

Peacock Feathers and Innovative Organizations

Subtitle: Sex and Creativity

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Bionics

- a source of inspiration



"How can we learn from nature"

(Prof. dr. John Videler, Keynote speaker,
ECCI-2001, Enschede)





Goal for this lecture



Inspiration



Understanding



To-do ideas

**...concerning creativity and innovation
in organizations and groups of people !!**

.... from knowledge on:

- **successful biological evolution**
- **good sex**



Søren Borch, CV

ConDiv, business consultant

- Self-employed since 1994
- Innovation and creativity

Professional background

Industry and trade, 7 years

- Logistics manager
- Administration manager
- System planner and project engineer

University research and teaching, 5 years

- Copenhagen Business School
- Research, teaching, management
- Senior researcher, head of department

Consultancy firms, 5 years

- Information technology
- Logistics
- Planning and OR

Educational background

- M.Sc.Eng., civil engineering, OR / statistics (1975)
- B.Sc.Merc., organization and strategy (1982)
- Ph.d., creativity and learning in decisions (1990)

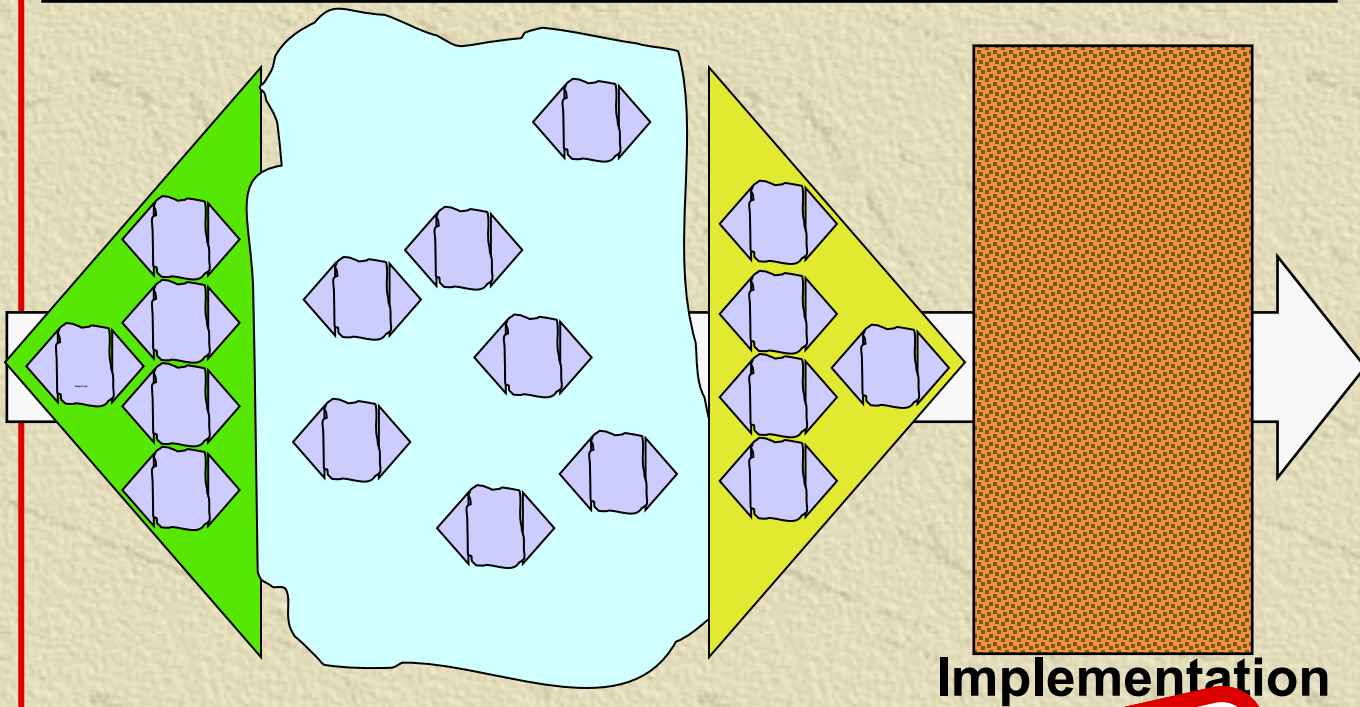


Creativity and Innovation

Fantasy = *New*

Creativity = *New* + *Useful*

Innovation = *New* + *Useful* + *Implemented*



Divergent

Groan

Convergent

**KreaCoach-1:
Creative ideas**

**KreaCoach-1:
Creative ideas**

KreaCoach-2: Knowledge based creativity

**KreaCoach
Courses**

**KreaCoach-3:
GamePlan**

**Contact:
www.condiv.dk**





Theories and method

Biological evolution

Darwin's selection theory

Zahavi's handicap theory

Sex guidance

Gray's Mars & Venus

Others

Max Weber

Castells

Freud

Method:

Metaphor and parallelism

Cross-cultural fertilization

**Business
creativity**



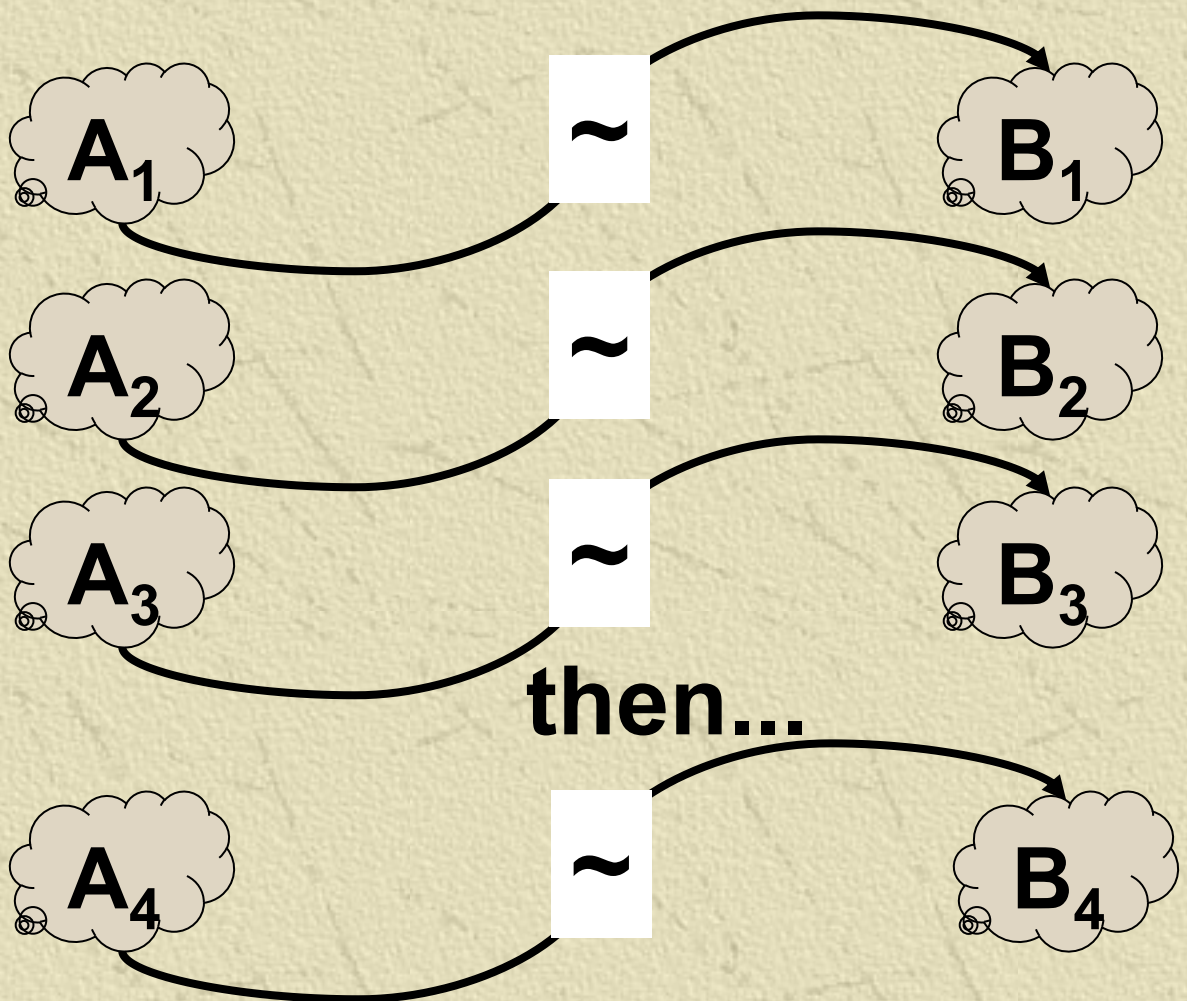
Method

No:

$$Y = aX + b \iff X = (Y - b)/a \quad (\text{for } a \neq 0)$$

YES:

If...



Stimulating new ideas

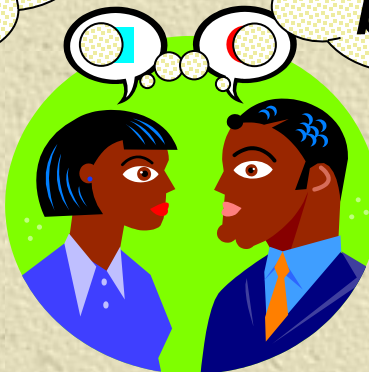
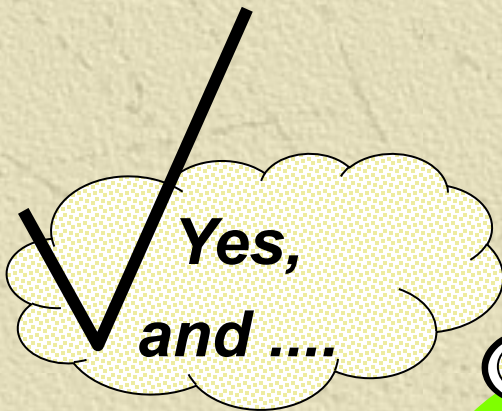
Not proving existing ideas



Method



**Theory or model
from some domain**



Audience

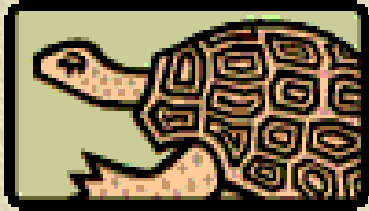


.... basic theory

Darwin



Darwin's theory for evolution of species



Natural selection **Survival of the fittest**

The bird with the longest beak gets more food and survives competition



Sexual selection **Spreading of the smartest**

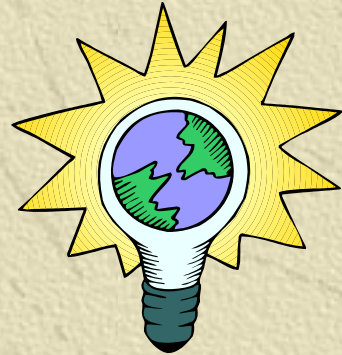
The peacock with the largest feathers gets access to more mating



Charles Darwin

1809-1882

Galápagos 1835



Natural selection, 1859:

"On the origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life"

Difficult: "Nature, not God"



Sexual selection, 1871:

"The Descent of Man - and Selection in Relation to Sex"

Very difficult: "Female, not male"



Do we also find it difficult to accept that sex is the driver of creativity ??



Well, maybe



Darwin's 3 assumptions

Heredity

- ◆ Genes are inherited
(Gregor Mendel, 1865)

Variation

- ◆ Genes carry many characters
- ◆ Genes mutate

Selection

- ◆ Successive development, not design

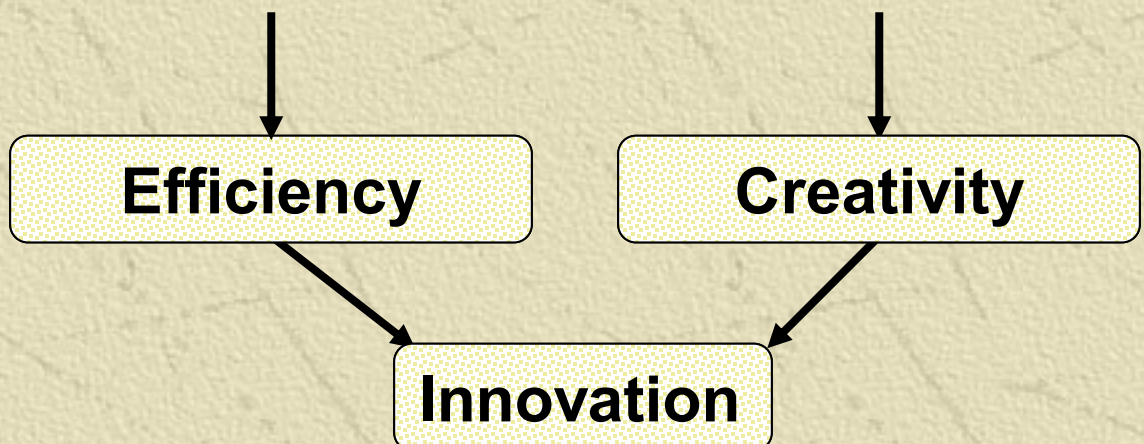
**Many parallels to organizations,
companies, project groups, ... ??**



Two selection models

- two cultures

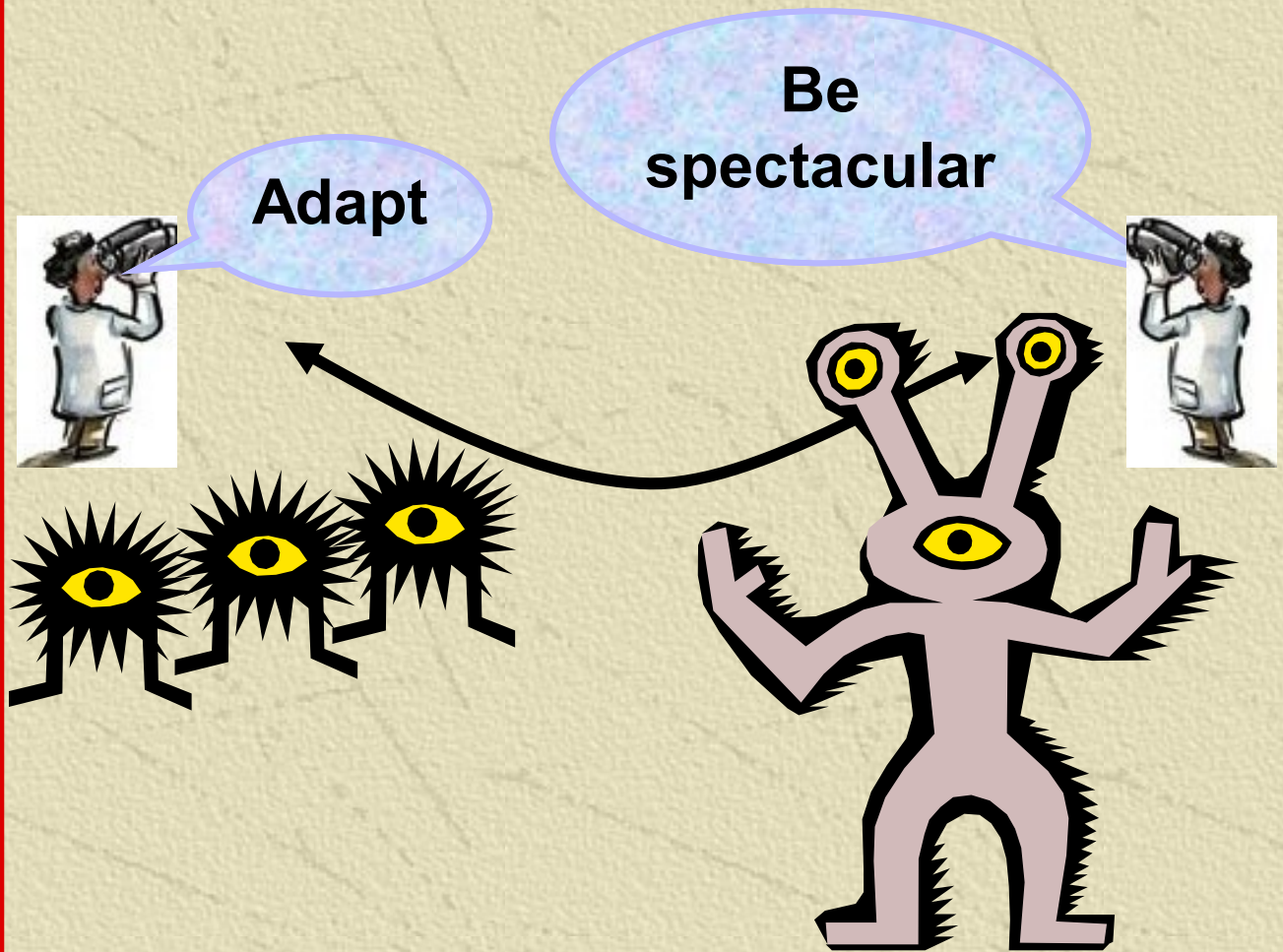
Natural selection	Sexual selection
Eat and fight	Seduce and mate
Adapt	Be spectacular
Play it safe	Take risks
Use all resources	Be wasteful
Do it simple	Do it difficult
Follow these guidelines and ...	
... survive	... mate





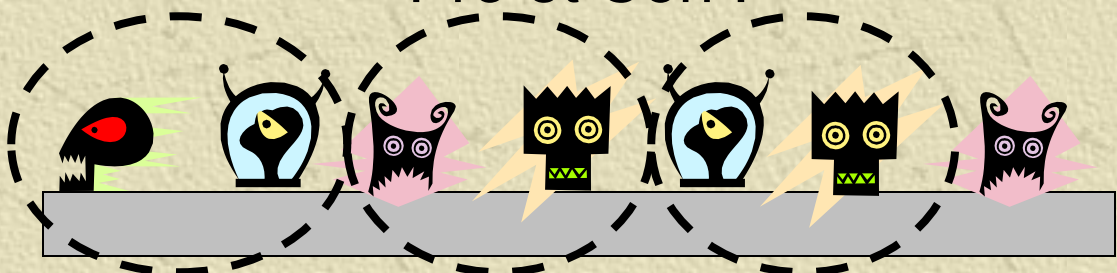
Icebreaker

(natural and sexual selection)



Discuss in groups of 2-and-2
the two alternative cultures.

Pro et Con !





.... central element

**Is sex really
so important?**

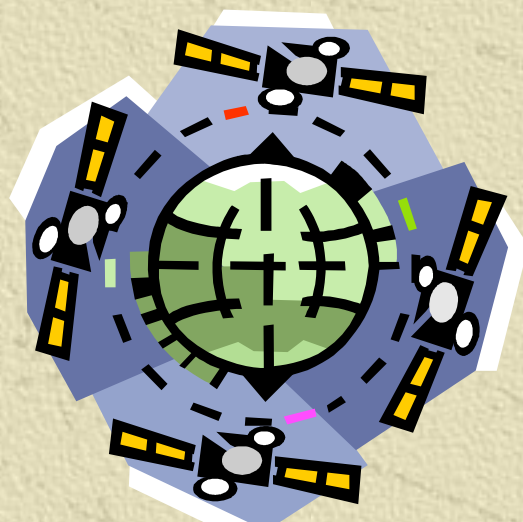


Sex is everywhere



Commercials

- Automobile ?
- Sportswear ?
- Milk ?



WWW

Pornography
Euro \$

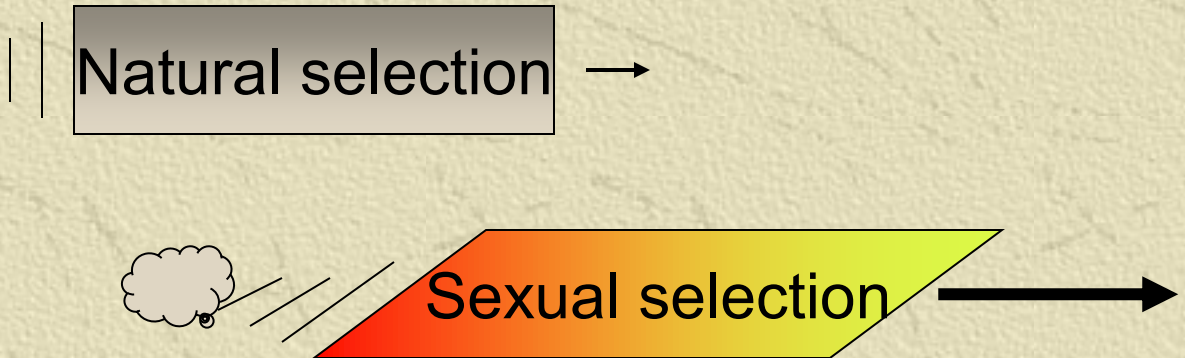
WHAT'S ON A MAN'S MIND



"Sex is here
to stay"
(Groucho Marx)



Sexual selection is faster



Source:

Ronald A. Fisher's theory on runaway sexual selection, from 1915 and 1930'es.

Involved a mathematical model for spreading of genes.

So...

Maybe the principals of sexual selection are relevant for creativity and innovation in a new fast world



Sexual sublimation

Freud's theory of sublimation

If the sexual drive is restricted,
then the sexual energy finds other outlets,
giving way to alternative work activities.
(my wording)

So...

**Creativity can be obtained
by suppressing "sex" !!**

**But human sexuality is
still the driver !!**



Success of capitalism

Weber's theory of capitalism

Capitalism is the result of

Protestant ethics:

- Abstention from sex
- Work, not pleasure
- God appreciates individual success
(my wording).

Capitalism has been innovative
and changed the world

- for good and for bad

Max Weber, German sociologist, 1904

"The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism", 1930



Still in doubt about sex?

**Sex seems to be
a very strong factor.**

**Let's go
into more detail...**



.... supplementary theory

Handicap theory



The peacock tail



The peacock
seduces
the peahen
with a spectacular,
but heavy
tail feather

Inspiration from the
Danish author
Tor Nørretranders' book
"The Generous Man"



The handicap principle

"The seducer with the most convincing handicap gets selected for mating (sex) in the sexual selection"

The handicap must be visible and difficult !

Source:

Amotz Zahavi, Israeli bird researcher and
Avishag Zahavi, plant physiologist, 1975
(my wording)



The word "Handicap"

"Hand in cap"

i.e. to make the game more even



... not mentally or physically disabled !

**It is a way to expose superiority and
a means for getting access to mating !**



Waste as a handicap for sexual selection

**Conspicuous consumption = waste
==> status and prestige**

(Thorstein Veblen, American sociologist and economist, 1899)

**It is expensive, visible, difficult
==> a handicap suitable for seduction**

(Handicap theory)

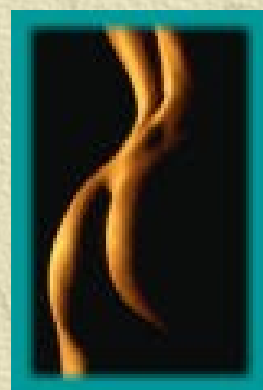
So:

**Waste and conspicuous consumption
is a Handicap**

(= a good means for sexual seduction)



Useful handicaps



Human beings	Peacocks
Many possibilities	One feather tail
Consciously or not	Unconsciously
Can create new	Always the same
Two ways seduction	One way seduction



Origin of human handicaps

The handicaps come from:

- **genetic inclination** (millions of years)
- **cultural / social influence** (centuries)
- **individual experience** (a lifetime)

Human handicaps have
a seducing effect
because they are anchored
in both seducer and selector.

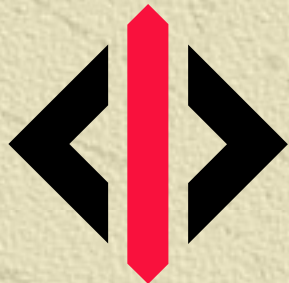


◀▶ next approach

**Creativity
as handicap**



Is creativity a handicap ?



Creativity

**Real creativity is
difficult and spectacular**

I paint to get sex



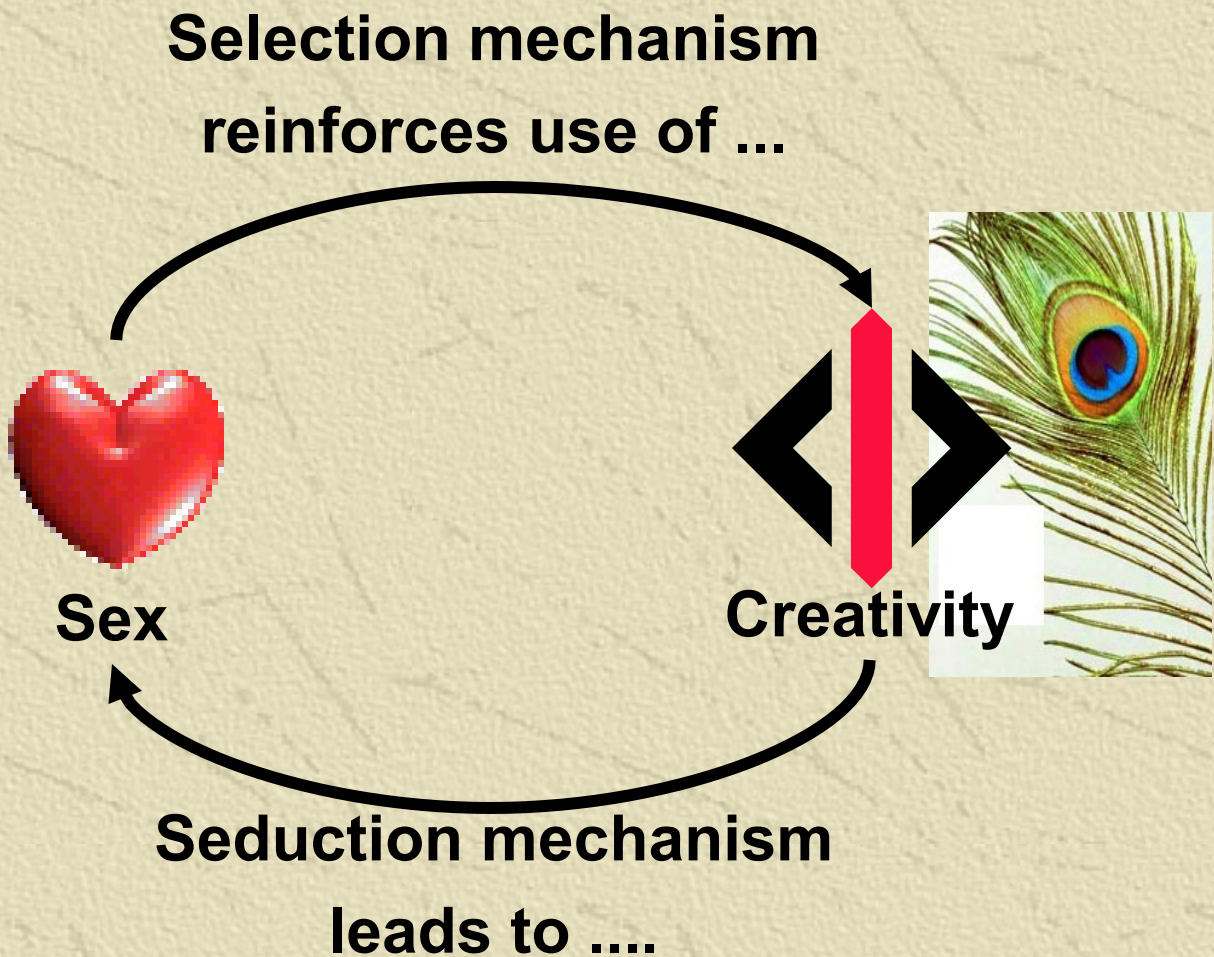
Danish creative artist
Jens Jørgen Thorsen

**Women select creative men
for a one-night stand (affair)
when close to ovulation
(given alternative descriptions)**

Psychologist Martie Haselton
and Geoffrey Miller, 2002



Creativity is a handicap !





3 levels of understanding why humans are creative

Creativity is a handicap. So....

1. Evolution (species)

The tendency to use creativity lies in the human species' gene pool.

- Sexual selection has favoured use of creativity

2. Psychology (individual)

The individual **does not consciously** use creativity to obtain sex. But many individuals have:

- Inherited genes for being creative (using handicap)
- Been conditioned for being creative

3. Consciousness (individual)

The individual **does use** creativity to obtain sex.

The individual believes there is a correlation:

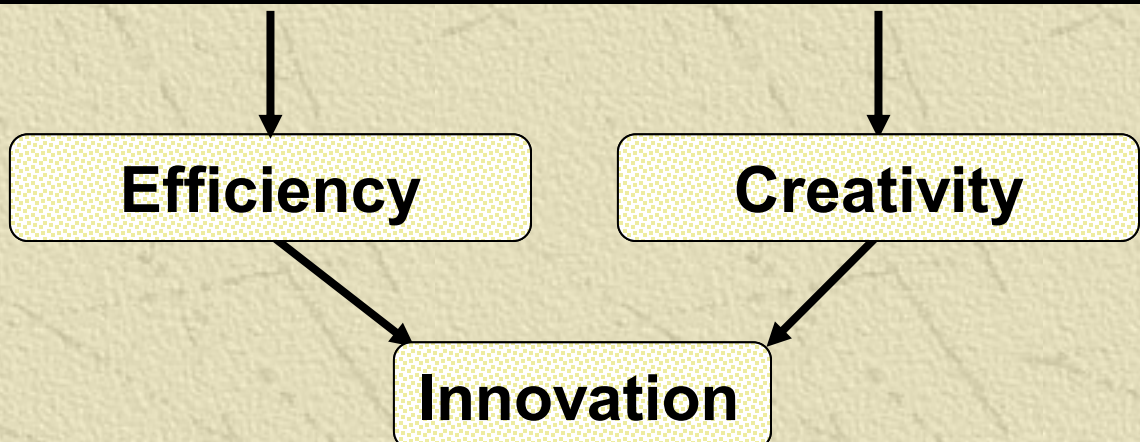
- Semi-conscious, repressed striving for sex
- Calculated and conscious striving for sex



A good platform for creativity ?

Creativity as a handicap thrives under the conditions of sexual selection

Natural selection	Sexual selection
Consolidate, survive	Renew, give life
Use all resources	Be wasteful
Play it safe	Take risks
Do it simple	Do it difficult
Use what's there	Try something new
Adapt	Break away
Be alike	Be different
Learn	Skip old knowledge





.... next approach

**Generosity
as handicap**



Altruism and gifts are handicaps



Altruism



Gifts

Both are valid as handicaps for sexual selection

Generosity



Use the Generous man or Economic man paradigm?

Economic man	Generous man
To have, accumulate	To give away, waste
Commodity	Gift
Mutual benefit	Generosity
Work	Play
Necessity	Freedom
Scarcity	Surplus
Anonymous	Personal
Sober-minded	Spectacular
Fight, power	Impress, beauty

~

~

Natural selection

Sexual selection



Efficiency

Creativity



Innovation



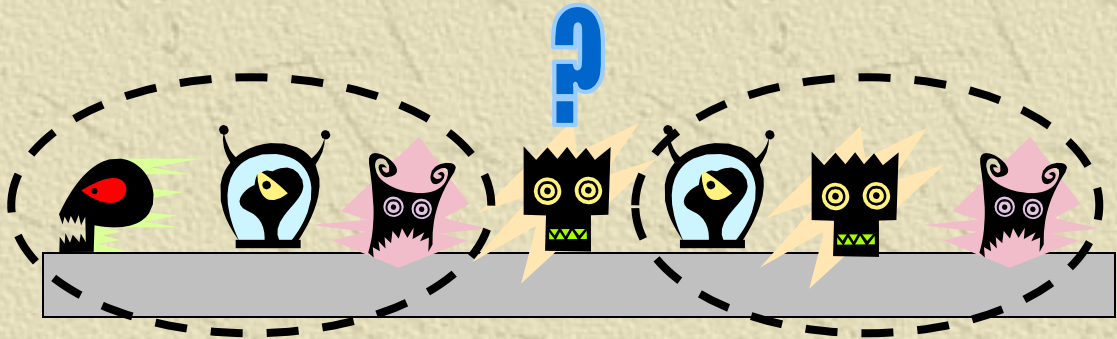
Icebreaker

- Generously or Economically ?

Discuss in groups of 3-and-3
the two alternative paradigms
for

Which is most important ?

(As many aspects as possible in 3 minutes)





All good comes from lust



Lust



Passion ?
Motivation?
Inclination?



- beauty

- altruism, ethics

- gifts

- effort

- creativity

Being
spectacular

Handicap for
sexual seduction



The law "Lust ==> Good"
gives more hope than
"Mutual egoism ==> Good"





.... next approach

**Male - female
handicaps**



Parental investment is key to sexual selection

**"The difference
in parental investment
in their offspring
is the key variable
that controls
the mechanism
of sexual selection"**

Robert Trivers, American biologist 1971-72:



Gender (human) specific characteristics?

Hypothesis 1:

Women invest more than men

Therefore:

- women are best at selection
- men are best at seduction

Hypothesis 2:

Women and men invest equally

Therefore:

- both are good at selection
- both are good at seduction

Both men and woman can be expected to use the handicap "creativity"

(Both hypotheses are probably valid)



Human lust, seduction and sexual selection

Given circumstances:

- Human beings have 2 genders and sexual reproduction
- Sex (and its consequences) is an investment
- Our species has survived



The human gene pool for both men and women must by now carry a heavy genetic inclination towards:

- **lust**
- **selection**
- **seduction**



Preferred handicaps - male / female looks



Men prefer:

- waste = $0.71 \times \text{hip}$
- beautiful complexion
- beautiful hair



Women prefer:

- square jaw
- deep voice
- masculine movements

These qualities are means of seduction, thus handicaps, and said to be functional for reproduction



Preferred handicaps

- male/female alternatives

Prio	Men prefer	Women prefer
1	Friendly, empathy	Friendly, empathy
2	Intelligence	Intelligence
3	<i>Attractive looks</i>	Exciting personality
4	Exciting personality	Good health
5	Good health	Adaptability
6	Adaptability	<i>Attractive looks</i>
7	Creativity	Creativity
8	Wish for children	<i>Good economy</i>
9	University degree	University degree
10	Good genes	Wish for children
11	<i>Good economy</i>	Good genes
12	Good housekeeping	Good housekeeping
13	Religious conviction	Religious conviction

American psychologist David Buss, 1989

American college students and 37 cultures

(Translated, unfortunately, forth and back from Danish)



Preferred stimuli - human preferences

Gender average:

Prio	Stimulating platform
1	Friendly, empathy
2	Intelligence
3	Exciting personality
4	Attractive looks
5	Good health
6	Adaptability
7	Creativity
8	University degree
9	Wish for children
10	Good economy
11	Good genes
12	Good housekeeping
13	Religious conviction

People prefer to be with others who are like this.

**Are these guidelines
for creative organizations?**



 next approach

Good creativity
- learn from good sex



Creativity ~ Sex

Hypothesis (let's suppose that...):

The two worlds, Creativity and Sex,
follow equivalent patterns.

Then rules for good sex can be used as
rules for good creativity !

Sex world	~	Creativity world
Sex technique	~	Creativity technique
Sex life, couple	~	Creative organization



Sex: Venus and Mars

Advice from John Gray



Venus (Aphrodite)
Roman goddess of love



Mars (Ares)
Roman god of war



Ref: John Gray 1995



Sex: Venus and Mars

Basic theory

Venus 	Mars 
Feelings ==> Sex	Sex ==> Feelings



.... technical approach

Sex guidance - techniques

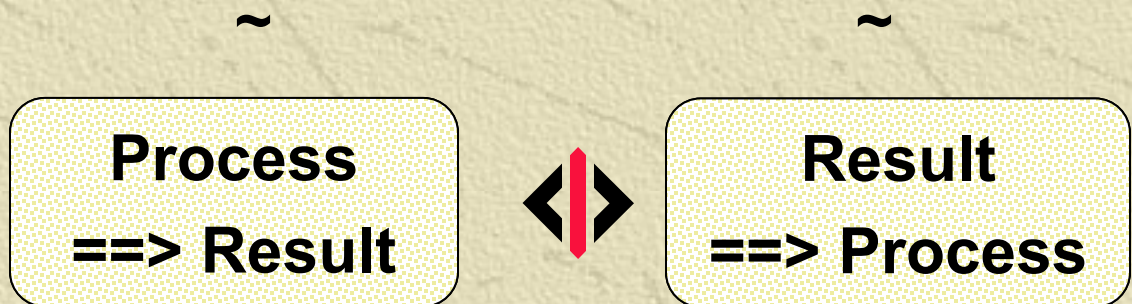
Ups!
Oh yes:
"open-
minded"





Good sex: Venus and Mars have different needs

Venus prefers... 	Mars prefers... 
Empathy	Facts
Understanding	Acknowledgement
Expectation	Satisfaction
Indirect approach	Direct approach



**Parallels to creative process:
Duality**

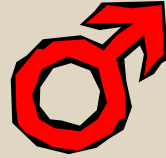


Good sex: Venus and Mars facilitator styles

Venus
prefers...



Mars
prefers...



Two
learning
styles?

- Empathy
- Dialogue
- Support
- Personal



- Just do it
- Play
- Self reliance
- Task oriented



Good sex: Fast or slow

Venus 	Mars 
Slow ==> Gourmet sex	Fast ==> Fast food sex

~

~

**Elaborate
creativity**



**Quick and dirty
creativity**



Good sex:

Action learning

Gray's diagnosis of the problem:

- Both Mars and Venus want to do good for the other
- Both expect "good" to be what they like themselves (which is different)

Gray's solutions:

- Give positive and explicit feedback
- If necessary, ask for what you want
- Add (or subtract) a zero from time
- Fake it until you make it

Parallels to creative process:



- Give positive and explicit feedback
- Shift between deadlines and open end
- Fake it until you make it



Good sex: Flow

Tantra sex:

- meditation
- mental and physical flow

Maybe like flow of artists and soccer players:

- exclusive state
- time is suspended
- consciousness switches off flow

(Csikszentmihalyi, 1990)

Parallels to creative process:



- postpone decision
- use the subconscious mind
- go into alpha state
- flow



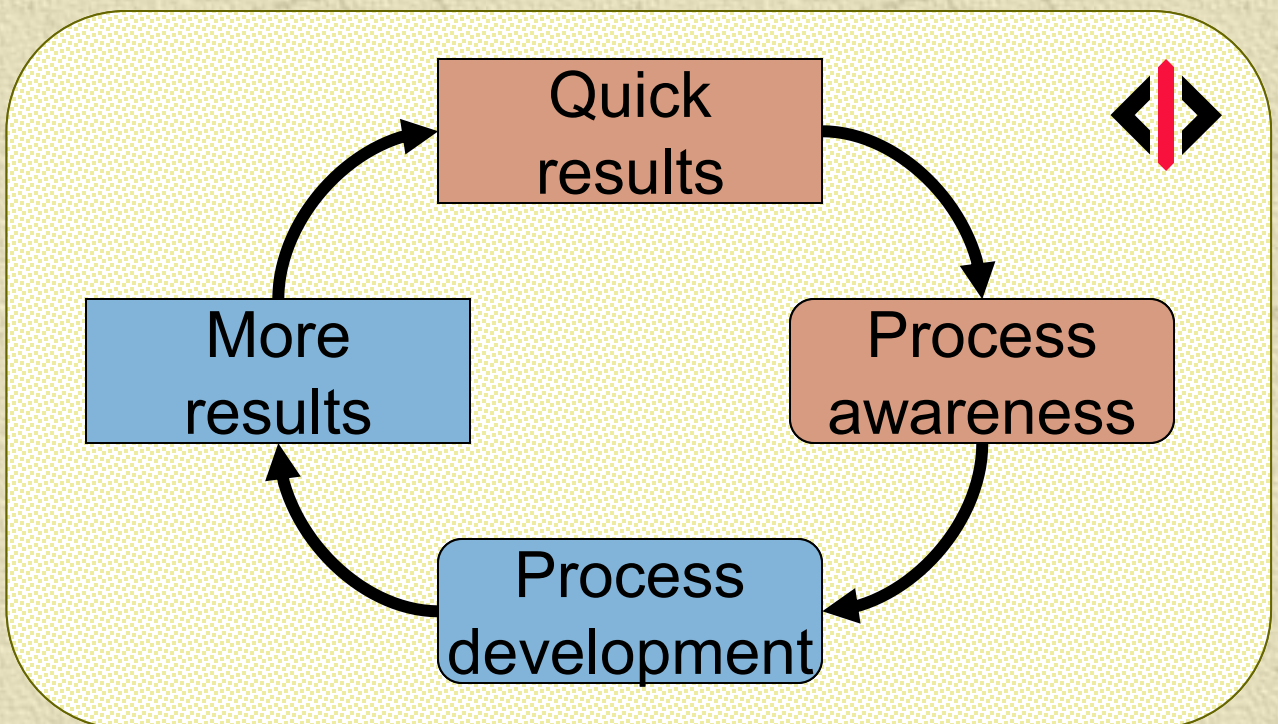
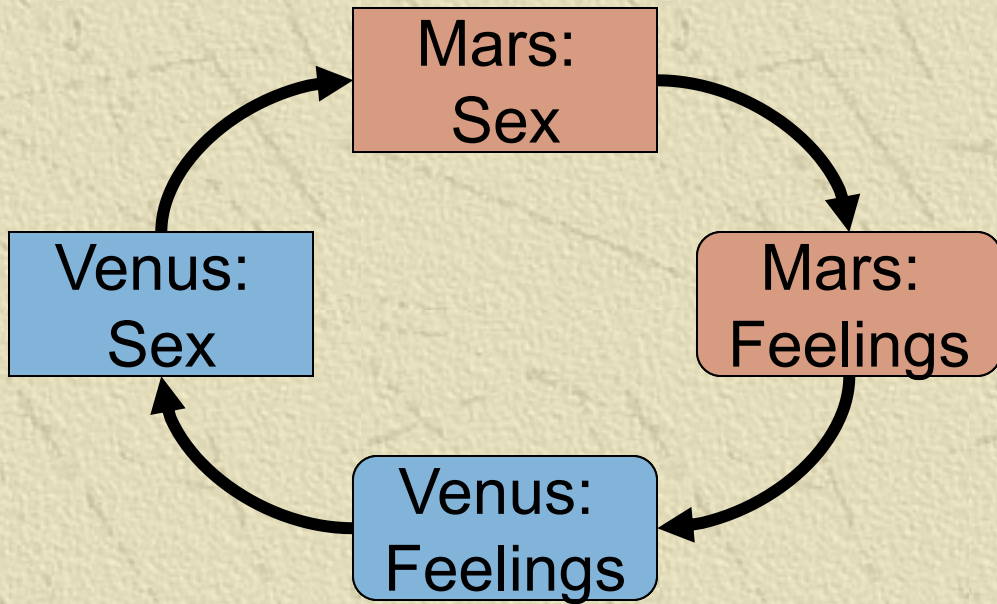
..organizational approach

**Sex guidance
- life in couples**





Good couple: Good sex





Good couple: Communicate

To obtain a good and lasting marriage and one-to-one relationship:

- **praise the other "You are so clever"**
- **give compliments "You are beautiful"**
- **positive feedback "I love (sex with) you"**
- **avoid wounding or painful rejection**

Parallels to creative organization:



- **use positive inquiry**
- **give positive strokes**
- **give positive and explicit feedback**

Confer to efficient organizations:

- **focus on key competencies**
- **control**
- **find mistakes**



**Learning
organization**



Good couple: Rituals

To obtain a good and lasting marriage and one-to-one relationship:

- **use rituals** (stereotype behaviour)
- **give a bouquet** (bunch of flowers)
- **open the car door** (shows you care)
- **if necessary, ask for the ritual**
- **rituals become fun and loving**

Parallels to creative organization:



- **use rituals**
- **have a fun and loving culture**

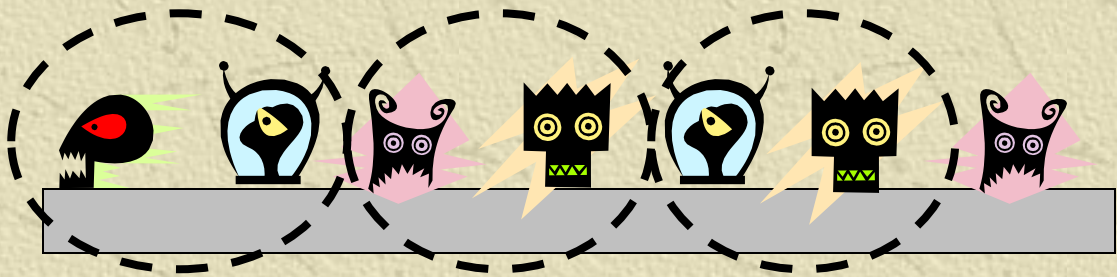


Icebreaker

(rituals in creative organizations)

In groups of 2-and-2
find as many rituals as possible
that are typical of creative organizations.

Choose one to share
with the rest of us.





Learning about creativity from the world of sex

The two worlds correspond:

Sex world	Business world
Sex	Creativity
Couple	Organization
Reproduction	Innovation*

Common for the two worlds are:



Duality is good



Equivalent advice for
good techniques

Equivalent advice for
good organization

* Innovation = Creativity + Implementation



.... next approach

More parallels

Pre-Darwin selection models



Teleological selection

The bird with the strong beak is designed with a purpose by an almighty power (God) to be able to crack nuts



Artificial selection

A human farmer enforces a tasteful duck getting offspring and kills the other ducks



Models for creative companies

Assume that creative ideas are like biological creatures that are born, live and die:

Teleological selection "God's plan"

Corporate mission
Long term plan



Artificial selection "Man's trial"

Successive small step management
Kaizen development



Natural selection "Nature's law"

Ex-/internal market, selection by...
Jungle law



Sexual selection "People's lust"

Empowered employees, selection by...
Communities of Practice, selection by...





Models for creative societies

Understanding of society

Inspired by Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells, 1997-2000

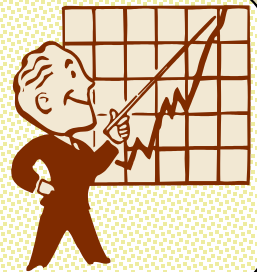
Teleological selection:

**Absolute monarchy
Dictatorship
(Divine, fundamentalist)**



Artificial selection:

**State, government (Castells 1)
Socialism
(Human hand and intention)**



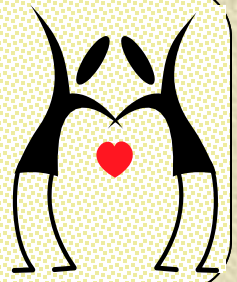
Natural selection:

**Market, liberalism (Castells 2)
Entrepreneurs, competition
(Anonymous hand)**



Sexual selection:

**Third sector (Castells 3)
Self organizing, human relations
(Social networks)**





Political program for nations in new economy?

According to Richard Florida* we need:

- openness
- multitude
- tolerance
- homosexuals
- ethnical shops
- experiments (Christiania)
- etc

Hmmm. Quite close to sexual selection ?



*American economist, professor of Regional Economic Development at Carnegie Mellon University, 2003



.... and finally ...

**Closing
down...**



Slogans for creativity in business and society?

Inspired by sexual selection:

- Lust & sex, not war
- Generosity, altruism, ethics
- Beauty and aesthetics
- Intelligence and empathy
- Networking and self organization
- Communities of practice (CoP)
- Explicit, positive communication
- Duality (process/result, fast/slow)
- Multitude and tolerance
- Mixed genders, races, cultures
- Risk taking, difficult goals

Anti-globalisation and anti-EU ?

But remember, we want *Innovation*:

- Efficiency + Creativity
- Natural selection + Sexual selection

Maybe we even want *stability* before *innovation*:

- Artificial and teleological selection





Management for Sustainable Innovation

Teleological selection

"God's plan"

Corporate mission
Long term plan



Artificial selection

"Man's trial"

Successive small step
Kaizen development



Natural selection

"Nature's law"

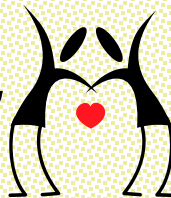
Market
Jungle law



Sexual selection

"People's lust"

Empowerment
Communities of Practice



Sustainable

innovation:

- Creativity
- Efficiency
- Stability

Remember
the sixth ;-)
management
principle





References

Above all inspiration from:

- Tor Nørretranders, "Det generøse menneske. En naturhistorie om at umage giver mage", (The generous human), Danish, People's Press, 2002

But also much inspiration from:

- David M. Buss, "Sex differences in human mate preferences: Evolutionary hypotheses tested in 37 cultures", Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 1989, 12, p 1-49
- Manuel Castells, "The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture", vol. I-III, London, 1997-2000.
- Charles Darwin, "On the Origin of Species, by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life", London, John Murray, 1859
- Charles Darwin, "The descent of man, and selection in relation to sex", 2 vols., London, John Murray, 1871
- John Gray, "Mars begærer Venus, Venus elsker Mars", 1998, original "Mars and Venus in the Bedroom", 1995
- Robert Trivers, "Natural Selection and Social Theory", Selected papers of Robert Trivers, Oxford University Press, 2002
- Thorstein Veblen, "The Theory of the Leisure Class", 1899 (quoted from Nørretranders p 96)
- Max Weber, "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism", Routledge, London 2001 (original 1930)
- Amotz Zahavi, "Mate Selection . A Selection for Handicap", Journal of theoretical Biology 53, 1975, p.205-214



Goal for this lecture was..



Inspiration



Understanding



To-do ideas

...concerning creativity and innovation !!



Theories and method

Biological evolution

Darwin's selection theory

Zahavi's handicap theory

Sex guidance

Gray's Mars & Venus

Others

Max Weber

Castells

Freud

Method:

Metaphor and parallelism

Cross-cultural fertilization

**Business
creativity**



Conclusions for creativity from biological evolution

Sexual selection ==> Creativity

Creativity = Handicap (good!!)

Creativity is deeply rooted in humans:

- evolution
- psychology
- conscious



Conclusions for creativity from sex guidance

Good sex ~ Good creativity

Good life in couples ~ Good organization

Duality of sex ~ Duality of creativity



Conclusions for creativity from several domains

Innovation is cross-cultural:

- Efficiency - Creativity
- Natural selection - Sexual selection
- Rational man - Generous man
-

Creative management is multi-cross-cultural:

- Teleological selection
- Artificial selection
- Natural selection
- Sexual selection



Creativity

(and for that sake all good)

comes from lust !

Understand this, and learn from it !

Yes



**Slut, Einde,
Ende, Finito,
Fin, End 完**

Selected slides:
www.condiv.dk/sex-crea