



The Domesticated Brain

Bruce M. Hood

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What makes us social animals?

Why do we behave the way we do?

How does the brain influence our behaviour?

The brain may have initially evolved to cope with a threatening world of beasts, limited food and adverse weather, but we now use it to navigate an equally unpredictable social landscape. In *The Domesticated Brain*, renowned psychologist Bruce Hood explores the relationship between the brain and social behaviour, looking for clues as to origins and operations of the mechanisms that keep us bound together. How do our brains enable us to live together, to raise children, and to learn and pass on information and culture? Combining social psychology with neuroscience, Hood provides an essential introduction to the hidden operations of the brain, and explores what makes us who we are.

The Domesticated Brain Details

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Author : Bruce M. Hood

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From Reader Review The Domesticated Brain for online ebook

Leland LeCuyer says

Like all Pelican Introduction books, Bruce Hood's *The Domesticated Brain* is targeted at a general audience. But that doesn't belie the fact that this accessible and well-written book presents an awful lot of cutting-edge information about the rapidly expanding understanding of the brain, consciousness, its evolution, and human nature as a domesticated social animal. What initially drew me to examine this volume was a nagging question about the trade-offs we humans have made along the path to civilization. Clearly we experience amazing benefits — not least of which is the miraculous ability that I can share what I think with you through the intermediation of Goodreads, the internet, the English language we share in common — because you and I have been domesticated; but these benefits have been purchased not without cost.

Just prior to my discovery of Prof. Hood's brief survey of neuroscience, I had come across a lecture by Toby Hemenway where he lamented the loss of a way of life, the destruction of "the freest people on earth," as just one cost of the eleven thousand year domestication program that began with the invention of agriculture.

Prof. Hood does not dwell upon the dark side of domestication. For better or worse, it is human nature to belong as much as it is human nature to desire to be free. For better or worse, we accept our chains and submit to acculturation not so much because of what we gain by doing so, but because it is our very nature to do so. *The Domesticated Brain* goes a long way explaining why. This is worth reading.

Peter Mcloughlin says

Fairly interesting but nothing groundbreaking. Seen a lot of the stuff described in other places. Some nice evo/psych but its been done before.

Karen says

Why do we need brains? Your first thought must be that we need brains to stay alive. But we also need other organs to stay alive. Hood opens *The Domesticated Brain* with various intriguing thoughts, even for someone who has taken an introductory psychology course. Nonetheless, as the book goes on, much of the content seems to be an aggregation of past knowledge. In other words, it would be a great book if you're looking for an introduction to humans as social animals and why we behave in certain ways. Hood touches on a variety of subjects, from psychology to biology, allowing the reader to better understand human behaviour.

However, he focuses mainly on developmental psychology and children (well, he *is* a developmental psychologist after all) but perhaps touching more on adults would be more useful to the general reader. Because of the wide variety of topics he touches on, I feel that the content seems to jump here and there, with a weak theme within each chapter, with the except of the last chapter. Regardless, it was a pretty good introduction to psychology and human behaviour which also touches on epigenetics. Many of the "must-know" famous psychology studies are used as examples and a lot of his claims are cited with studies to back them up. Overall, it was a great read.

Disclaimer: I received this copy under the Goodreads First Read Program.

Sproky says

Clear and covers a variety of material without oversimplifying (much).

The central thesis is that as human digestive systems, intelligence and technology, and lastly climate, led to lifestyle changes from small nomadic tribes to larger settled groups, there was selection for traits facilitating coexistence, and thus we became self-domesticating.

It's fairly convincing, although much of the book concerns peripheral issues and there's not much new here for anyone with basic knowledge in the areas around evolutionary biology.

Morag says

I borrowed this book from a friend who is working on a PhD in neuroscience in an attempt to understand the science behind human social interaction. A lot of the ideas in the book I was already familiar with, but - for me- it was the first time I learnt how the brain controls our social nature (which was interesting). The book was definitely for beginners and wouldn't be suitable for anyone after in-depth analysis but it was still a decent read.

chippyvale says

This is one of the best books in the field of Psychology. I enjoyed reading this tremendously and it is a refresher to my rusty knowledge about Psych as it has been a few years since I was minor-ed in Psych at school lol. Having said that, people who are new to the field of Psychology should give this a go because the concepts are easy to comprehend. Hood has also provided a plethora of examples, which made the reading all the more enjoyable and fascinating. Thumbs-up!

Metin Tiryaki says

Bruce Hood yazm?? bir kitap, asl?na bak!l?rsa ne akar, ne kokar, orta hallice. Ama çevirmen i?i resmen bat?rm???. TDK ‘ya uygun çevireyim diye u?ra?rken pek çok yerde “ne diyor bu yahu !” diye dü?ünüyorsunuz. Örnek vermek gerekirse: k?tk?sal, s??a, edim, oyda?ma, görüngü, ilkinki, ulam, tözcü, tepke... gibi günlük hayatta kullan?lmayan bir sürü kelime mevcut. Kitab?n bütünlü?üne ve anla??lmas?na zarar vermi? aç?kças?.

Kitab? çok fazla beyin üzerine kitap okumu? biri olarak vasat buldu?umu belirtmeliyim; beyinle pek alakas? yok, daha çok insan?n sosyalle?mesi ve evcille?mesi üzerine bir kitap.

GONZA says

It seems that the domestication produces a reduction in the brain in terms of mass, ie it shrinks and this goes for both men and animals, although in our case we prefer to speak of "ability to live in society more or less extended" . Clearly socialization brings with it the ability of communication and is therefore the researcher's

idea that our brain has evolved to be "social", which implies thus the ability to feel various emotions and to empathize and this would also explain the really exceptional lasting time, compared to that of other animals, of our childhood. It is during childhood that we learn to understand others and especially to control ourselves and our reactions, because this is a prerequisite for living in a society.

Sembra che l'addomesticamento produca una riduzione del cervello in termini di massa, cioè si rimpicciolisce e questo vale sia per gli uomini che per gli animali, anche se nel nostro caso si preferisce parlare di "capacità di vivere in società più o meno allargate". Chiaramente la socializzazione porta con sé la capacità di comunicazione ed è quindi idea del ricercatore che il nostro cervello si sia evoluto per "essere sociale", il che comporta quindi anche la capacità di empatizzare e di provare emozioni varie e questo spiegherebbe anche la durata veramente eccezionale paragonata a quella degli altri animali, della nostra infanzia. È proprio durante l'infanzia che impariamo a comprendere gli altri e soprattutto a controllare noi stessi e le nostre reazioni, proprio perché questa è una conditio sine qua per vivere in una società.

THANKS TO NETGALLEY AND PENGUIN BOOKS (UK) FOR THE PREVIEW!

Twì says

I usually don't write reviews about books, I simply can't find much to say about them. However, this time I was determined I'd write one, since I received this book in a giveaway.

I used to think that books like this one can't be really light but in the same time gripping reading. In my mind they were meant to educate people although not as seriously as textbooks in schools.

Yet I found Domesticated Brain funny and entertaining. There were many moments I had to force myself to put the book down so reading wouldn't interfere with my duties and life in general. There were things I knew, things I wasn't that deeply interested in, but I took it all in and I enjoyed it. And what I liked the most- it provoked more than one speculation in my mind about humans and their ways.

Nikolaos says

This is a fun read on the evolution of the human brain and, most importantly, social behaviour. The author recites an abundance of research findings and proven behavioral biases, although, to his credit, he refrains from admitting closure for topics that still evoke contradictory interpretations. This book does not serve as a mere encyclopedia of facts to be regurgitated during dinner parties; it immerses the reader in the uncomfortable sea of the (relatively) nascent area of behavioral neuroscience, reminding one that any material finding is only an intermediary step towards the next discovery and never the final stop. The reader will identify with several studies explaining (and therefore predicting) social behavior; the experience of understanding the limitations of uniqueness is sanguinely humbling.

I would recommend this book to everyone interested in the human factor and understanding more about oneself as a member of a species, not an individual.

David says

An accessible, digestible account of a complicated and timely subject. Exactly what a Pelican should be.

Tim says

In dit kleine boekje schetst Bruce Hood, psycholoog (geweest?) aan de universiteiten van Cambridge en Harvard en tegenwoordig Director of the Cognitive Development Centre van de universiteit van Liverpool, het beeld over onze hersenen, over hoe domesticatie z'n invloed heeft (gehad) op ons doen en laten.

Hij begint met de vergelijking van de hersenen van onze voorouders met de onze, hoe die eerste groter waren en de onze kleiner. Dat zou o.a. te maken hebben met adaptatie, met het wegvallen van functies die we door de jaren heen niet meer nodig bleken te hebben. Maar ook omgevingsfactoren, voeding, taal, en meer spelen een rol.

Ook het gedrag van baby's en kinderen wordt besproken, vooral dan in de context van met elkaar omgaan, delen, bezitten, handelingen/gedragingen/gezichtsuitdrukkingen/... overnemen van anderen (al dan niet volwassenen). Dit trekt hij dan door - niet altijd, soms moet je zelf die conclusie trekken - naar volwassenen.

Hood heeft het bijvoorbeeld ook over mindreading, over hoe we soms "weten" wat of hoe een ander denkt, al dan niet gezichtsuitdrukkingen, lichaamstaal, enz. Ook liegen komt aan bod, vooral dan of je vasthoudt aan je eigen overtuiging of je laat leiden door de groep, ook al is de groep fout.

Natuurlijk blijft het opvoedingsaspect niet onbesproken. Een goeie thuis blijft belangrijk, niet alleen voor de opvoeding, maar ook naar de toekomst toe.

Bij de groep horen is iets wat we allemaal willen. De mens is een sociaal dier, ook al is er de behoefte om af en toe de eenzaamheid op te zoeken. En om bij die of die groep te behoren, kan men tot veel in staat zijn. Uitgesloten worden is een erge straf, een die te vaak onderschat wordt, omdat men de implicaties niet kan meten. De repercussies kunnen soms desastreus zijn.

Hoods betoog is up-to-date, niet alleen omdat het in 2014 verscheen, maar omdat selfies, sociale media en het Internet in zijn huidige vorm ook aan bod komen.

Ondanks dat het een introductie betreft, bevat dit boekje toch veel informatie en voorbeelden (ook over het gedrag van dieren) over hoe de mens zich in een gedomesticeerde omgeving gedraagt, hoe niet altijd de omgeving of de cultuur allesbepalend is. Er zit meer achter dan dat. Bepaalde kenmerken zouden aangeboren zijn, al van bij de start in onze genen ingebakken zitten. Het geheel wordt opgeleukt met tekeningen en foto's.

The Domesticated Brain: A Pelican Introduction is zeer leesbaar (het is dan ook voor een breed publiek bedoeld), ook al gebruikte de heer Hood hier en daar wat technische woordenschat, die niet altijd uitgelegd wordt. Maar in de totaliteit is dit aandeel slechts triviaal.

Samengevat: aanrader!

Uyar says

Aslında zevkle okudum Kesinlikle tavsiye ederim okuyun... her ne kadar sosyalleşmeyi (sosyal bir hayvan olmayı) evcilleştirme olarak değerlendirilmi? olsa da yazar çok geni? olarak ve bilimsel verilere dayanarak

teorisini ispatlamaya çal???yor.. Özellikle alt?nc? bölüm çok ba?ar?l?

Ancak çeviri yapan arkada?a 1-2 laf?m var do?rusu okuyabilmek ve iyi anlayabilmek için kitab?n ?ngilizcesini de bakmak zorunda kald?m... tamam Türkçe yazacaks?n ama biraz abart? olmam?? m?? Yorum sizin:

K?tk?sal-applied;
s??a-capacity;
eskil-archaic;
dirimsel-biologic; dirimbilim-biology;
de?i?inim-mutation;
ilkinki-primer;
?nsaymun-primate;
Ulam-category;
Say?msal-statistical;
Geribeslem-feedback;
Bölüt-segment;
E?süremlilik-synchronicity;
Güdümlem-motivation;
Duygulan?msal-emotional;
Örnekçe-model;
Dizge-system; dizgesel-systematic;
Tepkinirlik-reactivity;
Öznitelik-character;
A??r?etkin-hyperactive;
Kestirim-prediction;
Ürkü-panic;
Olumsal-positive;
Özerk sinir dizgesi-autonom nervous system;
Kabuk-cortex;
Bilisizlik-ignorance;
Tepke-reaction;
Görüngü-phenomenon;
?çtepi-impulse;
?tki-reflex;
Özdevim-automatical
Özy?k?m-self-defeat;
Edim-action;
Al???-reception
Ço?un-multiple;
Bilindiklik-????
Erinim-resolution;
Erinç-calm;
Ketleme-inhibition;
Dü?lem-imagination;
Buyruntu-prize;
Zorlant?-coersion;
Kal?pyarg?-stereotype
Oyda?ma-consensus;
Usavurum-reasonning;
De?i?ke-version

Ya?ant?lam???zd?r; kim olmakl???m?z; duyumsallar?z... kendimizi iyi duyumsamam?z gerekir ama niye iyi hissetmemiz gerekir de?il??

Tözcü usavurma konusunda çal??mak nedir?

Mehmet says

Kitab? be?endim, kesinlikle bo? bir kitap de?il. Genelde bu tip popüler bilim kitaplar?nda pek dipnot kaynakça göremezsiniz ama bu kitap cömert bir kaynakçaya sahip. Kitapta en çok be?endi?im bölüm rutin ki?isel ili?kilerimizin beyindeki kaynaklar?na odaklanm?? son bölüm oldu. Bu bölüm sayesinde yalan, kendini kand?rma, aldatma, dedikodu gibi unsurlar?n beyindeki temelleri üzerine önemli fikirler edindim.

Jose says

I loved how succinctly and simply the author crammed so much into such a small tome. I was genuinely pleased by the way he spelled out the chapters on prejudice, the need to belong and act "for others" and social media. Those final two chapters made me rethink many of my own attitudes, smug and clever as i think i am ;)
