‘Culture’ in its most common sense – the accumulated attitudes and practices of a particular group – is thus part of the raw material through which private cultures are created and within which social interaction takes place, having a profound impact on present attitudes and behaviours, cementing particular social arrangements, forming the contours of a particular kind of cultural common sense and

providing a form of ‘inertia’ which resists and guides change. Cultural difference and mental universality are not contradictions; instead, they interact.⁵⁶

A key part of the environment which shapes individual development, of course, is composed of other people, each with his or her own psychological apparatus and interests. The resulting dynamics of these encounters are among the sources of culture and cultural diversity. Indeed, building on general principles of evolutionary psychology (the primary importance of the individual, the existence of a universally similar psyche which actively interacts with the surrounding environment and the inseparability of cultural dynamics and individual psychology), a set of principles for understanding culture emerges: ‘social groups will be arenas of conflict and cooperation’; ‘the shared features of culture are the outcome of negotiating individuals’; ‘where interests conflict, there is no “best solution” or adaptive culture for all’; and power is ‘a constant feature of almost every interaction between individuals’.⁵⁷ Significantly, such a perspective not only incorporates diversity between different cultures, but also allows – indeed, predicts – a pluralistic structuring of cultures (and subcultures):

Different social contexts will manifest different arrays of individuals, and so different social contexts will tend to have different local or situation-specific ‘cultures’ (the home or family will have its culture, the unsupervised children of a family will have their characteristic culture, the peer group will have its culture, the male band its culture, the female group its culture, particular friendship groups will have their cultures, etc.).⁵⁸

Thus, far from being deterministic (by ignoring the influence of historical and environmental contingency) or reductionist (by having a monolithic notion of culture), evolutionary psychology perceives meaningful and dynamic roles for both culture and social structure. To dismiss evolutionary explanations of human mental development, culture or behaviour, requires more than pointing either to cultural variability or change. Instead, it would be

necessary to prove that the *kinds of* diversity which exist and *the nature of* cultural change which occurs are incompatible with the human nature which is proposed.

Of course, applying ‘selection thinking’ to history of all kinds is not easy, and it will be more relevant to some aspects of culture than others. Moreover, evolutionary science and history often approach their subjects with different aims and at different levels of analysis. Whereas the former describes an architecture of the mind shared across societies and historical time spans, history (especially cultural history) tends to emphasise change and diversity. These differences result from each discipline’s focus on different levels of causation: ‘proximate’ and ‘ultimate’.⁵⁹ Proximate causes are the ones which historians are used to working with: the (largely conscious) motivations which move people to act in concrete social and historical situations. While attentive to proximate causes, evolutionary perspectives are, however, more interested in ‘ultimate’ causes of behaviour: the reasons *why* particular kinds of proximate causes have come to exist at all. As will be suggested in the next section, these different perspectives present obstacles as well as opportunities for historians interested in applying evolutionary psychological perspectives in their work.

Although the ‘universalising’ and ‘deterministic’ tendencies of evolutionary psychology have been overstated, it nevertheless generates global explanations anathema to historians who work within a particular period and national or regional context. The perceived ‘universalism’ of evolutionary thinking conflicts with a central tenet of most cultural history, which, generally hostile to metanarratives, has celebrated the micro-history and has been guided by an emphasis on difference, marginality, and particularity. These differences have helped generate cultural historians’ hostility toward evolutionary methodologies, but whether this puts evolutionary psychology at ‘cross purposes’ with cultural history depends on one’s view of the goals of the historical study of culture. As Paula Fass points out, the historical emphasis on the cultural margins and cultural fragmentation may mean that ‘questions concerning the experience of most people have dropped from sight’, making it more difficult for cultural historians to reach general

conclusions about the past (let alone the relevance of these experiences to the present).⁶⁰

These disciplinary differences can lead historians to reject evolutionary psychology out of hand. Clearly, historians – particularly cultural historians – are more reluctant to make broad generalisations about human behaviour based on a perspective which emphasises the independent power of culture to shape beliefs and behaviour. Obviously, the months, years, decades and even centuries of historians' chronologies of change are too brief for evolutionary adaptation to function. Nevertheless, evolutionary psychology provides a useful framework for explaining cross-cultural commonalities, historical continuities and the nature of historical change. Supplementing emphases on diversity and change with an appreciation for commonality, continuity, and our 'natural competencies' may in itself be a helpful direction for cultural history.⁶¹ Developing these notions in the context of comparative cultural history would make incorporating evolutionary perspectives all the more relevant.

Violence: Psychology, Society and Culture

I have aimed to map out an area in which a useful dialogue and methodological exchange between cultural history and evolutionary psychology can take place. Now, I would like to consider a specific phenomenon about which both evolutionary psychologists and historians have had a great deal to say: interpersonal violence. The interest of the former is perhaps unsurprising, as violence is a 'universal' behaviour (i.e., present in all societies, though at varying rates and with diverse specific meanings) which, across evolutionary time, has likely influenced survival and access to resources. As a result, the relevant psychological mechanisms governing at least some forms of violent behaviour may have been 'adaptive'. For their part, historians have always been interested in violence, though until recently this has largely meant violence related to war, empire and conquest; the detailed study of small-scale or individual interpersonal violence (which is more amenable to evolutionary psychological analysis) has flourished only within the last few decades.⁶² Building on earlier

quantitative work suggesting significant shifts in attitudes to violence over the past half millennium, historians of violence have increasingly been adopting qualitative, ‘cultural’ approaches to violence. Thus, violence seems an apt topic for examining whether or not there are specific opportunities for interdisciplinary exchange between evolutionary psychology and cultural history.

Describing the evolutionary psychology of interpersonal aggression means considering the work of Martin Daly and Margo Wilson, whose prolific and consistently compelling studies of violence share methodological assumptions with other evolutionary approaches. First, behaviour is studied as the product of individuals, each of whom has ‘intricately structured information-processing abilities and self-interests’ which cause them to deal with cultural messages and social realities in particular ways.⁶³ Second, most kinds of violence are seen as an outgrowth of conflicts over particular kinds of resources (or access to such resources), which may be material (say, wealth or family property) or immaterial (such as ‘honour’ or ‘status’). Thus, each interpersonal relationship involves *specific types of* conflicts; thus, there is no single evolutionary explanation of ‘violence’, because ‘violence’ is a blanket term covering a wide range of behaviour. Evolutionary perspectives highlight the need for a differentiated theorization of violence, emphasizing that discrete psychological mechanisms and social relationships cause different kinds of physically aggressive behaviour: violence between young male acquaintances⁶⁴ results from interpersonal tensions and psychological mechanisms distinct from those which contribute to the abuse of children by step-parents.⁶⁵ Although the ‘cultures’ of each kind of violence differ, each is seen as resulting from deep-seated psychological mechanisms. Third, most violence is not seen as ‘pathological’ or as the consequence of a mental failure or maladaptation: people possess ‘complex psychophysiological machinery that is clearly designed *for* the production and regulation of violence’.⁶⁶ Daly and Wilson do not deny cross-cultural and historical variation in violence; indeed, their view of violent behaviour as the product of a mental calculus dependent upon interaction with environmental factors in specific social contexts *predicts*

such variation.⁶⁷ But using ‘selection thinking’ they emphasise the underlying regularities of cultural variation. They have criticised analyses of violence which point to the causal impact of alleged cultural particularities which are, in fact, cross-cultural universals; have questioned the analytical utility of ‘subcultures’ of violence and critiqued theories which treat individuals as passive recipients of cultural messages about violence.⁶⁸

What do evolutionary perspectives offer the historian of violence? There are several points of mutual interest. The historiography of violence – while increasingly interested in representations, narratives and discourses of violence – remains rooted in social history and, thus, in considering violence as *behaviour*. This may in part have to do with the nature of the subject: real violence and the symbolic and imagined cultures which surround it are distinct, but they resist being analysed separately. Most obviously, narratives of violence not only help to define and express people’s attitudes toward it, they also shape the use of (real) violence. Shani D’Cruze has helpfully emphasised the relationship between discursive structures, individuals and real experience:

Discourse does not float free of social interaction nor does it hypnotise social actors into conformism any more than ‘social control’ terrorises them into acquiescence. Rather, individuals make situated and tactical identifications with these kinds of literatures.⁶⁹

Turning experience into narrative can itself now be understood as an evolved human capacity, and the insights of evolutionary psychology may be useful in trying to explain the tactical (and other) relationships between people and discourse.⁷⁰ While the narratives applied to violence are highly flexible, they are not limitlessly so, and there are convincing suggestions of cross-cultural similarities in the ways that violence is experienced.⁷¹ Our understanding of specific historical narratives of violence would benefit from attention to the means by which they were distributed, the purposes to which they were put and the interests (psychological, social and material) they served.⁷² We need a better understanding of the

individualised mental mechanisms which contribute to the generation of culture and the ‘epidemiology of representations’ through which cultural elements are distributed. Cultures of violence are not solely the product of prior culture, but are often adaptations to particular kinds of social situations, such as those in which personal security is insufficiently protected.⁷³ The specific understandings and forms of violence which emerge are, of course, diverse and mediated by particular cultural notions (related, for example, to ‘gentlemanliness’ or ‘machismo’); nonetheless, we should be open to considering the extent to which a universal psychology can generate diverse forms of behaviour.

Consider male violence. It has been well established that men (universally) have committed (and continue to commit) the overwhelming proportion of acts which societies define as ‘violence’. Such predominance is even more striking with regard to intra-sex violence: men kill other men far more often than women kill other women.⁷⁴ By itself, the universality of these patterns questions how far ‘culture’, on its own, can be seen as ‘causing’ patterns in violence. Obviously, male violence at certain times and in certain places is always socially patterned and culturally understood, and the specific (‘proximate’) reasons for fighting duels and the forms which they have taken have varied across cultures and across time, whether in early-modern Amsterdam, nineteenth-century Greece and late twentieth-century Philadelphia (simply to stay within the framework of Western culture).⁷⁵ Nonetheless, it is increasingly difficult to overlook what may be the ‘inherent rules’ of male fighting and the extent to which such social rules may be ‘labellings of natural tendencies’.⁷⁶ Across cultures, fighting is part of increasing or maintaining masculine status or honour, and while some masculinities are more violence-dependent than others, some connection between them seems ever-present. For evolutionary psychologists, such behaviour is ultimately the product of selective evolutionary processes (across vast pre-historical time) related to the winning of mates, resulting in a male psyche which generates intra-sex conflict contingent on environmental input (regardless of its ‘adaptiveness’ in particular historical or contemporary settings).⁷⁷ Nonetheless, male-on-male violence is one of the most variable

types of violence, in terms of its rate and proportion of overall violence, suggesting that the psychological mechanisms involved are highly sensitive to social stimuli such as inequality, threats to personal security or the perceived 'legitimacy' of violence (and the social costs of or potential punishment for using violence).⁷⁸ Some aspects of violence, such as fighting styles or preferences for particular weapons, may be culturally arbitrary but nevertheless significantly affect the extent, patterns and lethality of male-on-male violence; however, there is no inherent contradiction in suggesting that variability in male-male violence is related to universal, evolved predispositions. Innate, universal aspects of the psyche create the framework within which variability occurs, and a wide (though not limitless) variety of proximate causes can be motivated by a particular ultimate one.⁷⁹

The examination of cultural and social phenomena from a variety of mutually consistent theoretical and causal levels can be very fruitful approach, as is demonstrated by Richard E. Nisbett and Dov Cohen's study of the 'culture of honour' in the American South.⁸⁰ Crime statistics and attitude surveys point to a distinctive southern culture of violence, one which social historians have already examined in some contexts.⁸¹ Nisbett and Cohen are interested in explaining what has caused southerners to see violence used to defend honour, maintain social order or defend oneself as more legitimate than other Americans. Their compelling analysis relies not only on attention to culture, economics and patterns of migration (e.g., the role of pastoral farming, the social make up of those who settled and dominated cultural development in the South) but also individual psychology. Moreover, their analysis is broadly framed by evolutionary psychology, particularly those insights into male violence provided by Daly and Wilson. The result is multi-layered study of violent phenomena, an example of how approaches which are not in themselves 'cultural' can nevertheless generate insights about culture.

In a more directly historical context, Jeffrey Adler has recently evaluated the utility of evolutionary psychological theories through an examination of patterns of violence in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Chicago.⁸² In particular, Adler (relying on Daly and

Wilson) considers the evolutionary explanation of male-on-male violence in terms of an evolved psyche which compels men (especially young men) to be ‘obsessed with social comparisons’, prepared to take extreme risks and devoted to achieving and maintaining status (through violence when necessary).⁸³ Particularly in cases of reduced social or economic opportunities, men – in this view – become particularly reliant upon a reputation for toughness and the display of a credible threat of violence. As Adler summarizes the evolutionary view, adaptive pressures have contributed to ‘the strutting, preening, swaggering, and hypermasculinity of bachelor (sub)cultures’ which appear to be a common feature of human societies.⁸⁴ Adler sees the typical homicide in 1870s Chicago as arising out of drunken bar brawls, emphasising the ‘wild’ nature of the local plebeian male subculture. Here, the dominant characteristics of violence conform to the predictions of evolutionary psychology. Using a large database of cases, Adler then examines what happened to patterns of violence between 1875 and 1920, during which time Chicago underwent fundamental demographic and economic changes. On the one hand, there is evidence of continuity: the proportion of all homicides which were committed by men remained more or less the same (around 93 percent), and nearly four out of five homicides involved both a male perpetrator and victim. Nevertheless, significant and rapid change was also apparent. The homicide rate among young men tripled and the archetypal inter-male Chicago homicide changed from being a drunken bar brawl to being associated with robbery: ‘homicide in Chicago became increasingly impersonal, instrumental, and calculated’.⁸⁵ Adler concludes that his empirical study presents a mixed picture of the utility of evolutionary psychology. Indeed, it does suggest the limitations inherent in using the more generalising aspects of a very broad theory to sift historical data for fine-grained conclusions. Nonetheless, Adlers’ study provides some support for evolutionary psychological perspectives and demonstrates the potential for a dialogue between evolutionary psychology and history.

I suggest that a further useful element in this dialogue is found in the work of Norbert Elias, which has played an increasing – though not uncontroversial – role in the

cultural and social historiography of violence.⁸⁶ Interest among historians of crime in Elias's theory of the 'civilising process' increased in view of the consensus that overall rates of interpersonal violence declined significantly in the half millennium preceding the mid-twentieth century.⁸⁷ The long-term decline in homicide requires explanation, and attention has turned to social, cultural and institutional changes linked to alterations in individual psychology: increasing abhorrence of physical pain, expanding definitions of 'violence', growing sensitivity to the suffering of others, stricter laws against violence, the growth of state policing, and changes in class and other social relationships have become central issues in explaining what has happened to violence in the early modern and modern periods. Although Elias's theories were not designed to be incorporated with Darwinian psychology, there are nonetheless a number of parallels between them and the view of culture (and cultural change) presented by some exponents of evolutionary psychology. The theory of the civilising process may therefore be a good basis for developing a cultural and social history of violence which is mutually non-contradictory with evolutionary psychology.

Elias emphasised the importance of individual psychology, seeing it as inseparable from broader social development. Opposed to a view of 'society' as a unified, disembodied abstraction, Elias conceived it as a dynamic, historically specific network of individuals (a 'figuration'). From this perspective, as Pieter Spierenburg has argued,

the traditional opposition of 'individual vs. society' is a false opposition. Society consists of individuals; it is the name we give to the network (or figuration) of all social relationships. Hence, society cannot 'do' things (like making rules; people make rules).⁸⁸

The central notion of the 'figuration' has parallels with the emphasis in evolutionary psychology on 'arrays of individuals' in generating culture.⁸⁹ A second point of contact involves human nature: in Elias's view, each individual is driven by a built-in set of 'affects' (in essence, emotional urges) which interact with psychological self-control mechanisms.

Thus, the psyche is shaped by society, but ‘society’ itself emerges from dynamic interactions among individuals with particular kinds of psychological instinct structures. Through a socio-historical process, psychological mechanisms of self-control are developed and transmitted – through education and social pressure – to the individual. Across the historical period which Elias examined, this development led to more self control: ‘The individual is compelled to regulate his conduct in an increasingly differentiated, more even and more stable manner.’⁹⁰ The balance between different psychological elements – between, in Elias’s terms, ‘drives’ and ‘controlling agencies’⁹¹ – is affected by the social environment, particularly relations with others. As Nisbett and Cohen find in analysing the southern honour code, the ‘psyche’ may indeed be moulded by social development: the southern men in their study show more striking hormonal responses related to aggression when provoked.⁹² Nonetheless, the extent to which psychology can be affected by social reality (and culture) varies depending on which aspect (or ‘domain’⁹³) of life is being considered. Although Elias focused on the growth of self-control, not all needs ‘are replaceable or malleable to the same extent’:

And this raises the question of the limit of the transformability of the human personality. Without doubt, it is bound to certain regularities that may be called ‘natural.’ The historical process modifies it within these limits. The degree to which human life and behavior can be molded by historical processes remains to be determined in detail. At any rate, all this shows once again how natural and historical processes interact almost inseparably.⁹⁴

Such a view is compatible with evolutionary psychological theory, which recognises that different domains of human behaviour may be more or less susceptible to social change: there is a difference between ‘open’ and ‘closed’ behavioural programmes.⁹⁵

There are further points on which Elias’s theoretical approach and that of evolutionary psychology are compatible. For Elias, ‘power’ is neither a disembodied force,

nor the possession only of particular social groups, rather, it is present in all human relationships.⁹⁶ The nature of the relevant power (and its imbalances) depend on a variety of circumstances: however, even ‘subordinate’ individuals and groups are not entirely without power. Also, in common with evolutionary psychology, Elias sees the human psyche as having in-built mechanisms for the use – and control – of violence: violence, in itself, is not a symptom of individual psychological disturbance. For Elias, ‘culture’ is an important element of change, but its patterns are dependent upon the shape of social relationships between individuals. Examining the ‘higher levels of aggression which are characteristic of relationships within lower working class communities’ from his perspective means that the social figuration is key; the relative lack of ‘civilising’ pressures from above, the lower degree of state protection and lack of access to (material and immaterial) resources, encourage ‘their willingness and – at least in some contexts and on the part of some males – also their desire to engage in acts of physical aggression’.⁹⁷ The result may be a distinctive ‘culture’ of violence; however, to what extent is culture a *causal* factor when compared with the weight of social forces which (assuming a psyche with particular mechanisms designed to seek out security and status) generate a particular dynamic of violence? As Daly and Wilson have noted,

If we think we can explain why poor young men behave violently in terms of the ‘transmission’ of ‘values’ within a ‘subculture’, then we are unlikely to seek more utilitarian explanation. But, in fact, poor young men with dismal prospects for the future have *good reason* to escalate their tactics of social competition and become violent.⁹⁸

Elias’s emphasis on social dynamics in shaping behaviour means that particular kinds of historical phenomena are central to cultural change, such as levels of social interdependence and the extent to which states monopolize violence, making personal self-defence and vengeance less necessary. These phenomena have similarly received attention from

evolutionary psychology as causal factors in reducing violence.⁹⁹ ‘Culture’ was an important part of this shift, expressing the forces which put pressure on people to exercise control; however, attention to social structure and psychology are essential to understand how – and why – these forms of pressure functioned.

Evolutionary psychology is capable of integration with one of the prominent theoretical models applied to the history of interpersonal aggression, provides a useful framework for explaining cross-cultural similarities and cultural variations in violence, and helps explain the dynamics of continuity and change. As an approach to violence inspired by Elias has emphasised, changes in the propensity to use violence are related to forms of social pressure and to social changes which have made violence less necessary, changes which have involved an interaction between society, culture and individual psychology. From the perspective of evolutionary psychology, there is no reason to assume that these changes will follow a strictly ‘adaptive’ script. Furthermore, Peter J. Richerson and Robert Boyd have suggested a ‘semi-independent’ force of cultural institutions such as religion in shaping behaviour.¹⁰⁰ Of course, Darwinist principles may be less applicable to other aspects of cultural history, which is only appropriate to the methodology of evolutionary psychology: in seeing ‘culture’ as a diverse, multi-level phenomenon, it is far from offering universal explanations of culture. Human behaviour is as far as ever from a ‘theory of everything’; however, ‘selection thinking’ can contribute to cultural history. It may, for instance, help in asking new questions, such as those related to the possibly important connection between social phenomena, such as violence, and the human life cycle. There are, for instance, marked cross-cultural, age-related patterns in violent behaviour (both as perpetrator¹⁰¹ and as victim¹⁰²), and evolutionary psychology presents a framework for explaining these trends.

Conclusion

Were I, following Mandler, to make my own ‘modest proposal’, it would be that cultural historians continue developing a ‘theory of meaning’; however, in doing so, they should be guided not only by sociology but also by the principles of evolutionary psychology. One of the most useful principles of evolutionary psychology is that culture has an identifiable location: within the minds of individuals. These minds themselves are the product of an evolved organ, which influences the ways that culture is formed, experienced and altered. Using cultural history to confront what some see as the ‘universalising hubris’ of science – to the extent that it is real – is a worthwhile goal; however, an evolutionary perspective may at the same time help to rein in what we might call the particularising hubris of some forms of cultural studies. Concerns about disciplinary sovereignty are misplaced: historians have long been able to make use of economic insights without becoming economists, have adopted anthropological perspectives without turning into anthropologists, and, despite the massive influx of theoretical influences from literature and **linguistic**, we remain distinct from those fields as well. Why, then, can we not at least consider, engage with, and make use of insights about the human condition derived from ‘biology’? Those areas of history which have overlapped most with the concerns and topics of evolutionary psychology, such as childhood, family, sex, nutrition, physical health and violence and aggression, would perhaps have the most to gain.

I have used the example of interpersonal violence to suggest that in explaining cultures of violence it is often necessary to go beyond the issue of ‘culture’ itself. Anchoring culture in ‘society’ remains important, and most historians need no reminder to do so. In some ways, however, the new ‘social turn’ remains a half-measure, ignoring a considerable body of natural science commentary on the location, purpose and dynamics of culture. Far from being ‘incommensurable’ with the interests of historians, evolutionary psychology has addressed a large number of issues which are of great relevance for historians, including the origin of ‘historical consciousness’ itself.¹⁰³ If we are interested in ‘identity’, ‘desire’ and ‘meaning’, we need to understand the mental process by which they are formed. To have a

full understanding of ‘power’, we need to understand why people are interested in having it and whether there are enduring or global patterns in the ways they pursue it. Even our perceptions and sense of aesthetics may be profoundly shaped by our evolutionary heritage.¹⁰⁴ In many cases (though probably not all), evolutionary psychology is a promising source from which to borrow theoretical perspectives. As Mandler writes, we should be ‘ranging more widely among the possible intellectual frameworks and choosing those appropriate to our problematic and our evidence, rather than deferring automatically to those that other people have used...’.¹⁰⁵ Indeed. However, neither should we automatically shun those intellectual frameworks which other historians have avoided. As David Gary Shaw has pointed out, ‘the gap between science and history is less than historians instinctively believe’; given the ‘paradigm shift’ in which science has ‘gone historical’, the time might be ripe to work toward ‘a unification of knowledge, in which evolutionary science and history border on each other.’¹⁰⁶ Whether historians are willing to pursue such a goal is another question. Nonetheless, I would agree with Eric Hobsbawm’s observation that

for the first time, we have an adequate framework for a genuinely global history, and one restored to its proper central place, neither within the humanities nor the natural and mathematical sciences, nor separated from them, but essential to both.¹⁰⁷

Once evolutionary biology is seen not as a machine for generating universal laws but rather as an attempt to analyse the legacy of an evolutionary past with which individuals, societies and cultures continue to contend, then the perceived chasm between the humanities and natural sciences – by no means new – starts to seem less daunting.

7,696 words (9,806 with notes)

¹ Peter Mandler, 'The Problem with Cultural History', *Cultural and Social History*, 1 (2004) pp. 94-117; Carla Hesse, 'The New Empiricism', *Cultural and Social History*, 1 (2004) pp. 201-7; Colin Jones, 'Peter Mandler's "Problem with Cultural History", or, Is Playtime Over?', *Cultural and Social History*, 1 (2004) pp. 209-15; Carol Watts, 'Thinking about the X Factor, or, What's the Cultural History of Cultural History,' *Cultural and Social History*, 1 (2004) pp. 217-24; Peter Mandler, 'Problems in Cultural History: A Reply', *Cultural and Social History*, 1 (2004) pp. 326-32.

² See a special issue of the *Journal of Social History*, 37, no. 1 (2003), esp. Peter N. Stearns, 'Social History Present and Future', *Journal of Social History*, 37 (2003) pp. 9-19 and Paula S. Fass, 'Cultural History/Social History: Some Reflections on a Continuing Dialogue', *Journal of Social History*, 37 (2003) pp. 39-46.

³ Fass, 'Cultural History/Social History', p. 39.

⁴ Stearns, 'Social History', p. 10.

⁵ Mandler, 'Problem', pp. 116-17.

⁶ Hesse, 'New Empiricism', p. 207.

⁷ Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?* (Cambridge, 2004).

⁸ Exceptions include the contributions to a special edition of *History and Theory*, 38, no. 4 (1999), some of which are cited below.

⁹ On the possibilities for combining cultural materialist perspectives with evolutionary psychology, see Doyne Dawson, 'The Marriage of Marx and Darwin?', *History and Theory*, 41, no. 1 (February 2002) pp. 43-59.

¹⁰ See David Gary Shaw, 'The Return of Science', *History and Theory*, 38, no.4 (1999) pp. 1-3 for an overview.

¹¹ See, e.g., W.G. Runciman, 'Culture Does Evolve', *History and Theory*, 44, no. 1 (2005) pp. 1-13; Martin Stuart-Fox, 'Evolutionary Theory of History', *History and Theory*, 38, no. 4 (1999) pp. 33-51.

¹² For a summary of these 'units of replication' see Stuart-Fox, 'Evolutionary Theory', pp. 39-42. The most well-known is probably the 'meme', described in Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford, 1976) and developed in Susan Blackmore, *The Meme Machine* (Oxford, 1999).

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- ¹³ On gene-culture coevolution, see C. L. Lumsden and E. O. Wilson, *Genes, Mind and Culture: The Coevolutionary Process* (Cambridge, 1981). The image of genes acting as a leash on culture comes from E. O. Wilson, *On Human Nature* (Cambridge, 1979) p. 167; Jerome H. Barkow, 'The Elastic Between Genes and Culture', *Ethology and Sociobiology*, 10 (1989) pp. 111-29.
- ¹⁴ Laura L. Betzig, *Despotism and Differential Reproduction: A Darwinian View of History* (Hawthorne, 1986); Martin Daly and Margo Wilson, *Homicide* (Hawthorne, 1988).
- ¹⁵ Mark V. Flinn, 'Culture and the Evolution of Social Learning,' *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 18 (1997) p. 45.
- ¹⁶ With regard to violence see, e.g., Peter Gay, *The Cultivation of Hatred. The Bourgeois Experience, Victoria to Freud, vol. 2* (New York, 1993); V. A. C. Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People, 1770-1868* (Oxford, 1994).
- ¹⁷ An excellent survey of debates about evolutionary approaches to human behaviour and psychology is available in Ullica Segerstråle, *Defenders of the Truth: The Battle for Science in the Sociobiology Debate and Beyond* (Oxford, 2000).
- ¹⁸ Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, 'Evolutionary Psychology: A Primer', available at <<http://www.psych.ucsb.edu/research/cep/primer.html>>, accessed 10 December 2005.
- ¹⁹ Tooby and Cosmides, 'Generation of Culture', p. 44.
- ²⁰ Dan Sperber, *Explaining Culture: A Naturalistic Approach* (Oxford, 1996) p. 153
- ²¹ Donald E. Brown, 'Human Nature and History', *History and Theory*, 38, no. 4 (1999) p. 144.
- ²² John Tooby and Leda Cosmides, 'Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture, Part I: Theoretical Considerations', *Ethology and Sociobiology*, 10 (1989) pp. 29-49.
- ²³ Cosmides and Tooby, 'Primer'.
- ²⁴ Steven Pinker, *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature* (London, 2002), pp. 31-56.
- ²⁵ Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, 'Beyond Intuition and Instinct Blindness: Toward an Evolutionarily Rigorous Cognitive Science,' *Cognition* 50 (1994) pp. 41-77.
- ²⁶ John Tooby and Leda Cosmides, 'The Past Explains the Present: Emotional Adaptations and the Structure of Ancestral Environments', *Ethology and Sociobiology*, 11 (1990) pp. 375-424.
- ²⁷ Tooby and Cosmides, 'Generation of Culture', p. 34.
- ²⁸ Tooby and Cosmides, 'Generation of Culture', pp. 37-38.

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- ²⁹ The term ‘selection thinking’ derives from E.L. Charnov, *The Theory of Sex Allocation* (Princeton, 1982), cited in Daly and Wilson, *Homicide*, p. 7.
- ³⁰ Brown, ‘Human Nature and History’, p. 139.
- ³¹ Along with other cited works, e.g., Robert Trivers ‘The Evolution of Reciprocal Altruism’, *Quarterly Review of Biology*, 46 (1971) pp. 35-57; Jerome H. Barkow, *Darwin, Sex and Status: Biological Approaches to Mind and Culture* (Toronto, 1989); Donald Symons, ‘Beauty is in the Adaptations of the Beholder: The Evolutionary Psychology of Female Sexual Attractiveness,’ in Paul R. Abramson and Steven D. Pinkerton (eds), *Sexual Nature, Sexual Culture* (Chicago, 1995) pp. 80-118.
- ³² Segerstråle, *Defenders of the Truth*, 391-96.
- ³³ ‘The evolutionary approach holds that no behavior is inevitable’: Randy Thornhill and Craig T. Palmer, *A Natural History of Rape: Biological Bases of Sexual Coercion* (Cambridge, 2000) p. 153.
- ³⁴ Richard Dawkins, *The Extended Phenotype: The Long Reach of the Gene* (Oxford, 1999) pp. 9-29.
- ³⁵ Pinker, *The Blank Slate*, pp. 30-58.
- ³⁶ E.g., Daly and Wilson, *Homicide*, pp. 8-9, pp. 275-91, pp. 296-97.
- ³⁷ Thornhill and Palmer, *Natural History*, p. 20.
- ³⁸ Cosmides and Tooby, ‘Primer’. As Mark Flinn puts it, ‘Human mental abilities do not just constrain culture; they generate its options in the first place!’ Flinn, ‘Social Learning’, 30.
- ³⁹ Tooby and Cosmides, ‘Psychological Foundations of Culture’, p. 21.
- ⁴⁰ For a summary, see the entry by Tony Bennett on ‘culture’ in *Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Oxford, 2005) pp. 63-69.
- ⁴¹ Burke, *Cultural History*, p. 3.
- ⁴² Stearns, ‘Social History’, p.10; Mandler, ‘Problem’, p. 94; Neville Kirk, ‘History, Language, Ideas and Post-Modernism: A Materialist View’, *Social History*, 19, no. 2 (1994) pp. 221-40.
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- ⁴⁴ Tooby and Cosmides, ‘Generation of Culture’, p. 45.
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- ⁴⁷ Edward O. Wilson, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* (New York, 1998) p. 163.
- ⁴⁸ Tooby and Cosmides, 'Psychological Foundations of Culture', pp. 117-18.
- ⁴⁹ Tooby and Cosmides, 'Psychological Foundations of Culture', pp. 118.
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- ⁵¹ Sperber, *Explaining Culture*.
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- ⁵³ Peter J. Richerson and Robert Boyd, 'The Role of Evolved Predispositions in Cultural Evolution', *Ethology and Sociobiology*, 10 (1989) pp. 195-219; Tooby and Cosmides, 'Generation of Culture', p. 35.
- ⁵⁴ Tooby and Cosmides, 'Generation of Culture', p. 32.
- ⁵⁵ Pinker, *Blank Slate*, p. 66.
- ⁵⁶ Tooby and Cosmides, 'Psychological Foundations of Culture', p. 45. Martin Daly and Margo Wilson, 'Human Behavior as Animal Behavior' in J.J. Bolhuis and L.A. Giraldeau (eds), *The Behavior of Animals. Mechanisms, Function, and Evolution* (Oxford, 2005), p. 403.
- ⁵⁷ Tooby and Cosmides, 'Generation of Culture', p. 45.
- ⁵⁸ Tooby and Cosmides, 'Generation of Culture', p. 45.
- ⁵⁹ These distinctions are a constant theme in natural science discussions of human behaviour: see, e.g., Pinker, *Blank Slate*, p. 54; Thornhill and Palmer, *Natural History*, pp. 3-5; Daly and Wilson, *Homicide*, pp. 6-9.
- ⁶⁰ Fass, 'Cultural History/Social History', pp. 42 and 45.
- ⁶¹ Cosmides and Tooby, 'Primer'.
- ⁶² For a summary in the British context, see J. Carter Wood, 'Criminal Violence in Modern Britain', *History Compass*, 3, BI 200 (2005): 1-14, available at <http://www.history-compass.com/viewpoint.asp?section=5&ref=176>, accessed 10 December 2005.
- ⁶³ Martin Daly and Margo Wilson, 'Crime and Conflict: Homicide in Evolutionary Psychological Perspective', *Crime and Justice*, 22 (1997), p. 52.
- ⁶⁴ Margo Wilson and Martin Daly, 'Competitiveness, Risk Taking, and Violence: The Young Male Syndrome', *Ethology and Sociobiology*, 6 (1985) pp. 59-73.

⁶⁵ Martin Daly and Margo Wilson, *The Truth About Cinderella: A Darwinian View of Parental Love* (London, 1998).

⁶⁶ Daly and Wilson, 'Crime and Conflict', p. 57. Emphasis in original.

⁶⁷ A variability which all evolution-influenced perspectives accept, e.g., Pinker, *The Blank Slate*, p. 315.

⁶⁸ E.g., Daly and Wilson, 'Homicide and Cultural Evolution', pp. 100-2; pp. 107-9.

⁶⁹ Shani D'Cruze, 'Unguarded Passions: Violence, History and the Everyday', in Shani D'Cruze (ed), *Everyday Violence in Britain, 1850-1950* (Harlow, 2000) p. 15.

⁷⁰ Michelle Scallise Sugiyama, 'Narrative Theory and Function: Why Evolution Matters', *Philosophy and Literature*, 25 (2001) pp. 233-50.

⁷¹ E.g., Carolyn Nordstrom, *A Different Kind of War Story* (Philadelphia, 1997), Introduction; and Margaret Arnot, 'Understanding Women Committing Newborn Child Murder in Victorian England', in Shani D'Cruze (ed.), *Everyday Violence in Britain, 1850-1950: Gender and Class* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 55-69.

⁷² Rob Sindall, *Street Violence in the Nineteenth Century: Media Panic or Real Danger?* (New York, 1990); J. Carter Wood, 'A Useful Savagery: The Invention of Violence in Nineteenth-Century England', *The Journal of Victorian Culture*, 9, no. 1 (2004): 22-44.

⁷³ Elijah Anderson, *The Code of the Street: Violence, Decency and the Moral Life of the Inner City* (New York, 1999) p. 34; J. Carter Wood, 'Self-policing and the Policing of the Self: Violence, Protection and the Civilising Bargain in Britain', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies*, 7, no. 1 (2003) pp. 109-28.

⁷⁴ 'The difference between the sexes is immense, and it is universal. There is no known human society in which the level of lethal violence among women even begins to approach that among men.' Daly and Wilson, *Homicide*, p. 146 (and see chart on pp. 147-48). Emphasis in original.

⁷⁵ Pieter Spierenberg, 'Knife Fighting and Popular Codes of Honor in Early Modern Amsterdam' in Pieter Spierenburg (ed), *Men and Violence: Gender, Honor, and Rituals in Modern Europe and America* (Columbus, 1998) pp. 103-27; Thomas W. Gallant, *Experiencing Dominion: Culture, Identity and Power in the British Mediterranean* (Notre Dame, 2002); Anderson, *Code of the Street*.

⁷⁶ Robin Fox, 'The Inherent Rules of Violence' in Peter Collett (ed), *Social Rules and Social Behavior* (Oxford, 1977) p. 133.

⁷⁷ Daly and Wilson, *Homicide*, pp. 123-61.

⁷⁸ Daly and Wilson, *Homicide*, pp. 284-6.

⁷⁹ 'Explanation at one level (e.g., adaptive function) does not preclude or invalidate explanations at another (e.g., neural, cognitive, social, cultural, economic.)' Cosmides and Tooby, 'Primer'.

⁸⁰ Richard E. Nisbett and Dov Cohen, *Culture of Honor: The Psychology of Violence in the South* (Oxford, 1996).

⁸¹ Elliott J. Gorn, "'Gouge and Bite, Pull Hair and Scratch": The Social Significance of Fighting in the Southern Backcountry', *American Historical Review*, 90 (1985) pp. 18-43; Kenneth S. Greenberg, 'The Nose, the Lie and the Duel in the Antebellum South,' *American Historical Review*, 95 (1990) pp. 57-74.

⁸² Jeffrey S. Adler, "'On the Border of Snakeland": Evolutionary Psychology and Plebeian Violence in Industrial Chicago, 1875-1920', *Journal of Social History*, 36 (2003) pp. 541-60.

⁸³ See Daly and Wilson, *Homicide*, pp. 123-61.

⁸⁴ Adler, 'Snakeland', p. 542.

⁸⁵ Adler, 'Snakeland', p. 548.

⁸⁶ See Pieter Spierenburg, 'Violence and the Civilizing Process: Does It Work?', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies*, 5, no. 2 (2001) pp. 87-105 and Gerd Schwerhoff, 'Criminalized Violence and the Process of Civilization: A Reappraisal', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies*, 6, no. 2 (2002) pp. 103-26. See also E. A. Johnson and Eric H. Monkonen (eds), *The Civilization of Crime: Violent Crime in Town and Country since the Middle Ages* (Chicago, 1996) and J. Carter Wood, *Violence and Crime in Nineteenth-Century England: The Shadow of Our Refinement* (London, 2004).

⁸⁷ Manuel Eisner, 'Modernization, Self-Control and Lethal Violence: The Long-term Dynamics of European Homicide Rates in Theoretical Perspective', *British Journal of Criminology*, 41 (2001) pp. 618-38.

⁸⁸ Pieter Spierenburg, 'Elias and the History of Crime and Criminal Justice: A Brief Evaluation,' *IAHCCJ Bulletin*, 20 (1995), p. 19.

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- ⁸⁹ Tooby and Cosmides, 'Generation of Culture' p. 45.
- ⁹⁰ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners and State Formation and Civilization* (Oxford, 1994) p. 445.
- ⁹¹ Elias, *Civilizing Process*, p. 487.
- ⁹² Nisbett and Cohen, *Culture of Honor*.
- ⁹³ Tooby and Cosmides, 'Generation of Culture', p. 35.
- ⁹⁴ Further, 'The formation of feelings of shame and revulsion and advances in the threshold of delicacy are both at once natural and historical processes. These forms of feeling are manifestations of human nature under specific social conditions, and they react in their turn on the sociohistorical process as one of its elements.' Both quotes from Elias, *Civilizing Process*, p. 131.
- ⁹⁵ Tooby and Cosmides, 'Psychological Foundations of Culture', p. 46.
- ⁹⁶ Pieter Spierenburg, 'Punishment, Power, and History: Foucault and Elias,' *Social Science History*, 28 (2004) pp. 607-36.
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- ⁹⁸ Daly and Wilson, 'Cultural Evolution', p. 107.
- ⁹⁹ See, e.g., Steven Pinker, *The Blank Slate*, pp. 320-21 and pp. 329-36; Daly and Wilson, *Homicide*, pp. 221-51.
- ¹⁰⁰ Richerson and Boyd, 'Evolved Predispositions'.
- ¹⁰¹ Daly and Wilson, *Homicide*, pp. 168-74.
- ¹⁰² Daly and Wilson, *Homicide*, pp. 73-93 Thornhill and Palmer, *Natural History*, pp. 70-73 and pp. 89-96
- ¹⁰³ Donald E. Brown, *Hierarchy, History, and Human Nature: The Social Origins of Historical Consciousness* (Tucson, 1988).
- ¹⁰⁴ Wilson, *Consilience*, pp. 229-59.
- ¹⁰⁵ Mandler, 'The Problem with Cultural History', p. 96.
- ¹⁰⁶ Shaw, 'The Return of Science', p. 4.
- ¹⁰⁷ Eric Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times: A Twentieth-Century Life* (London, 2002), p. 297.