Questions

- What, according to Evolutionary Psychologists, do humans look for in a mate?
- How might rape be explained according to Evolutionary Psychology?
Topics

- General Descriptions
- Facial Attractiveness
- Controversial Elements
- Altruism
Evolutionary Psychology

- Holds the view that not only do genes largely determine human *physical* characteristics but *behavioural* tendencies as well, and that this occurs because certain behaviors - including those that differ by sex - are adaptive for survival and reproduction.
In other words . . .

- The mind is a set of information-processing machines that were designed by natural selection to solve adaptive problems faced by our hunter-gatherer ancestors.
Another Way to Look at It . . .

Our natural competences -- our abilities to see, to speak, to find someone beautiful, to reciprocate a favor, to fear disease, to fall in love, to initiate an attack, -- are possible only because there is a vast array of complex computational machinery supporting and regulating these activities.

This machinery works so well that we don't even realize that it exists.
“Modern skulls house a stone age mind.”
According to Pinker

- Evolutionary Psychology is the study of the phylogenetic history and adaptive functions of the mind (page 51).
- Evolutionary Psychology is worth considering because most proposals in the field deal with drives like fear, sex, love, and aggression
Some examples of behavioural tendencies that are explained by ev. psych. . .

- Depression
- Homosexuality
- Religion
Facial Attractiveness

- Symmetry
  - Bi-lateral = overall high quality of development
  - Positively correlated with genetic heterozygosity
  - Some other factors found in Scheib study
    - Results show a relationship between women’s attractiveness ratings of faces and symmetry even when symmetry cues were removed
Facial Attractiveness con’t

● Averageness
  ● Studies show that computer-generated average faces are rated as more attractive than almost all of the individual faces they are constructed from
  ● Similar findings for non-face objects
Facial Attractiveness con’t

- **Hormone Markers**
  - In Males:
    - Testosterone affects a number of facial features
  - In Females:
    - Attractive features (eg: prominent cheekbones) correspond to high estrogen to testosterone ratios and signal fertility
    - Skin condition
Facial Attractiveness con’t

- Individual differences in perception DO matter
  - May reflect the operation of adaptive conditional mating strategies that trade off cues to genetic benefits
  - As well as individual differences across life span
Why the beliefs of Ev. Psych scare people . . .

- The need to believe that all people have an equal chance to succeed and reproduce (thus carrying on their genes).
  - “If the misery of our poor be caused not by the laws of nature but by our institutions, great is our sin” - Darwin
Why the beliefs of Ev. Psych scare people con’t . . .

- Rape as a Reproductive Strategy
  - Thornhill and Palmer:
    - Rape tendencies have been favored by sexual selection to give socially unsuccessful males a chance to beget offspring, and also to give males who do have mates an extra chance to get their genes copied.
    - Just because men *are* biologically primed for rape does not mean such behaviour is justified.
  - Feminist Arguments
Any chance for altruism?

- If individuals are in competition to survive, why has a system which benefits others survived the fires of natural selection?
  - Reciprocal Altruism - 'You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours'.
  - Inclusive Fitness (Hamilton, 1964) - altruism could have evolved because the altruistic act allowed relatives who shared some of the benefactor's genes to survive, thus increasing the benefactor's inclusive fitness.
The Questions One More Time

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