

Re: Darwinian evolution=Armageddon?

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.bio.evolution/2004-07/0001.html>

From: Michael Ragland (*ragland37_at_webtv.net*)

Date: 06/29/04

Date: Tue, 29 Jun 2004 16:10:46 +0000 (UTC)

Michael Ragland <ragland37@webtv.net> wrote:

Ragland:

Okay. But at one time aggression, xenophobia, etc. were apart of selection. If they are pleiotropically linked to genes under selection why wouldn't they theoretically still be under selection? For example, assuming Darwinian evolution was given enough time wouldn't it be possible aggression would be under selection and gradually it would be "removed" since it was no longer adaptive?

Wilkins:

In environments where aggression is selectively disadvantaged. But the majority of humans today, whether they live in small tribal arrangements or large cosmopolitan environments, live in situations where aggression is not so disadvantaged.

This sets up a situation where group selection may be invoked – those groups that are less aggressive may in fact be overrun by aggressive groups. It's happened before.

Ragland:

Well I disagree with you Mr. Wilkins. I think we currently do live in a cultural environment (scientific and technological civilization) where aggression is selectively disadvantaged. What do you base your statement, "But the majority of humans today, whether they live in small tribal arrangements or large cosmopolitan environments, live in situations where aggression is not so disadvantaged"? I'm glad you spoke your mind here because I think it is the majority opinion and that a certain number of people on sci.bio.evolution think I'm a "fruitcake". Do you think as a "species" aggression is not selectively disadvantaged?

John Wilkins:

Michael, I have no opinion on your dried fruit content.

Ragland:

You mean whether you think I'm a fruitcake....fruitcake=dried fruit. LOL! But seriously you made IMO a fairly good effort in responding to my comments and questions.

John Wilkins:

But I look about and see that we are relatively as violent as chimps; perhaps a bit less. In societies that live in tribal groups, most aggression within the group is rigidly controlled, while outgroup aggression is generally (but not always) ritual. Even so, tribal murder rates are greater than urban aggression rates. That said, most people lived in a village rather than a city until relatively recently. So I think there has been no selection yet against aggression.

Ragland:

I agreed with you in my response.

John Wilkins:

A large part of the problem is that we who grew up after WWII, and before the current troubles, seem to think that the world is generally a nice place except in those horrid places; in fact the world is as viol