

Evo and Proud

Peter Frost's anthropology blog, with special reference to sexual selection and the evolution of skin, hair, and eye pigmentation

→→→ SATURDAY, 21 DECEMBER 2013

Looking back over 2013

She looks nice in a long skirt. Source: [Ted Talks](#)

The year is ending, and it's time to take stock. Which posts interested you the most? Here are the five most popular ones, with the number of visits to each post:

[White skin privilege](#) – 6923

[The other slave trade](#) – 5948

[Eye color, face shape, and perceived personality traits](#) – 5708

[Cleansing the scientific literature](#) – 4989

[First, sexual transmissibility and then ...?](#) – 3578

The first two belonged to a five-part series on the white slave trade (see also [Trading in fair-skinned women. Did it happen elsewhere? From Slavs to slaves, From Slavs to slaves. Part II](#)).

The existence of this trade is little known even among the well-educated, who typically react with disbelief. Surely those white slaves were fewer in number than the black slaves taken across the Atlantic. And surely all of that happened long before the Atlantic slave trade.

Wrong on both counts. Europe exported about as many slaves to the non-European world as were exported from Africa to the Americas. Eastern Europeans continued to be “harvested” until the mid-1700s and the population of the Caucasus until the mid-1800s. By comparison, the black slave trade was banned within the British Empire in 1807 and throughout the Western Hemisphere by the 1860s. The difference was qualitative and not quantitative. Black slaves were mostly male; white slaves mostly female.

In writing those posts, I wasn't driven by a desire to slander

sitemeter.com

L'homme n'est ni ange ni bête, et le malheur veut que qui veut faire l'ange fait la bête — Pascal

Welcome to my blog! For the most part, this page will be an extension of [my website](#), with comments relating to my research. But it will also branch out into more general discussions of human evolution.

My blog

[My publications](#)

[Ahnenkult](#)

[Dienekes' anthro blog](#)

[hbd* chick](#)

[JayMan's blog](#)

[John Hawks' weblog](#)

[Mangan's](#)

[Occidentalist](#)

[Polish Genetics and Anthropology Blog](#)

[Steve Sailer](#)

[West Hunter](#)



Mon amour, Irina

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[The origins of Northwest European guilt culture](#)

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Muslims. Many white slave girls went on to become the wives of leading men, including sultans (like **Roxelana**). Their slave status was a passing thing, as explained by a notable of Tunis, Mohamed Rechid, when the authorities questioned him in 1891 on his role in slave trafficking:

Q. Do you have any white slave women of Circassian or other origins?

A. No, I don't have any.

Q. When you went to Constantinople, you didn't bring any white slave women back with you?

A. I brought two women back with me, this is true, but they aren't slaves. They are two sisters, one of whom is my wife. One is called Zohra and the other Daïde.

Q. If they aren't slaves, how did you get them?

A. I bought them in Constantinople, I freed them, and I married one of them. The other one is my sister-in-law. (Dali, 2012)

In Tunis, the noblest families are partly descended from such women (Dali, 2012). The same seems true for most of North Africa and the Middle East, according to this historian of Muslim Spain:

The same convoys of booty also included women, these Frankish women who were all the more sought after in Cordova because they were blond and fair-skinned. It was among them, as among the captive women from Gascony, that the Umayyad princes chose their most pampered concubines and who, once they became mothers, were themselves raised to the rank of veritable princesses, of proven sultaneses (*umm walad*) who were influential and quick to enter, with the assistance of Slav eunuchs, into secret and complicated palace intrigues. But the Frankish women did not populate only the caliph's harems; the dignitaries of the *khassa* and the rich burghers of the cities also procured them at lavish prices, like, in the modern period, the Circassian women who have so curiously tinted the upper classes of oriental Muslim society. (Lévi-Provençal, 1953, p. 179)

Of course, many white slave women had less fortunate outcomes, never rising above the level of concubine, singing girl, or prostitute. But this is not something to feel bitter or guilty about. The past is another country. We study it so that we may better understand the present.

In this five-part series, I was responding to Cameron Russell's argument that she and other top models are cashing in on a legacy of white privilege. In other words, if Europeans had not become so dominant socially, economically, and geopolitically, her white skin and facial features would today seem much less attractive. Well, that alternate reality did exist. Until five centuries ago, white folks were weaklings on the world scene, with large areas of their continent under the rule of outsiders. And yet, European women were greatly admired in Muslim Spain, North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, this being why so many of them were enslaved and exported to those regions ... just because of their looks.

- ▶ July (4)
- ▶ June (5)
- ▶ May (4)
- ▶ April (4)
- ▶ March (5)
- ▶ February (4)
- ▶ January (4)

- ▶ 2012 (51)
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- ▶ 2008 (51)
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→→→→ About Me

 [Peter Frost](#)

Anthropologist. I've published mainly on sexual dimorphism in human skin color and on the evolutionary origin of European hair and eye colors.

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[visitors location counter](#)

Eye color, face shape, and perceived personality traits

This post was about Karel Kleisner's study on eye color and face shape. In sum, blue eyes are associated with less robust and more feminine faces, but only if the faces are male. It may be that female face shape is overdetermined, i.e., all girls are exposed to enough estrogen in the womb to feminize their faces, but only blue-eyed boys reach this level of estrogenization. Thus, to some degree, blue eyes are a female trait. This finding is consistent with the view, supported by other findings, that the most visible features of Europeans are actually *female* features, i.e., they are a product of a selection pressure that acted primarily on women.

I was initially taken aback on seeing the averaged blue-eyed and brown-eyed male faces that appear in Dr. Kleisner's first paper on this subject. Surely some of those photographed subjects were partly Jewish or Roma. But, then, the brown-eyed men would have been more variable in face shape, yet they were not. And how would that reason explain why blue eyes correlated with facial feminization in men but not in women?

I have also addressed this topic in [Great hair ... and how it evolved](#) and [Perception of skin color in sub-Saharan Africa](#).

Cleansing the scientific literature

Two years ago, the Danish psychologist Helmuth Nyborg published a paper on his country's demographic future. He made the following points:

- Contrary to official statistics, immigrant birth rates are not falling. In fact, they have been rising since 1980 and were over twice the ethnic Danish birth rate in 2009. Since 1995, the ethnic Danish birth rate has been falling.
- After rising for half a century, average national IQ began to fall in 1997. This decline has also been observed in Norway, even though average IQ has continued to rise elsewhere in line with the Flynn effect.
- By 2050, less than one fifth of the population will have IQs in the 90 to 104 range, and over half in the 70 to 85 range. Primary schools will mainly have low IQ children of sub-Saharan, Middle Eastern, North African, Latin American, and Caribbean backgrounds.
- By 2072, ethnic Danes will have fallen to 60% of the population and 33% of all births. They will become a minority around 2085.

These predictions may or may not be correct (see Does Nyborg's study make sense?). Is the rapidity of demographic change overstated? Are the differences in IQ due to poor upbringing and hence amenable to improvement? Criticism can and should be made, but that option was passed over by three of Nyborg's colleagues. They complained to the *Danish Committee for Scientific Dishonesty*, which ruled that he must withdraw his study

from the scientific literature. I denounced this decision in an e-mail to Morten Østergaard, the Danish Minister for Research, Innovation, and Higher Education, as did many other academics.

I got the following reply (words bolded as in the original):

Dear Dr. Frost,

The Minister for Science, Innovation and Higher Education Morten Østergaard acknowledges receipt of your e-mail dated 14 November 2013.

Further to your concern as to the decision (ruling) dated 28 October 2013 of the Danish Committees on Scientific Dishonesty on Helmuth Nyborg's contribution to the article "The Decay of Western Civilization: Double Relaxed Darwinian Selection" published in the scientific journal "Personality and Individual Differences", we are now pleased to invite you to study the translation into English of the decision. You will find the translation following this link:

<http://fivu.dk/en/research-and-innovation/councils-and-commissions/the-danish-committees-on-scientific-dishonesty/decisions/2013/decisions-of-28-october-2013-on-authorship-and-misleading-reference.pdf>

Based on the conclusions of the Committees they **recommend** that the article be withdrawn. But, as you will see, the Danish Committees on Scientific Dishonesty have **not** in any way considered the conclusions drawn by Dr. Nyborg, nor have they **ordered** him to withdraw the article.

The Committees have been established as stipulated in an act of Parliament to "investigate allegations on research misconduct only, i.e. falsification, fabrication, plagiarism and other serious violation of good scientific practice committed wilfully or grossly negligent on planning, performance or reporting of research results". The Committees are not entitled to consider cases involving the validity or truth of scientific theories or cases involving the research quality of a scientific product.

If you are interested in more information on the mandate of the Committees, you may find all the relevant regulations translated into English here:

<http://fivu.dk/en/research-and-innovation/councils-and-commissions/the-danish-committees-on-scientific-dishonesty/the-danish-committees-on-scientific-dishonesty>

Yours sincerely,

Charlotte Elverdam
General Counsel and
Head of Secretariat for Danish Committees on Scientific
Dishonesty

Yes, it was just a recommendation, but recommendations are made to be acted upon by someone in authority. Or maybe the Committee expected that Dr. Nyborg would just voluntarily purge his study from the scientific literature? Anyhow, it's clear that no one in authority wishes to proceed further.

First, sexual transmissibility and then ...?

The scientific community is slowly realizing that microscopic parasites can manipulate human behavior. Attention is now focused on the protozoan *Toxoplasma gondii*, but only because we already know what it does to cats and mice. There is no reason to think that human-specific microbes have not also evolved in this direction. As the Czech biologist Jaroslav Flegr points out: "A large number of parasitic organisms [...] may influence the phenotype of their human host even more than the *Toxoplasma*. These organisms are, however, still waiting for research teams to engage in a systematic study of their influence on the human host."

Some of them may be surprisingly commonplace, organisms like vaginal yeast and bacterial vaginosis. See also **Brainwashed by a microbe?**

And now for the duds ...

My year-end review would be incomplete unless I mentioned my least popular posts:

The cagots – 649

The Visual Word Form Area. Part II – 667

Thoughts on the Paris Spring – 755

More thoughts. The evolution of a word – 771

Can antiracism reform itself? – 860

I thought my worst post would be **Is something afoot with Bigfoot?** Yet that one had a respectable 1199 visits (**the alleged yeti DNA turned out to be from a bear**). Instead, the booby prize goes to ...

The cagots

In this post, together with previous ones on **the Paekchong of Korea** and **the Burakumin of Japan**, I argued that outcaste groups are evolutionarily conservative and thus tend to preserve predispositions that once were prevalent in the general population, e.g., with respect to time orientation, impulse control, anger threshold, etc.

Such groups exist in many societies, such as those of East Asia. The existence of stigmatized occupations, notably trades that involve contact with dead flesh (butchering, leather making, undertaking), provide lower-class individuals with a protected means of livelihood, but at the cost of becoming themselves stigmatized. The occupational class becomes a caste and, hence, no longer participates in the evolutionary changes that affect the general population. Over time, this caste tends to perpetuate the