Chapter 6:10 The Self-Domestication Hypothesis

[544] In terms of providing a nurturing-avoiding, human-condition-escaping explanation for bonobo behaviour, the problem with the SEM is that it only offers a supposed explanation for bonobos' *lack* of aggression, and so still falls well short of being able to provide a supposed explanation for bonobos' extraordinary **'personal restraint'**, **'respect for others'**, **'loving'**, **'moral'**, cooperative, harmonious, gentle state. And there is a *big* difference between not being aggressive and being loving. Given this shortfall, nurturing-avoiding, mechanistic biologists clearly needed to come up with a more sophisticated version of the SEM, one that could supposedly account for the bonobos' extraordinary cooperative, gentle, peaceful, loving nature. This supposed solution was provided in 2012, with the presentation of the so-called Self-Domestication Hypothesis (SDH) by anthropologists Brian Hare, Victoria Wobber and Richard Wrangham (one of the originators of the SEM) in a paper titled 'The self-domestication hypothesis: evolution of bonobo psychology is due to selection against aggression' (*Animal Behaviour,* 2012, Vol.83, No.3).

[545] The first point to note is the use up front in the title of this paper of the idea that the **'evolution of bonobo psychology is due to selection against aggression'**, as if being able to **'select… against aggression'** is a normal, acceptable biological principle, a fait accompli, when it isn't. As emphasised, genes are selfish; outside of the love-indoctrination situation they don't allow for **'selection against aggression'** between sexually reproducing individuals. What is being put forward is the superficially persuasive but biologically flawed 'cooperation is more advantageous than competition and can therefore be selected for' argument that the SEM relies on, but to be putting it up front in their title is an outrageous bluff, a desperate deception, an all-out effort to create the illusion that **'selection against aggression'** is sound, acceptable biology.

[546] Another point that should be made before examining the soundness or otherwise of the SDH is that by concluding their 2012 paper with the following statement, its proponents suggest that it not only explains bonobo cooperation but potentially human morality as well: **'The self-domestication hypothesis is therefore a potentially powerful tool for understanding the processes by which selection shapes both psychological and other seemingly unrelated traits, including those in humans.'** (Incidentally, the **'psychological' 'traits'** they refer to are *behaviours*, such as tolerance and playfulness, *not a psychosis*—so like the Multilevel Selection theory for eusociality, the SDH does not address the psychology of the human condition, rather it is just another desperate attempt to deny it.) And indeed, by 2014 the idea of using the SDH to explain human behaviour, which the authors only suggest in this 2012 paper, had taken hold to the extent that in October of that year a symposium called 'Domestication and Human Evolution' was hosted by the prestigious Center for Academic Research & Training in Anthropogeny (CARTA). A subsequent report on the symposium in *Science* magazine was subtitled **'"Self-domestication" turned humans into the cooperative species we are today'** (Ann Gibbons, 'How we tamed ourselves - and became modern', 2014, Vol.346, No.6208). And in 2017 Hare went on to publish 'Survival of the Friendliest: *Homo sapiens* Evolved via Selection for Prosociality', in which he put forward the 'HSD' or 'human self-domestication hypothesis'. He wrote, **'Hopefully, the HSD will help energize efforts toward answering the ultimate Darwinian challenge: how our minds evolved and allowed H. sapiens to survive as Earth's last remaining human'** (*Annual Review of Psychology*, 2017, Vol.68).

[547] Which brings us to the accountability of the SDH. Supposedly inspired by research into domestic dogs and the experiments of the Russian scientist Dmitri Belyaev in domesticating silver foxes for the fur industry, the SDH proposes that **'selection against aggression'** inadvertently involves selection for youthfulness or juvenileness, so that adults in subsequent generations end up retaining **'pro-social'** juvenile behavioural traits such as '**increased tolerance**', **'increased adult play'**, a **'decrease in predatory motivation'**, and **'decreased xenophobia** [fear of outsiders]'. (Hare, Wobber and Wrangham describe these traits as **'correlated by-products'** of the original SEM-derived **'selection against aggression'** process.) This 'juvenilisation' is known as the **'domestication syndrome'** because it is thought to account for changes between wild animals and their domestic descendants, such as changes between wolves and dogs.

[548] Essentially, when the proponents of the SDH say that **'In addition to showing less severe forms of aggression compared to chimpanzees, bonobos show differences…that appear analogous to the domestication syndrome'** (ibid), what they are claiming is that the increase in **'pro-social'** behaviour that characterises the **'domestication syndrome'** bridges the gap between the mere **'lack of aggression'** that the SEM could only hope to account for, and bonobos' extraordinary **'personal restraint'**, **'respect for others'**, **'loving'**, **'moral'**, cooperative, harmonious, gentle behaviour. However, juvenile **'pro-social'** behaviour *does not* replace or override the selfish genetic need to aggressively compete for the fundamental biological needs of food, shelter, territory and mates. In fact, species that have been domesticated, like dogs and foxes, still aggressively compete for food, territory and mating opportunities, something that is almost entirely absent in bonobo behaviour. So the SDH's claim to bridge the gap and explain bonobos' selfless, loving behaviour is simply another giant bluff. The truth is that without the involvement of love-indoctrination to first establish unconditionally selfless love in the system, retarding stages of maturation alone can't create a state of unconditionally selfless love.

[549] Certainly, humans have domesticated dogs and even silver foxes by selecting for tamer and more social juvenile characteristics, the effect of which has been to retard the development of these animals so that they retain the tamer, more tolerant and more **'pro-social'** behaviour of juveniles into adulthood—with the juvenile physical characteristics of floppy ears, more neotenous faces, etc, also carrying through into adulthood. However, while retarding development does bring the tamer, more tolerant, more **'pro-social'** characteristics of the juvenile stages into adulthood, it doesn't free the genes from their need to be selfish, and so doesn't eliminate selfish competition and aggression—*only* love-indoctrination can do that. Juvenileness is a form of more tolerant socialness but it isn't a selfless state. In fact, as stated, dogs and foxes who have been 'puppyfied' still aggressively compete for the resources of food, territory and mating opportunities, behaviour that lies in stark contrast to bonobos' selfless and loving behaviour. Being prepared to mingle and socialise, even being more playful—like domesticated dogs—is an improvement on the SEM's reduced aggression theory for bonobo behaviour, but the truth is it still falls well short of being able to account for bonobos' unconditionally loving behaviour.

[550] A brief summary of the love-indoctrination process that was described in chapter 5 may help clarify this failure of both the SEM and the SDH.

[551] The love-indoctrination process states that by selecting for longer infancies (which primates, with their arms semi-freed from having to walk on all fours, were able to do

because they could hold a helpless infant), and for more maternal mothers, all within an ideal nursery environment of ample food and few predators, an infant's brain is able to be inscribed or indoctrinated with unconditionally selfless love, thus allowing it to grow up to behave selflessly. An accidental, but fortuitous, side-effect of this indoctrination or training of a mind in selfless, truthful, effective thinking, however, was the emergence of consciousness, for once liberated, the conscious mind could then support the development of selflessness by consciously favouring (especially in mate selection) more selfless individuals, thus greatly speeding up the development of selflessness. Since the training in selfless love tended to wear off with age, selection for selflessness became, to a degree, a selection for youthfulness, resulting in more youthful, neotenous characteristics in adults. Both the SEM and the SDH, in effect, describe this process *but without* the key element of the involvement of the nurturing of unconditional selflessness; they omit the whole process of love-indoctrination—a glaring omission that created two problems. First, it necessitated the development of the flawed, dishonest **'selection against aggression'** argument to attempt to explain how selfless cooperation could emerge without love-indoctrination. And, second, since this **'selection against aggression'** could not, in fact, create unconditionally selfless love, only a supposed reduction in aggression, it could *only* ever lead to less aggressive, tamer, more tolerant, more social characteristics in adults.

[552] The point is, unconditionally selfless love is *not* produced by the situation espoused by either the SEM or the SDH, whereas love-indoctrination *does* produce love, which *can* then be actively selected for. So neither the SEM nor the SDH explains the extraordinary **'personal restraint'**, **'respect for others'**, **'loving'**, **'moral'**, unconditionally selfless, cooperative, harmonious, gentle behaviour we see in bonobos and in our own moral instincts. The selection against aggression that the SEM describes and the delaying of the onset of adult competitiveness and aggression that the SDH proposes do *not* produce an unconditionally loving individual; to produce that you have to be selecting for individuals that have been nurtured with love, but that is a process neither the SEM or the SDH recognises.

[553] To suggest that selecting for juvenileness can lead to less aggressive juvenile **'psychology'** being carried through to adulthood to the point of eliminating selfishness was simply a deception—another bluff—by the proponents of the SDH. In interviews Hare has conducted about the SDH we can see him trying to bridge this gap between the extraordinarily cooperative, gentle, peaceful, unconditionally selfless, **'loving'** behaviour that bonobos display, and what the SDH is able to supposedly explain, namely **'pro-social'** traits such as tameness and **'increased tolerance'**, when he describes bonobos as **'peaceful'** ('Why Bonobos Don't Kill Each Other', *The New York Times,* 5 Jul. 2010) and **'kind'** creatures (Brian Hare speech at Poptech 2010; see <www.wtmsources.com/139>) who **'absolutely are upset if there is any hint of aggression in the group'** ('Bonobos–Making Love Not War', *Catalyst*, ABC-TV, 20 Sep. 2007), and who find **'joy in working with others'** ('Dogged', *Smithsonian*, Oct. 2007)—as if those traits and emotions are what his hypothesis is able to explain the origins of.

[554] This attempt by Hare to bridge the gap between the extraordinarily cooperative, selfless behaviour that bonobos display, and what the SDH is allegedly able to explain, is very similar to Wrangham's earlier claim that the SEM is able to account for bonobos' extraordinary (and these are his words) **'personal restraint'**, **'respect for others'**, **'loving'**, **'moral'** behaviour. Furthermore, it was also described earlier how, in their 2012 paper, Hare, Wobber and Wrangham said their **'self-domestication hypothesis is…a potentially powerful**

tool for understanding the…psychological…traits…in humans'—'a potentially powerful tool for understanding' the origin of our unconditionally selfless moral nature no less! Hare has also proposed that **'bonobos display…what might be thought of as our better angels'** ('"Hippie chimp" genome may shed light on our dark side', *Science* on NBCNews.com, 13 Jun. 2012; see <www.wtmsources.com/141>), which again is our unconditionally selfless moral nature!

[555] The truth is, domestication or juvenilisation cannot *create* this type of behaviour without there having been love-indoctrination, it can only stymie the growth of adult types of behaviour, and so Hare and Wrangham are having to exaggerate its effect to account for bonobos' love and gentleness. Yes, it is only as *part* of the nurturing, love-indoctrination process that juvenilisation can produce real **'loving'**, **'moral'**, **'peaceful'**, **'kind'**, **'joy'** in cooperation, **'personal restraint'**, and **'respect for others'**, and an abhorrence **'of aggression'**.

[556] All my publications have included a description of the love-indoctrination, mate selection process—with an account of humans' domestication of dogs appearing in my 1988 book, *Free: The End Of The Human Condition* (see <www.humancondition.com/free-love-indoctrination>), and a description of humans' domestication of both dogs and foxes appearing in the 2009 edition of my book *The Great Exodus* (see <www.humancondition.com/exodus-mate-selection>). (Wrangham was sent *Free* in 1988, and over 2005-2006 all three SDH authors were sent another of my publications, *The Human Condition Documentary Proposal*, which also contains a description of the love-indoctrination, mate selection process (see <www.humancondition.com/doco-maternalism>)). The reason I referred to how **'domesticated dogs are derived from their common ancestral wild type by neoteny—retarding development at some juvenile stage'** (*Free: The End Of The Human Condition*, p.142 of 228) was because the domestication of dogs and foxes does dramatically illustrate some of the aspects involved in the love-indoctrination, mate selection process, particularly how powerfully effective conscious selection can be in producing a change (it **'Explains** [the] **speed of human development'** (ibid. p.142)), and how the development of stages of maturation is retarded by selecting for youthfulness (it **'is a marvellous illustration of the development of neoteny'** (ibid. p.141)). However, I explained that **'self-selection'** (as I originally termed the process that bonobos and our ape ancestors employed to assist in the development of unconditionally selfless behaviour) differs to the selection we employed to domesticate dogs and foxes in that without love-indoctrination to create the unconditionally selfless love that could then be selected for, **'self-domestication'** (or, again, as I termed the process in all my books, **'self-selection'**) can *only* achieve tamer, more tolerant and more social characteristics in adults, *not* unconditionally selfless love. As I emphasised in *Free*, **'On their own genes could not develop selflessness but once there was love-indoctrination** [they could]**'** (p.47).

[557] An illustration of the difference between the effects of love-indoctrination and the effects of domestication put forward by the SDH, which is merely selecting against aggression, can be seen in the work of the famous 'dog whisperer' Cesar Millan. Millan is forever informing dog-owners that the mistake they are making in trying to control their dogs is that they are attempting to love them into behaving less aggressively when what they have to do to achieve control and reduce aggression is impose dominance. Millan is, in effect, recognising that domesticated dogs haven't overcome the 'animal condition' of selfishly having to ensure their genes reproduce, which is why they are still highly competitive for food, shelter, territory and a mate—a competitiveness that can only be partially overcome through the imposition of a dominance hierarchy, where

each individual accepts its position in a hierarchy that is determined according to the competitive strengths of the various individuals involved.

[558] I might mention that in 2013 Hare published a bestselling book titled *The Genius of Dogs*, in which he again exaggerated the effects of domestication, this time in regard to dogs, writing that in contrast to wolf packs where the leaders are the dominant breeding pair, **'the leader of a feral dog pack is the dog who has the most friends'** (B. Hare & V. Woods, 2013, p.174 of 367). This statement is supposedly supported by a report titled 'Effect of affiliative and agonistic relationships on leadership behaviour in free-ranging dogs', which found that **'formal dominance in free-ranging dogs may be a more consistent predictor of leadership than agonistic dominance'** (Roberto Bonanni et al., *Animal Behaviour*, 2010, Vol.79, No.5). Although this finding distinguishes between **'formal dominance'** (in which the subordinate animal signals its submission during a greeting ceremony), and **'agonistic dominance'** (in which the subordinate animal signals its submission following a fight), it still makes very clear that feral dogs are highly competitive and operate within a **'dominance'** hierarchy.

[559] In summary, there is a quantum difference between the claimed reduction in aggression that both the SEM and the SDH can supposedly produce and the very real love we see in bonobos. Neither the SEM or the SDH *begin* to offer an accountable explanation of that species' extremely loving behaviour, whereas the nurturing, love-indoctrination explanation *fully* accounts for it. Although genes are a tool for developing order, they are limited in the sense that they can't normally develop unconditional selflessness, which means that genetics is a selfish, cold, loveless process; it is not going to produce bonobos' warm, gentle, cooperative, loving behaviour—unless the love-indoctrination path is taken, for it alone has the power to superimpose love on an essentially selfish system. As Drummond said of nurturing love, it was only **'once this fire began to warm the cold hearth of Nature and give humanity a heart, the most stupendous task of the past was accomplished'**. In contrast, the SEM and the SDH are desperate and hopelessly flawed attempts to explain bonobo behaviour and the origins of our moral nature without admitting the critical role of nurturing.

[560] (A more complete description of the SEM and the SDH and their limitations can be found in *Freedom Expanded* at <www.humancondition.com/freedom-expanded-social-ecological-model>.)

[561] Having now analysed the mechanisms of both the SEM and the SDH, we now need to describe the immense danger they present to the human race.

Chapter 6:11 End play for the human race

[562] As pointed out in chapter 2:4 and emphasised again at the beginning of this chapter, the great danger of the practice of denial is that, in the end, it becomes *so* entrenched and sophisticated that it locks humanity onto a path to terminal alienation, to total madness and extinction—to the **'universal ruin to the world'** that Plato said **'more and more forgetting** [denial]' leads to. The development of the denial of the truth that nurturing created humanity, firstly in the form of the SEM, and in its most recent and most sophisticated incarnation, the SDH, dramatically illustrates this dangerous potential.

[563] The bonobos offer the most powerful evidence of the nurturing origins of our unconditionally selfless moral soul, but the SEM and, to an even greater extent, the