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Vertebrate Social Behavior

Discussion of the scientific literature, both theoretical and empirical as well as other texts, pertaining to the evolution of social behavior in vertebrates, including humans.

MONDAY, MARCH 28, 2011

The Evolution Of Altruism

In an upcoming paper, Gardner et al. (2011. *J. Evol. Biol.* DOI: 10.1111/j.1420-9101.2011.02236.x) provide a theoretical treatment attempting to clarify "the genetical theory of kin selection", with particular reference to confusions about what r (coefficient of relatedness) means. The article seems of import given current controversies (primarily in the journal *Nature*) about the generality and utility of Hamilton's formulation, inclusive fitness. In my experience, it has been clarifying to conceptualize evolution as, ultimately, a result of individual-level "decisions" (not necessarily conscious ones) since genes expressed in subsequent generations represent the individual's relative reproductive success (i.e., relative to other individuals in her/his population). The following link exhibits a 1 minute video of the late William D. Hamilton explicating his views.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIASTTUgJAo>

Posted by Clara B. Jones at 7:15 AM



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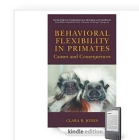
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ABOUT ME



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