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The 99 Percent—Development and Socialization Within an Evolutionary Context

Growing Up to Become "A Good and Useful Human Being"

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In comparison to our pre-agriculture foraging cousins we are far from virtuous and might even be considered to have lost our minds, if not our humanity (Sahlins, 2008).[1] In fact, we are quite immoral, wicked, and stupid if we use anthropological reports of those who live like our presumed nomadic foraging, gatherer-hunter[2] ancestors as a baseline. How did this come to be? How do modern Westerners differ socially and morally from those who live like our distant ancestors and what might account for the differences? In this chapter, I compare the ancestral social environment, as known from extant small-band gatherer-hunter cultures from around the world, with the contemporary Western social environment (focused mostly on the United States, which continues to export its views and lifestyle to the rest of the world).

Apprehending an appropriate baseline for judging social functioning is critical for understanding how cultural practices influence human nature and personality. Unfortunately, many popularized evolutionary theorists today ignore or keep shifting the baseline used for comparison. Most commonly, they assume that today's human behavior is normal and normative and then try to explain it as adaptive. There is a lack of awareness of how different the social environment was for our ancestors and how this forms a different human nature. Because the small-band gatherer-hunter context encompassed 99 percent of human genus existence, I take it as the baseline range for human society and human development with their corresponding influences on human nature.[3]

The ancestral lifestyle and its implications are often ignored or confused by what I call Hobbesian evolutionary psychology (H-EP; a subset of evolutionary psychology).

This view is Hobbesian (Hobbes, 1651/ 2010) because it often concludes that humans are naturally selfish and aggressive and need extensive social controls to behave well (e.g., Pinker, 2011). H-EP typically transposes the behaviors and personalities of modern Westerners and Western social environments onto the past and explains how today's behaviors were adaptations made in the ancestral environment ("environment of evolutionary adaptedness," Bowlby, 1951; Hartman, 1939). This H-EP reasoning is totally backwards. The contemporary Western social environment creates individuals and personalities quite different from the ancestral social environment, influencing human development, capacities, and culture.

Common Characteristics of Small Band Gatherer-Hunter Life

Small-band gatherer-hunter societies, found all over the world, developed strikingly similar cultures. Here I discuss several generalized characteristics of these societies, relying heavily on Ingold (1999) and others who summarize or report their own anthropological data on gatherer-hunter societies (e.g., Marshall, 1979; Shostak, 1981; Thomas, 1989). Small-band gatherer-hunters (SBGH) refers to immediate-return societies (vs. delayed-return societies who invested in cultivation, domestication, or resource accumulation) who were foragers with few possessions.[4] Table 17.1 provides a summary of comparisons discussed.

Companionship Culture

One of the most notable features of SBGH life is a *companionship* lifestyle (Gibson, 1985). It represents a boundaryless context that involves nonexclusive intimacy and face-to-face connection that is constituted by a sharing of food, movement, residence, company, and memory (Bird-David, 1994; Ingold, 1999). Companionship is voluntary and terminable, preserving individual autonomy. As an immediate-return society, egalitarianism is assumed and predominant. The formal structures of *kinship* culture "places people from birth in determinate relations with fixed, lifelong commitments" (Ingold, 1999, p. 404), whereas in SBGH there is an absence of formal, adjudicated commitments. In contrast to delayed-return societies with their hierarchies and fixed relations, some argue that SBGH live socially but without a society at all, an arrangement representing the minimal necessary and sufficient characteristics of a society (Ingold, 1999; Wilson, 1988). SBGH individual freedom is unknown to us today, but may be sought as people move from rural communities to the anonymity of the city.

Despite the evidence to the contrary, H-EP assumes the predominance in the ancestral environment of the type of patriarchal, male-dominated family structure that we assume to be normal today in the West (nuclear family, mom and dad in charge), which is only a recent historical development (Coontz, 1992). H-EP uses a baseline derived from

TABLE 17.1 **Comparison of Two Types of Living**

	Small-band gatherer-hunters	United States Today
Social embeddedness	High	Low
Social support	High	Low
Socially purposeful living	Normative	Non-normative
Community social enjoyment	Every day	Rare (spectator sports, religious services)
Boundaries	Fluid, companionship culture	Rigid kinship culture, social classes
Physical contact with others	Considerable (sleeping, resting, sitting, dancing)	Minimal
Relations with other groups	Cooperative	Competitive attitude although cooperative action
Individual freedom	Extensive (freedom to leave, to play, freedom of activity; no coercion)	Primarily free to make consumption choices (freedom to move if adult)
Relationships	Egalitarian (no one bosses anyone)	Hierarchical (adults over children, boss over worker, teacher over student)
Contact with other ages	Multi-age group living day and night	Rare outside of family home
Role models	Virtuous	Frequently vicious within popular and news media
Cultural mores	Generosity and cooperation are fostered and expected	Selfishness and stubbornness are expected and fostered by popular culture
Immorality	Cheating, abuse, aggression were not tolerated	Cheating, abuse, aggression expected
Natural world	Embeddedness in and partnership with nature	Detachment from, control and fear of nature

Sources for information include those cited in the text and *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers* (Lee & Daly, 1999).

these more recent social structures, projecting onto the past a scenario like today's of sexual restriction and competition, assuming sexual competitiveness for virginity, and emphasizing the timing of first sexual behavior. H-EP assumes mate competition and male desire to control female reproduction to ensure genetic dominance. In contrast, among SBGH, sexual relations are widespread with experimentation at all ages (e.g., Everett, 2009). As with our bonobo cousins, individuals do not wait for the right fertile mate. Sexual relations are more about pleasure than control. Moreover, there is no evidence to show that SBGH males are concerned about whose child was theirs, but evidence to the contrary—communal living means collective breeding and alloparenting (Hrdy, 2009). Women control reproduction themselves—they are responsible for killing a newborn who is defective or unable to be cared for by the community.

From the hypotheses that are tested in H-EP, it is clear that they are missing an understanding of the SBGH baseline. Otherwise, for example, why else would they hypothesize a male preference for virginity, a concern of settled societies, not SBGH? In fact, the patriarchy and male dominance H-EP assumes to be normal is about 6000 years old (called the "Great Reversal" by Campbell, 1959–1968) and is non-universal since it does not exist among SBGH.

Personhood and Individualism

SBGH members value individualism but it is of a different nature than the individualism of the modern Western world. Ingold (1999, p. 407) points out the differences: the

Westerner is considered to be rational, self-contained, and autonomous, "locked within the privacy of a body," "standing against" and competing for the "rewards of success" with "an aggregate of other such individuals" in the society; Westerners have anonymous, "brittle, contingent, and transient" relationships that lack "direct, intersubjective involvement" (Ingold, 1999, p. 407).

In contrast, SBGH do not experience a dichotomy between public and private, self and society: "Every individual comes into being as a center of agency and awareness within an unbounded social environment which provides sustenance, care, company, and support. All people and things known, used or made are drawn into the person's subjective identity" (Ingold, 1999, p. 407). The ego is small and the self is large (Taylor, 2010). Selves grow in a supportive web of relations, developing action capacities and perceptual capabilities where personal autonomy "unfolds in purposed action within the web of nurture" (Ingold, 1999, p. 407). Moreover, although conflicts do arise, a person usually does not act against others but *with* them. An individual's intentions and actions originate from and seek realization in and through "the community of nurture to which they all belong" (Ingold, 1999, p. 407). The SBGH orientation to individual-group relations is a good match for Aristotle's rhetoric about virtue and virtue development (Urmson, 1999). Virtue is cultivated within a community and implemented or fulfilled in that community (Narvaez, 2006). And the community envelops not only the humans but all known entities. SBGH spend their lives in what would be called a "higher consciousness," aware of connection and interrelationships with the natural world and cosmos (Taylor, 2010).

Anarchy prevails among SBGH. That is, there is no central authority and no formal leaders. Adults have the freedom to roam and do what they want (Hewlett & Lamb, 2005; Konner, 2010). Children, too, are considered free beings, reincarnations of relatives or gods, not to be coerced (Sahlins, 2008). Among the Semai, for example, coercion is assumed to harm the spirit (*punan*; Dentan, 1968). More experienced persons, such as elders, can *persuade* others to follow their suggestions but no force can be used. Among the Semai, even parents have no authority to coerce children to do something (Dentan, 1968). Yet this does not mean that power is not appreciated. Instead of power as coercion of others, as Westerners often understand it, power is found in a person's skill or wisdom that garners community attention (Ingold, 1999). Relationships are founded on trust—which entails acting "with the person in mind, in the hope and expectation that they will do likewise" toward you, without compulsion or obligation (Ingold, 1999, p. 407). In fact, any move toward domination over another can break a relationship.

SBGH do not countenance inequality in resources or status (Ingold, 1999). They are fiercely egalitarian, an ancient universal (Boehm, 2001). Although individuals may want to lord it over others at times, SBGH have ways to keep this from happening. All over the world in SBGH communities, anthropologists have noted 'rough good humor,' also known as leveling or humility-enforcing after success (Lee, 1988, p. 264). For example, among the Ju/'hoansi or !Kung, when a hunter is successful, ritual insulting

of the game takes place. The larger the animal, the greater the teasing. Here is sample dialogue after a successful hunt provided by frequent onlooker Richard Lee (1988, pp. 265–266):

> Hunting group member: "It's so small, it's hardly worth our while; why don't we just leave it? It's still early; we could actually go and hunt something good."
>
> To which the hunter replies: "You know, you're right. It's nothing. Why don't we just leave it, and go off and hunt something else. Even a porcupine, a rabbit— anything would be better than this."

After a good laugh, they prepare the meat to take home. When asked why they talk like this, one man said: "If somebody gets a big head and thinks a lot of himself, he'll get arrogant; and an arrogant person might hurt someone, he might even kill someone. So we belittle his meat to cool his heart and make him gentle" (Lee, 1988, p. 266). In fact, when someone tries to hoard something for himself, the Ju/'hoansi call that person "far-hearted" (stingy or mean; Lee, 1988). Such social egalitarian practices prevent the individual ego from becoming too large and self-focused.

The United States presents a stark contrast. The individualism of the United States today is a strange and aberrant form of social relations that is a recent historical phenomenon (Sahlins, 2008). Big, selfish egos are assumed to be normal, especially among males and the powerful. Inequality is condoned, with the wealthiest and most powerful controlling the vast majority of resources with its harmful effects on mental and physical health as well as social well-being among the non-powerful (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). H-EP tends to assume incorrectly that the current state of affairs, with inequality and hierarchy, was typical of the ancestral SBGH past. On the contrary, political hierarchy (and organized violence) began in the last 1 percent of human genus existence, among societies that cultivated crops, domesticated animals, or stopped roaming and settled down (see Fry, 2006; Wells, 2011).

Group Collectivism

Although there is a greater individualism and individual autonomy among SBGH, there is also a deep collectivism and group identity that focuses on the contemporaneous membership in the group, a membership that fluctuates with the interests of individual members. SBGH members often assume that individuals would not want to be alone, accompanying another into the forest even for pit stops. No one expects or desires to be alone. Social cohesion and communal living is normative. For example, anthropologist Robert Dentan (1968) describes how he and his wife at first tried to tie shut their hut door to keep out Semai community members in order to get more sleep in the morning. But the Semai easily figured out how to untie the door and entered to converse before dawn. The cultural assumption was that the Dentans would *want* to see and talk with them—there was no

conception that they would not—and that they would be up before dawn like the rest of the community.

Westerners, in contrast, are trained up to expect aloneness—children are isolated in their own cribs, rooms, and activities, even in early childhood when mammalian development is optimized by constant physical contact and intersubjective social interaction (Schore, 1994, 2001, 2003a, 2003b). Social isolation even briefly after birth in animal studies shows long-term detrimental effects on sociality (e.g., Henry, Richard-Yris, Tordjman, & Hausberger, 2009). Perhaps there is a link between the common experience of early childhood isolation and the epidemic of loneliness among adults in the United States (Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008) and the facts that single adults comprise 50 percent of the adult population and single-adult households outnumber every other type of household (Klinenberg, 2012).

Economics, Pleasure, and Desire

It is clear from ethnographies that SBGH do not fit the Western stereotype—that human nature is full of unlimited wants in a world of limited means, resulting in scarcity. *Homo economicus* (economic man) "is naturally acquisitive, competitive, rational, calculating, and forever looking for ways to improve his material well-being" (Gowdy, 1999, p. 391). As noted in the beginning of the chapter, such a person in a SBGH society would have been deemed immoral or mad. In SBGH societies, pleasure does not come from material wealth—there are few possessions and there is a careless attitude toward them since anything that is needed can be constructed anew. Instead of displaying runaway, materialistic desires presumably inherent in human nature (a notion promulgated by economic science), SBGH members demonstrate few material desires and live sustainably: "Assumptions about human behavior that members of market societies believe to be universal, that humans are naturally competitive and acquisitive, and that social stratification is natural, do not apply to many hunter-gatherer peoples". (Gowdy, 1999, p. 391).

Instead, SBGH individuals find pleasure primarily in social activities. Documented enjoyments include social playing, dancing, singing, joking, laughing, and even sitting close together (e.g., Everett, 2009; Gowdy, 1999; Ingold, 1999). SBGH has no expectation of drudgery. Necessary activities like gathering and hunting are pleasant social activities where no one is coerced to participate, and some never do but still receive a share (Woodburn, 1982).

Recent research demonstrates that pleasant social activities are the kinds of activities that keep a person and their hormones in what I would call a "moral mood"—more generous, compassionate, and easygoing (Batson, Coke, Chard, Smith, & Taliaferro, 1979; Frederickson, 2003). We know that human happiness comes from social play and social activities where a person can "lose himself" in flow with others (Brown, 2009). In contrast, focusing on possessions and money, materialism tends to make one unhappy (Kasser, 2002).

Cooperation Inside and Outside the Group

Contrary to contemporary discourse emphasizing competition in nature, the natural world is characterized primarily by mutualism and symbiosis (Kropotkin, 1902; see Ryan, 2002, for a review). Competition and aggression characterize a relatively small proportion of relations among naturally ordered systems. Humans, too, are prepared to be cooperative from birth (Trevarthen, 2005).

Nevertheless, H-EP assumes that humans are naturally selfish, a viewpoint rampant in USA culture (creating a society to match, according to Schwartz, 1986). H-EP assumes that our ancestors were naturally detached, territorial, aggressive and possession-driven, much like us today (e.g., Buss, 2005). This is also mistaken. Among SBGH, generosity and sharing are group mores (Ingold, 1999). SBGH have an immediate-return economy, in which food is used immediately rather than being stored (Woodburn, 1982). They demonstrate "lack of foresight" about food and resources, sharing them with others today rather than hoarding them for tomorrow. Sahlins (2008, p. 51) notes: "Natural self interest? For the greater part of humanity, self-interest as we know it is unnatural in the normative sense; it is considered madness, witchcraft or some such grounds for ostracism, execution, or at least therapy. Rather than expressing a pre-social human nature, such avarice is generally taken for a loss of humanity."

H-EP assumes competition and coalitionary violence among our SBGH ancestors (e.g., Pinker, 2011). But the data do not support this view. Cooperation was common among groups that often held relatives (Fry, 2006; Ingold, 1999). Groups were permeable and fluid. Yet H-EP assumes strict ingroup/outgroup relations and rivalry between groups instead of cooperation (the "pervasive intergroup hostility model," Fry, 2006; for examples, see Buss, 1999; Ghiglieri, 1999; Wrangham & Petersen, 1996). Most SBGH do not engage in war and are generally unwarlike in their cultural orientations, living "without centralized authority, standing armies, or bureaucratic systems. Yet the evidence indicates that they have lived together surprisingly well, solving their problems among themselves largely without recourse to authority figures and without a particular propensity for violence" (Lee & Daly, 1999, p. 1). There is little to be competitive about since there are no possessions, women have their own autonomy, and childrearing is communal. Wiessner (1981) documents how relations are carefully maintained with distant groups whose good will was assumed when food supplies were limited during times of stress.

Of course, aggressive tendencies are inherent in nature if one counts survival mechanisms that are triggered under perceived threat—true for all organisms. However, dispositional aggression and selfish human personality result from experience during periods sensitive to epigenetic and plastic effects (Narvaez & Gleason, 2012), or else an adopted cultural worldview (Narvaez, 2008; 2009; in preparation). Using Western personality as a baseline for describing human nature generally represents an ethnocentric and ignorant viewpoint that misrepresents the data (for reviews, see Fry, 2006; Ingold, Riches, & Woodburn, 1988a, 1988b; Lee & Daly, 1999).

Sustainable Lifestyle

Because the members of most of SBGH societies have everything they need and spend their time primarily in leisure and interpersonal enjoyment, without "social classes and arguably no discrimination based on gender" (Gowdy, 1999, p. 391), Sahlins (1972) calls the lifestyle the "original affluent society." They live "in equilibrium with their environment, without destroying the resources upon which their economies were based" (Sahlins, 1972). They have no agriculture or industry, and few possessions, challenging our notion of what a good life requires.

Some argue that because SBGH are mobile, they are unable to want too much, focused forever on the present (Sahlins, 1972). Although this may be true, they also have a greater intelligence and deep regard for natural resources—for example, making substitutions when a resource seems overstressed (Woodburn, 1980). They make decisions communally, focused on the long-term welfare of the group with a sense of relational commitment to everything in the natural world.

Human Nature, Virtue, and Natural Morality

In *The Human Cycle*, Colin Turnbull (1984) contrasts the life-course of the Mbuti gatherer-hunters of formerly Zaire (now Democratic Republic of the Congo) with that of Westerners, particularly his own upbringing in Britain (having nannies, going to boarding and exclusive schools). I find his comparisons most apt to illustrate how we have come to be such different peoples with different brains, minds, and worldviews.

The Mbuti mother and child had an "intense, continuous, and consistent physical proximity" during the first three years of life, sharing in mutual reciprocity (Turnbull, 1984, p. 75). Turnbull's own experience of "caring" was vastly different, with an emphasis on "a possessiveness that divided the family and an insistence that the child, unable to care for itself, had to have goodness, or what was deemed good for the child, imposed on the helpless creature." Because of the missing grounding of mutuality, "The cooperation that emerges later in life—and in our modern society cooperation is every bit as necessary as it is in all societies—is mechanical, rather than organic, because it was learned by imposition rather than felt through reciprocation" (Turnbull, 1984, p. 75). Whereas the Mbuti have an inner drive to cooperate, the Westerner, even through adulthood, must sometimes be coerced to behave in a social manner. He described Mbuti children on the verge of adolescence as having had all their capacities "explored and developed to the limit; not just their bodies, but their senses of sight, smell, touch, and hearing have all been nurtured as instruments of learning and communication" (Turnbull, 1984, p. 73). Turnbull contrasts his own preparation for adolescence, in which he experienced coercion toward manly violence. For example, he was roundly criticized for his failure to do well in competitive sports with hints that he was a coward because he was assumed to be afraid to use his body for violence.

SBGH didn't need a commandment to "love your neighbor" because one does so when one is raised with kindness and compassion, with early needs fully met, when secure

attachment is formed along with a resilient brain and psyche (Sills, 2009). Ancestral parenting practices and social conditions foster a natural morality that follows Piaget's (1932/1965) notion that "morality is the logic of action." In the ancestral context, this is a truism. Virtue and survival go hand in hand. Cooperation is essential for life.

Contrasting Cultures: The Abandonment of Natural Virtue Development in the West

The human genus spent 99 percent of its existence in a lifestyle that is egalitarian, emphasizing individual autonomy, immersed in nearly constant, pleasurable social activity—whether gathering, hunting, social leisure, or sleeping, attending primarily to the here and now with minimal possessions or planning for the distant future. So different from the modern Western context, it is not surprising that the two environments foster different moral personalities (Narvaez, 2008; in preparation). Among SBGH, the majority of moral functioning is focused on social *engagement*—relational presence, a moral mindset that treats others as equals through social play and friendship. In fact at birth, babies appear to expect this type of *companionship* attachment as well as a caring attachment (Trevarthen, 2005) and they receive this in SBGH. Occasionally in SBGH environments, self-protection (*safety ethic*) becomes a primary mindset, mostly in reaction to predators but rarely in reaction to other people. Abstracting capabilities typically would include the community as the grounding for thought—*communal imagination*. In contrast, the US environment fosters moral functioning as mostly social self-protection—social withdrawal—or gaining control, dominance, and status. Imaginative capabilities emphasize personal gain that is emotionally detached instead of emotionally present (see Figure 17.1). The ancestral context and the modern US context foster a distinctive set of moral mindsets and capabilities. How did this happen?

Shift to Fixedness and Materialism and Away from Autonomy and Presence

What has become plain to me, from reading anthropological accounts like Turnbull's, analyzing our own childrearing practices, and comparing outcomes, is that Western culture has extirpated the evolved grounding of moral rationality and moral development (Narvaez, 2012). This has been happening for some time but may be reaching its nadir (Taylor, 2005). Historically in delayed-return societies (in contrast to SBGH immediate-return), an ideology of sacralized leadership and centralized authority emerged, with its accompanying control of women and young men by older men (Barnard & Woodburn, 1988). Those with power (older men) fostered an ideology that established fixed relations among humans (e.g., institutionalized marriage). Fixed relations were given power over individual autonomy. Further, the possessions that accumulated with power were themselves imbued with mystical power over human autonomy (e.g., private property). The pinnacle of this
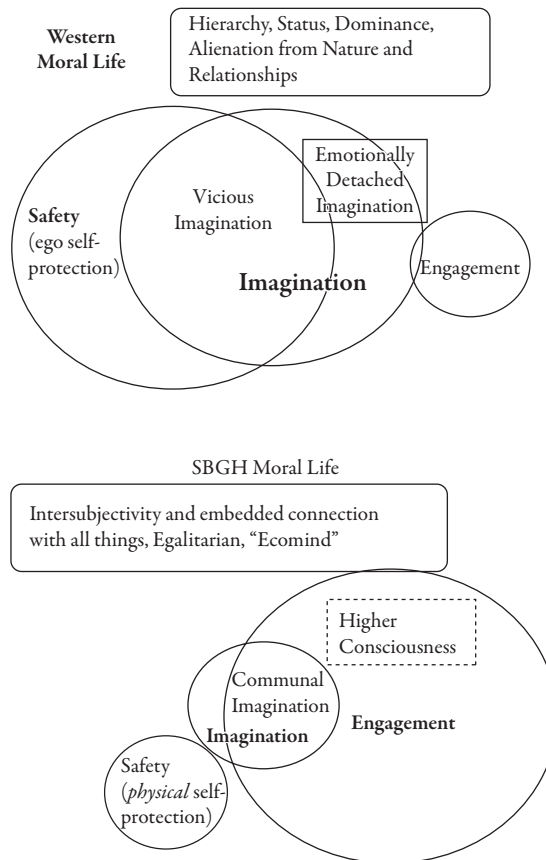
FIGURE 17.1 Contrasting moral lives: Western versus small-band gatherer-hunter.

mythology is a corporate capitalist system so powerful, pervasive, and destructive that it "shall not be named" and is taken as a baseline for how reality works so any questioning of its assumptions (e.g., competitiveness, self-interest, "free" markets) is considered absurd. Through an emphasis on consumption and materialism, US cultural narratives and societal practices have denigrated close maternal, familial, and community care, as well as true individual autonomy and the self-development necessary for a confident social being. What do I mean more specifically?

Violations of Evolved Mammalian Parenting Practices

Trauma and undercare of children may be a primary cause of our differences (Narvaez, in preparation). Undercare refers to the absence of ancestral caregiving practices in early life. Ancestral caregiving among humans represent slight variations to social mammalian parenting that emerged more than 30 million years ago: responsiveness to the needs of the child, constant touch, breastfeeding for at least two years, multiple adult caregivers, extensive positive social support for mother and child, free play in nature (Hewlett & Lamb, 2005), as well as natural childbirth. These practices are related to optimal functioning

physiologically, psychologically, and morally (Narvaez & Gleason, in press). All these practices have diminished over the twentieth century in the United States (Narvaez, Panksepp, Schore, & Gleason, 2012). Widespread lack of social support for optimal early caregiving may be undermining all the rest of the practices, as this lack leads to distracted and less responsive caregiving (Crockenberg, 1981; Garmezy, 1983) that worsens by generation.

Coercion is Normative

Although humanity may have become less warlike in recent millennia and looks comparatively less *physically* violent (Pinker, 2011), today there is a great deal of violence built into a child's life from childbirth on. According to the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, more and more children in the United States are coerced into the world with labor induction and cesareans. Hospital childbirth practices are detrimental to child well-being (e.g., Henry, Richard-Yris, Tordjman, & Hausberger, 2009). Commonly used maternal drugs during childbirth numb the fetus, and extensive interference during and after birth thwarts the newborn's energy to reach for the mother's breast (Mercer, Erickson-Owens, Graves, & Haley, 2007). Separation from mother at birth at all is traumatic and can have long-term effects but it happens routinely in the United States (Bystrova et al., 2009). Isolating children throughout childhood from close contact (i.e., in their own rooms, cribs, carriers, playpens, strollers) has become the norm, which is the equivalent of punishing young children for the mammalian desire to be physically in touch with caregivers. The trauma of early life experience for many children leads them to a self-protective orientation to social and moral life (Narvaez, 2008; in preparation).

Violation of Children's Birth Rights

Children are born ready for a companionship culture (Trevarthen, 2005). They begin to communicate, expecting a response, from the first day of a natural birth. They are ready for embeddedness in social life, which fosters not only strong emotional attachment but cognitive and emotional intelligence (Greenspan & Shanker, 2004). Denying children companionship not only leads to the multiple poor outcomes mentioned previously, but thwarts children's flourishing. In light of the decline of all ancestral early life caregiving practices, perhaps a declaration for the rights of the baby is needed.[5]

Long-Term Effects of Undercare

Children who are undercared for are more likely to have decrements on multiple levels (Narvaez, in preparation). Neurotransmitters are faulty, leading to memory problems (autobiographical, working memory); the immune system is poorly developed, leading to increased illness and "sickness behavior" that is comparable to depression; the neuroendocrine and stress response systems are poorly established, leading for example to stress reactivity (Meaney, 2001). Undercare does not foster prosocial emotions adequately, leading to faulty attachment replaced with addictions or hoarding, but also to underdeveloped moral systems.

My research collaborators and I (Narvaez, Gleason, Brooks, Wang, Lefever, Cheng, & Centers for the Prevention of Child Neglect, 2012, Narvaez, Gleason, Cheng, Wang, & Brooks, 2012; Narvaez, Wang, Gleason, Cheng, Lefever, & Deng, 2012) have been examining ancestral parenting practices, suspecting that these matter for becoming a good and useful human being of the ancestral sort. In our studies we are finding that children with longer breastfeeding, more positive touch, or more play had better self-regulation and higher empathy than those with less of each of these parenting practices. Children whose mothers had positive attitudes about all ancestral parenting practices display more joy, consideration, empathy, imagination, and social attunement. A cross-cultural comparison of our US and China samples indicates that ancestral parenting practices affected three-year-olds' moral and social functioning in both the US and China, with different patterns for each country.

Contrasting Moral Universes.

Figure 17.1 illustrates postulated differences between the typical Western mind (at least for the United States) and the SBGH mind. The sizes of the circles indicate the amount of time generally spent in each mindset. Current parenting, schooling, and culture in the United States cultivate the safety ethic (mostly as *social* self-protection rather than from an other-species predator) and detached imagination but little engagement. Maternal and familial distraction and intergenerational trauma foster little right-brain development, leaving in charge either the left-brain, detached imagination or the reptilian survival (fight, flight, or freeze) mechanisms (safety ethic). Individuals flip between apathy (especially toward nature) and fear/rage toward change/ difference/the Other. Schooling that only emphasizes conscious, explicit understanding, reasoning, logic, linearity, and representations (rather than actual experience, emotion, connection, awareness) can leave children spiritless.

Undermining the evolutionarily-evolved principles of childrearing, as the West has done, leaves the child with no internal moral compass. Instead, morality must be imposed externally—through rules, sanctions, or constructed incentives. And each group or sub-group has its ideology that clashes with another's. Beliefs become all important because there is lack of shared *experiential* knowledge and intuitions that come from intersubjective experience with one another and the natural world. This contrasts with the vast experience of regular intersubjective relational presence in the SBGH context, with imagination used for communal ends.

Could and Should We Shift Our Baselines
Back to The 99 Percent?

How did the United States in particular bring about so much truly self-centered behavior, visible in all ages and nearly all walks of life (Callahan, 2004)? The United States seems to have particularly virulent strains of Western ideologies including "human-nature-as-evil,"

"body-as-disgusting," "body-as-machine," "nature-as-separate," and the illusions of extreme individualism. Cultural expectations and encouragement of selfishness struck the United States hard, particularly in the twentieth century (see Ayn Rand's influence on political figures, Levine, 2011). Popular culture escalates the ongoing sense of threat and insecurity that results in a self-protective mindset. Worst of all, popular culture and some religious leaders encourage parents to violate many of the evolved basic principles of early life care, an especially sensitive period. More than ever, culture has extirpated the moral foundations for our sociality and our relationship with nature.

Some might argue that we cannot go back to earlier lifestyles, and besides—who wants to live outside with bugs and predators? The purpose of using evolutionary baselines is not to romanticize the past (or romanticize the present like H-EP seems to do). A proper evolutionary baseline can help us understand whether today's human behavior and health outcomes are normative for human beings—part of their natural nature, or maladaptations that emerge from a mismatch between evolved needs and current environments. Sometimes researchers find a mismatch and assume there is nothing that can be done (e.g., overexposure to strangers in modern cities). The point here is that there truly is something that we can do to shift current baselines for human development in a way that fosters greater well-being, not only in humans but also for the natural world.

What can we do? First, we must remember that we are mammals and mammals require particular circumstances for flourishing. We do not thrive in isolation, without autonomy or positive social support. We should not blame children for their misbehavior if they have been raised without one or more of these basic needs. Instead, we should ensure that all persons receive what they evolved to need, especially in the first years of life when brain and body systems are being established. Second, we need to remember that much of human nature and well-being is malleable but as a dynamic system, whose initial conditions are magnified and built upon for all later developments. Great care should be taken about preparing for pregnancy, childbirth, and postnatal care—by the whole community. Third, we need to reestablish ancestral parenting practices to the degree possible, to ensure that long-term well-being is fostered by a good beginning. We can change the environment for young children to match up with their human mammalian needs. Here are a few examples of what can be done. We can establish means of milk sharing among women, as occurs under ancestral conditions (Hrdy, 2009). We can establish workplaces where babies can be kept in close contact with caregivers, encourage safe bed-sharing, encourage extensive support systems for families, design child raising with free play in mind, and practice natural childbirth for most births. Some countries have been moving in these directions, such as those who have adopted the World Health Organization's "baby-friendly" hospital initiative (only 4 percent of US hospitals are "baby-friendly" according to a 2011 report by the Centers for Disease Control). Finally, promoting intersubjectivity from the beginning of life, inclusive of other creatures and life-forms as among SBGH, can help promote ecological mindedness, instead of the

detached orientation to the natural world that has become so prevalent and damaging to our habitat, the earth.

Conclusion

Some argue that humanity is starting to (re-)tame the ego and reintegrate the psyche of our forebears, shown by an increased sense of empathy for the less fortunate, animals, and a deeper connection with indigenous cultures and the natural world in recent generations (Taylor, 2005). Part of this change requires a move toward a sense of Spirit (in Turnbull's term), which is a right-brain holistic orientation (see McGilchrist, 2009) that allows us to discern the ultimate unity of all living things, as we know they are at the quantum level. This higher consciousness imbues everyday experience for SBGH who have an "awareness of Spirit that enables them to accept differences of manner, custom, speech, behavior, even of belief, while still feeling an underlying unity. It is awareness of Spirit that enables them to avoid the conflict and hostility that arise so easily from such differences" (Turnbull, 1984, p. 75). Such an awareness leads to a deep respect and affection for the non-human natural world but also for children. Treating children and their needs with generosity may be required for a shift toward our full human capacities. With a greater awareness of the good life we could be living, we can reengineer our social structures and expectations away from fostering destructive and harmful lives and toward nurturing sensible, good, and useful lives.

Notes

1. The Yahgan see the goal of life to become "a good and useful human being" (Gusinde, 1937).
2. Gatherer-hunters is a more accurate term than hunter-gatherers because in these types of societies generally, the vast majority of foods sources are gathered.
3. There is some evidence of collector societies some 40,000 years ago, but this was a minority (See Vanhaeren & d'Errico, 2005).
4. For more information on immediate versus delayed-return societies, see Kelly (2007), Lee and Daly (1999).
5. See blog post on this for initial ideas for a declaration for the rights of the baby: http://www.psychologyto-day.com/blog/moral-landscapes/201111/do-we-need-declaration-the-rights-the-baby

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