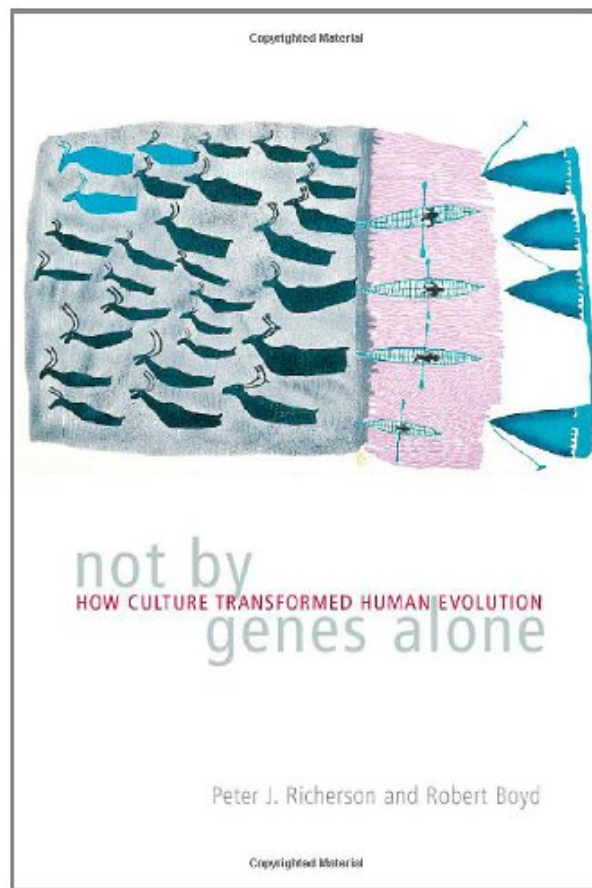


# **NOT BY GENES ALONE: HOW CULTURE TRANSFORMED HUMAN EVOLUTION BY PETER J. RICHERSON, ROBERT BOYD**



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## Review

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Humans are a striking anomaly in the natural world. While we are similar to other mammals in many ways, our behavior sets us apart. Our unparalleled ability to adapt has allowed us to occupy virtually every habitat on earth using an incredible variety of tools and subsistence techniques. Our societies are larger, more complex, and more cooperative than any other mammal's. In this stunning exploration of human adaptation, Peter J. Richerson and Robert Boyd argue that only a Darwinian theory of cultural evolution can explain these unique characteristics.

Not by Genes Alone offers a radical interpretation of human evolution, arguing that our ecological dominance and our singular social systems stem from a psychology uniquely adapted to create complex culture. Richerson and Boyd illustrate here that culture is neither superorganic nor the handmaiden of the genes. Rather, it is essential to human adaptation, as much a part of human biology as bipedal locomotion. Drawing on work in the fields of anthropology, political science, sociology, and economics--and building their case with such fascinating examples as kayaks, corporations, clever knots, and yams that require twelve men to carry them--Richerson and Boyd convincingly demonstrate that culture and biology are inextricably linked, and they show us how to think about their interaction in a way that yields a richer understanding of human nature.

In abandoning the nature-versus-nurture debate as fundamentally misconceived, Not by Genes Alone is a truly original and groundbreaking theory of the role of culture in evolution and a book to be reckoned with for generations to come.

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Genes and Culture working together.

By Michael Valdivielso

Not By Genes Alone by Peter J. Richerson and Robert Boyd explains something that should seem simple. Genes made us, we made culture, so genes shaped culture. Yet culture also helped shape us, so genes and culture interact together and work together to make us. But HOW do you do research on culture and link it to genes? Well, if culture also acts like genes, then what you want to do it treat it like genes.

And that is what the book does. It studies culture from an evolutionary point of view, breaking it down to traditions and values, making these the genes of culture. Cultures evolves, adapts and sometimes even cause problems, bringing about the extinction of the culture. One culture might work better than another and overwhelm the weaker, less fit culture.

By using the ideas and knowledge that Darwin has passed down to us the authors were able to understand how genes and culture worked together to shape US. LOTS and lots of detailed, data rich, chapters. Take your time and enjoy.

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Great intro to evolution of culture(s)

By Manuel A. Ramos

Greatly interested in neuroscience of the brain & said book was mentioned in Patricia Churchland's "Touching a nerve..." I'm a Darwinist @ heart & have wanted to have a sense of the history of human culture(s) in terms of the HOW. Richerson's book is a great intro availing himself of the latest research in that field.

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