

Power disparities

I also resist explanations that are couched in terms of disparities of power. Patriarchy as an explanation for sex differences in income is a good example. Patriarchy doesn't really explain anything. It is merely a description of a state of affairs. It needs to be explained so that we can understand the disparities that it is supposed to explain.

Controversy

I believe the only way to change the world is to learn how it really works.

However, I believe some fear that understanding how things actually work will attenuate the blame and victim hood they see as necessary for the social changes they believe are necessary. I sometimes wonder if our obsession with the ethics of research isn't caused by our desire not to know how things really work.

Controversy must be encouraged because all new ideas have the potential to be threatening. The Sterling Prize is one of the things we have to encourage and celebrate controversy.

This is the most complex structure in *our* known universe. I say "our" because there may be more complex structures in the universe, but we may not be able to comprehend them because of the limitations of our brain. We cannot hear the sounds that bats, elephants, and dogs can hear. Similarly, there may be ideas and structures that our limited brains cannot comprehend. Chimpanzees cannot learn algebra no matter how carefully it is explained to them. Similarly, there may be things we cannot learn no matter how carefully they are explained to us. However, I believe that we do have the ability to understand the brain well enough to make a better, though not a perfect world.

insight into managing the most dangerous weapon in our known universe. However, I do not see many answers coming from the traditional neurosciences in the near or even the distant future. There are two reasons for this belief. The neuro sciences will not help us deal with what is happening in the Middle East, or what should be done to or for Premier Gordon Campbell and Prime Minister Jean Chretien?

take a table at random from the bottle?" If you are very confident that Wallace is right, then you should be willing to take the pill for say a few hundred dollars. It is like a game of Russian roulette with 999 blanks and one bullet. The money is almost free.

However, if you suspect that Darwin is right, then you should want a great deal of money to take a pill from the bottle because you are very likely to die a few

female for forcible copulation. It is the desperate losers of the scorpionfly world that attempt to copulate forcibly. However, all males are capable of all three tactics. The one used depends on the male's success in male-male competition. Attempted forced copulation would be rare in a rich, low competition environment.

We can infer that the male's brain is a set of tools that he uses in attempting to get a mating with a female. They can be thought of as information processing systems for processing information about the situation and the costs and benefits

evolutionary time. We are stuck with them. Managing them is a problem that we

Adaptive-culturally variable

Some additional examples

Athletic sports

Warfare

Favouring kin

Gossip

Sexual jealousy

Pornography

Self deception

Beauty in mate choice

Courtship behaviours

Facial expressions

Reciprocal exchanges

Self deception

Polygyny

The psychological mechanisms that produce them are adaptive – culturally variable. However, they contribute to reproductive success much as they always have done. Most of the things we think, do, and say are produced by this type of

analogous to what happened in the western world during the past two centuries. The removal of the economic, religious, and political constraints resulted in the West, then Japan, returning to more ancestral ways of functioning. The reason is that many of our evolved tools have a motivational component to them. When conditions are liberal these components tend to predispose us to return to ancestral ways of functioning. Return to the scorpionfly slide to help think about the logic.

This slide may help you understand how I think of ancestralization. Think of the scorpionfly in a rich, ancestral environment. Since both males and females prefer the dead insect mating tactics it will be the only tactic used in the rich ancestral environment. Now imagine scorpionfly mating tactics in an environment that varied greatly in the availability of resources. Moreover, there are a variety of political traditions and religious institutions that impact on male mating tactics so that all three tactics are used reasonably frequently by males. Now imagine that economic and social change occurs in this environment. It becomes economically rich. Moreover, the political and religious institutions weaken. Since