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A natural history of rape

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The mind is a product of evolution, so the informed scientist studies the mind informed by evolutionary theory. As we proceed, give yourself an objectivity test: take your pulse periodically, if racing, you are failing. Rape impacts the evolved interest of all human beings and is therefore an emotionally charged issue.

Begin with evidentiary truth:

What are people? Animals, vertebrates, mammals, a species of primates, closely related to pigmy chimp (third chimp). We know this for sure.

Why are people? By what process did we come to exist in the form we did?

2 complementary answers:

1. we evolved from southern Africa from earlier species of primates
2. the creator was evolutionary processes guided by natural selection

Some people erroneously pull some human behaviors/mentation out of this evolution history by claiming that humans are not animals, etc.

What does it mean to say that some human behaviour is not evolved?

Some transcendental framework must be invoked:

1. ghosts
2. arbitrary omnipotence learning model that characterizes traditional social sciences (SSSM)

Both are transcendental explanations.

To say that rape is learned is not outside the realm of evolutionary explanations. Learning requires complex psychological mechanisms, even social or cultural learning.

In our book, we argue that learning during boys' development, in part, causes rape proneness in men. Rape is biological which, by definition means it is of or pertaining to life. To say that rape is natural, we mean that rape is not supernatural - not a product of the two transcendental frameworks mentioned.

Each science has its nature that it is charged to understand. Biology is charged to understand life. So rape is evolutionary, biological and natural. This does not mean morally correct. That would be a naturalistic fallacy. We do not derive morals from the way the world is.

Science simply determines what is in the world. You can not derive any values about rape, good or bad from a biological understanding of it.

Cause: that without which a phenomenon cannot exist. There are two types of biological causes proximate and ultimate.

Proximate: causes that work in the immediate timeframe: genes, development (ontogeny), hormones, physiology, motivation, learning. (e.g. sexual motivation is a proximate cause of rape)

Regarding genes: each trait of the individual has a development during which genes and environment equally cause the trait. There is no such thing as genetic determinism or as environmental determinism. These terms pertain to ideology and mythology.

Ultimate: causes that work in an evolutionary timeframe: For complex traits (e.g. rape) direct or indirect Darwinian selection is the ultimate cause.

So proximate and ultimate causation are complementary, not alternatives, ultimate explains the existence of proximate. Thus there is no conflict in saying that rape is learned and saying that rape is the product of selection in the deep-time past. You are dealing with different kinds of causation.

Learning is simply one proximate cause of a behaviour that is influenced by a person's experience. Since there are thousands of proximate causes responsible for any given learned behavior of the individual the standard social science model is simply a supernatural view.

Biologists do not dichotomize: learned vs. biological, learned vs. evolutionary, cultural vs. biological, or social vs. biological are not relevant dichotomies.

Traits (e.g. Rape) are biologically determined or caused (both proximately caused and ultimately caused). But biological determinism does not equal inevitability. Evolved doesn't equal inevitable. So rape is not inevitable.

Once we understand the biological causes, we may be able to reduce rape.

Rape is a product of evolution (as said).

This says little because all feature of life are

The question is never whether a feature of life such as rape can be viewed in evolutionary terms the question is how to relate rape and evolution to come up with a better understanding of the specific evolutionary history of rape.

In our book we present 10 ultimate hypotheses of human rape (8 of which can be discounted as unlikely).

2 reasonable evolutionary hypotheses for human rape are:

1. indirect selection for rape during human evolution history. Rape is a byproduct of other adaptations just as are computers, arthritis and blood's colour.

Rape may be a by-product of men's greater visual sexual arousal, autonomous sex drive, desire for sexual variety, willingness to engage in impersonal sex, and reduced ability to abstain from sexual activity, and less discriminating criteria for sexual partners.

These psychological adaptations and associated behaviours were favored in human evolutionary history because they increased a male's number of mates that had offspring. .

Simply put: men's strong libido evolved by direct selection, and when it is combined with evolved female mate choice, rape arises as an incidental effect. Men's libido has many incidental sexual effects: pedophilic, and homosexual rape and all sex with non-reproductive age female humans. Mating with heterospecifics (e.g. sheep), corpses, blowup dolls, etc. Rape of reproductive age women is therefore also an incidental effect.

2. Direct selection for rape in human evolutionary history. Rape itself is an adaptation, a product of direct selection for rape in the past. Our male ancestors became ancestors in part because they conditionally used rape.

Rape adaptation hypothesis

A human rape adaptation would have the following characteristics:

- a. be specialized for rape;
- b. be present in men's psyche (not anatomically as in some species)
- c. give rise to conditionally expressed rape (rape when benefit high, cost low) non random;
- d. be present in virtually all men. This is how adaptations usually are; they are characteristic of a species or all of one sex of a species.

Evidentiary proof of psychological rape adaptation: the existence of a psychological trait as functionally specialized for rape as the color vision adaptation is for color vision (or as the distance vision detector is for distance estimation).

Both hypotheses identify sexual motivation as a proximate cause of rape. This conflicts with the popular view: the common denominator across all rape is the rapist's sexual interest.

Obviously rape doesn't reflect sexual interest of the victim. In many rapes, violence and control are used as means of achieving the proximate reward of sexual stimulation. So violence and domination are not the primary motivations because

1. rape murder is very rare (<.1%)
2. some rapes involve date-rape drugs or other sedatives (drugs)
3. studies show that 1-2% of rape victims presenting themselves to emergency rooms need hospitalization.
4. Studies indicate that typically the amount of violence used corresponds to that needed to force sexual access.

Knowledge application that may reduce rape:

1. improve the rearing conditions for boys (father presence, tax credit to divorced dads to keep them near their sons, reduce wealth inequality so that there will be fewer boys raised in poverty, improve health care since sick boys grow up to be sick men, criminals).

Life history traits are caused proximately by an individual's survival prospect.

Various things impact the probability that an individual will survive including: disease, reduced health, low food quality etc. These generate a time preference for discounting the future. This results in high risk taking, impulsivity, short-term relationships, exploitive relationships, high mating effort (including risky forms of mating effort like rape) low parental effort etc.

So we should rear boys to have a future time preference – belief in a rewarding and certain future. Give them dads, resources; they will perceive a low probability of early death and mortality. Secondly, reduce settings in which men perceive rape as high benefit/low cost (e.g. effective punishment of rape in war).

Is castration a good punishment? Castration's opponents say it won't help because rape is not biological and not sexual. But chemical castration is affecting the hormones of the male, and hormones are one of the proximate causes of a man's libido. It is important to understand the biological arguments to avoid such simplistic arguments as that above. It may be more useful to control rape by intervening in the

early lives of boys as mentioned above. Also we may reduce rape by teaching an evolutionarily informed version of sex education to youth.

Evolutionarily informed sex education courses would include the following information :

- a. females are choosy (no typically means not interested)
- b. men's evolved sexuality
- c. men's design to see sexual interest when not actually signaled and to pursue secondary sex traits of women (e.g. there may be a cost for women to display these traits in the presence of men they would not like to attract who may nevertheless be affected by the display)
- d. information to help men avoid situations in which they may rape (equip men with the knowledge to make informed decisions about their own behaviour)

A scientific understanding of rape's causes is the solution to providing society with the tools to make informed decisions on how to affect its incidence. Misinformation is a danger to us all. People have a choice between ideology and knowledge. Society has a choice. Rape is hard to think about objectively. That is why our arguments should be based on the biological evidence not based on ideology.

Q. Are there any species other than human that rape?

A. Duck males target fertile partners as do human males. In house sparrows rape and gang rape occurs. Also many species of insects and even other primates rape, for example, orangutans (there has even been a case of one raping a human female).

Q. How frequently did it occur in our ancestral past?

A. Frequently enough for it to evolve as part of our psychology.

Q. What about personal responsibility for rape?

A. The biology does not place blame. But as humans we put the responsibility on the male, regardless of what the women is wearing, etc. So explanation is different from blame.

Q. I am unsure of your position on castration? Is rape proneness similar to FAS?

A. I am saying that we don't need punishment if we can eliminate the behaviour.

Q. Are you saying that the majority of rapes take place in situations where people are impoverished?

A. Yes. Where the desperate guys are, you find the highest rates of all crime, including rape – short term social strategies prevail.

Q. If rape-proneness is in virtually all men, there must be other biological inhibitions that affect men.

A. If you take college men, give them a questionnaire assessing men's coercive tendencies, attitudes toward rape proneness etc, the degree of rape proneness is associated with father absence, poverty etc. Many men have very low rape proneness, and these are the males that come from a very different background. But in past studies, when told "consider a situation in which no one will ever find out about your behaviour, would you rape" 37-57% of college males will say yes. This is very high for such a social, communicative species as we are.

Q. How many males have you interviewed personally?

A. I've talked to many males who have participated in coercive sex. I've also looked at the studies that discuss what men say was their motivation; they say many things. Just as you can look at the stars in

the sky all of your life and still know very little about them, you could look at a million rapists and still not understand what rape is.

Q. I've heard that rape occurs at all income levels?

A. Yes there is variation in men in rape proneness, this is not the same as saying that high status men do not rape – they do, but at a lower frequency than low status men.

Q. Why did you not consider rape itself as a form of violence?

A. Why would you want to do that to get a better understanding of rape? As a woman, of course, rape is a terrible thing, some women rate as worse than murder. This too makes evolutionary sense. The common denominator though is not the violence, it is the sex. Chapter 4 in our book deals with women's psychological responses to rape. For example, rape is more detrimental to a reproductively aged female and should result in more pain in these women.