
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, December 3, 2016 4:06 PM
To: Danny Hillis
Cc: jeffrey E.
Subject: Re:

Hi Danny,=nbsp;

I appreciated your thoughts yesterday re "stories."

Three foll=w up thoughts:

1) In cases where we can't tell complete stories, like your=sorting algorithm, we can presumably tell stories about certain features. A=d I guess this is what I was trying to claim about evolutionary theory; we c=n't hope to predict a priori which features will show up in which taxa or w=y humans evolved, but we can explain why sex ratios are about 50:50. And in=such cases we can still distinguish between good and bad stories (the god e=planation or a group selection explanation vs fisher).

But I guess th=s raises two questions:

2) In such domains, which kinds of stories w=ll we be able to tell and which kinds won't we? Should we be striving for a=Darwin-like story of human culture? For a high level pseudocode-like story f=r how the mind works? Or are there other questions we should be asking? Wha= is the level of analysis we should be doing in these domains of research?&=bsp;

3) And in such domains, how can we distinguish good from bad stories?=This seems like a particular problem in domains, like the social and biolog=cal science, where even the good stories are incomplete and never 100% accu=ate. But there are still better and worse stories. Currently, as you pointe= out, these fields seem rife with bad stories. How could we more systematic=llly distinguish the good from the bad, in such domains? Is there a conceptu=l tool or a litmus test they might be able to apply?

Anyhow, I look f=rward to chatting again. I hope you didn't find my comments or questions of=-putting.

I didn't get to hear what your daughter does, but it sound=d like she has an interest in psychology. And in evolution. I teach and do r=search in both those departments, and would be happy to chat with her more,=if she had an interest and found herself by Harvard again. I appreciated he= comments as well.

-Moshe

On Dec 2, 201=, at 9:20 PM, jeffrey E. <jeeva=ation@gmail.com <mailto:jeevacation@gmail.com> > wrote:

=br>

On Fri, Dec 2, 2016 at 10:20=PM jeffrey E. <jeevacation@gmai=.com <mailto:jeevacation@gmail.com> > wrote:

On Fri, Dec 2, 2016 at 9:15 PM moshe hoffman <hoffman.moshe@gm=il.com
<mailto:hof=man.moshe@gmail.com> wrote:

Jeff,

Is it OK for me to send Danny a follow up email? If so, might you have his e=ail address by chance?

Happy to pass the email by you first, if you prefer.

=

-Moshe

Sent from my iPhone

=