The Altruism Equation Seven Scientists Search For The Origins Of Goodness

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The Altruism Equation is a pleasure to read. Dugatkin's explanation of the relevant science is clear and comprehensible. He also blends the scientific views of these seven scientists with their personal and professional lives in a way that enhances our understanding of both.

The Altruism Equation: Seven Scientists Search for the ...

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The Altruism Equation traces the history of this debate from Darwin to the present through an extraordinary cast of characters-from the Russian prince Petr Kropotkin, who wanted to base society on altruism, to the brilliant biologist George Price, who fell into poverty and succumbed to suicide as he obsessed over the problem. In a final surprising turn, William Hamilton, the scientist who came up with the equation that reduced altruism to the cold language of natural selection, desperately ...

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In a world supposedly governed by ruthless survival of the fittest, why do we see acts of goodness in both animals and humans? This problem plagued Charles Darwin in the 1850s as he developed his theory of evolution through natural selection. Indeed, Darwin worried that the goodness he observed in nature could be the Achilles heel of his theory. Ever since then, scientists and other thinkers have engaged in a fierce debate about the origins of goodness that has dragged politics, philosophy, and religion into what remains a major question for evolutionary biology. The Altruism Equation traces the history of this debate from Darwin to the present through an extraordinary cast of characters-from the Russian prince Petr Kropotkin, who wanted to base society on altruism, to the brilliant biologist George Price, who fell into poverty and succumbed to suicide as he obsessed over the problem. In a final surprising turn, William Hamilton, the scientist who came up with the equation that reduced altruism to the cold language of natural selection, desperately hoped that his theory did not apply to humans. Hamilton's Rule, which states that relatives are worth helping in direct proportion to their blood relatedness, is as fundamental to evolutionary biology as Newton's laws of motion are to physics. But even today, decades after its formulation, Hamilton's Rule is still hotly debated among those who cannot accept that goodness can be explained by a simple mathematical formula. For the first time, Lee Alan Dugatkin brings to life the people, the issues, and the passions that have surrounded the altruism debate. Readers will be swept along by this fast-paced tale of history, biography, and scientific discovery.

Describes the intellectual journey of eccentric American genius George Price, who tried to answer the evolutionary riddle of why people are nice, and eventually gave away all his belongings and took his own life in a squatter's flat.

Capturing the essence of the origin and evolution of the so-called "degeneracy debates," over whether the flora and fauna of America (including Native Americans) were naturally weaker and feebler than species elsewhere in the world, this book chronicles Thomas Jefferson's efforts to counter French conceptions of American degeneracy, culminating in his sending of a stuffed moose to Buffon.

Tucked away in Siberia, there are furry, four-legged creatures with wagging tails and floppy ears that are as docile and friendly as any lapdog. But, despite appearances, these are not dogs—they are foxes. They are the result of the most astonishing experiment in breeding ever undertaken—imagine speeding up thousands of years of evolution into a few decades. In 1959, biologists Dmitri Belyaev and Lyudmila Trut set out to do just that, by starting with a few dozen silver foxes from fox farms in the USSR and attempting to recreate the evolution of wolves into dogs in real time in order to witness the process of domestication. This is the extraordinary, untold story of this remarkable undertaking. Most accounts of the natural evolution of wolves place it over a span of about 15,000 years, but within a decade, Belyaev and Trut’s fox breeding experiments had resulted in puppy-like foxes with floppy ears, piebald spots, and curly tails. Along with these physical changes came genetic and behavioral changes, as well. The foxes were bred using selection criteria for tameness, and with each generation, they became increasingly interested in human companionship. Trut has been there the whole time, and has been the lead scientist on this work since Belyaev’s death in 1985, and with Lee Dugatkin, biologist and science writer, she tells the story of the adventure, science, politics, and love behind it all. In How to Tame a Fox, Dugatkin and Trut take us inside this path-breaking experiment in the midst of the brutal winters of Siberia to reveal how scientific history is made and continues to be made today. To date, fifty-six generations of foxes have been domesticated, and we continue to learn significant lessons from them about the genetic and behavioral evolution of domesticated animals. How to Tame a Fox offers an incredible tale of scientists at work, while also celebrating the deep attachments that have brought humans and animals together throughout time.

"Hermit crabs might not be the first example that comes to mind when thinking about power in animal relationships, but they are representative of the costs, benefits, assessment, and struggles that animal behaviorist Lee Dugatkin explains in Power in the Wild. Besides learning that researchers can evict all crabs from their shells by tickling their abdomens with paintbrushes, readers discover that attacker crabs can assess both the quality of shells and the ability of competitors to hold onto them- and both attacker and attacked make decisions about how much energy to expend holding onto a good shell. If the attacker looks tough, a target might just give up and flee. That the models for these behaviors mirror game theory for nuclear deterrence is all the more interesting. Dugatkin makes clear that this is not a book about what non-human animal power dynamics can teach us about ourselves, but it is an overview of power in the animal world generally- from the costs of pursuing power, to the role of gender (including a description of a species of fish that changes gender depending on its rank), to new findings on observer animals that watch and assess greater community power relationships without participating in power struggles themselves"--

A famed political scientist's classic argument for a more cooperative world We assume that, in a world ruled by natural selection, selfishness pays. So why cooperate? In The Evolution of Cooperation, political scientist Robert Axelrod seeks to answer this question. In 1980, he organized the famed Computer Prisoners Dilemma Tournament, which sought to find the optimal strategy for survival in a particular game. Over and over, the simplest strategy, a cooperative program called Tit for Tat, shut out the competition. In other words, cooperation, not unfettered competition, turns out to be our best chance for survival. A vital book for leaders and decision makers, The Evolution of Cooperation reveals how cooperative principles help us think better about everything from military strategy, to political elections, to family dynamics.

Today many school students are shielded from one of the most important concepts in modern science: evolution. In engaging and conversational style, Teaching About Evolution and the Nature of Science provides a well-structured framework for understanding and teaching evolution. Written for teachers, parents, and community officials as well as scientists and educators, this book describes how evolution reveals both the great diversity and similarity among the Earth's organisms; it explores how scientists approach the question of evolution; and it illustrates the nature of science as a way of knowing about the natural world. In addition, the book provides answers to frequently asked questions to help readers understand many of the issues and misconceptions about evolution. The book includes sample activities for teaching about evolution and the nature of science. For example, the book includes activities that investigate fossil footprints and population growth that teachers of science can use to introduce principles of evolution. Background information, materials, and step-by-step presentations are provided for each activity. In addition, this volume: Presents the evidence for evolution, including how evolution can be observed today. Explains the nature of science through a variety of examples. Describes how science differs from other human endeavors and why evolution is one of the best avenues for helping students understand this distinction. Answers frequently asked questions about evolution. Teaching About

Evolution and the Nature of Science builds on the 1996 National Science Education Standards released by the National Research Council--and offers detailed guidance on how to evaluate and choose instructional materials that support the standards. Comprehensive and practical, this book brings one of today's educational challenges into focus in a balanced and reasoned discussion. It will be of special interest to teachers of science, school administrators, and interested members of the community.

Examines the importance of cooperation in human beings and in nature, arguing that this social tool is as an important aspect of evolution as mutation and natural selection.

Since the last edition of this definitive textbook was published in 2013, much has happened in the field of animal behavior. In this fourth edition, Lee Alan Dugatkin draws on cutting-edge new work not only to update and expand on the studies presented, but also to reinforce the previous editions' focus on ultimate and proximate causation, as well as the book's unique emphasis on natural selection, learning, and cultural transmission. The result is a state-of-the-art textbook on animal behavior that explains underlying concepts in a way that is both scientifically rigorous and accessible to students. Each chapter in the book provides a sound theoretical and conceptual basis upon which the empirical studies rest. A completely new feature in this edition are the Cognitive Connection boxes in Chapters 2–17, designed to dig deep into the importance of the cognitive underpinnings to many types of behaviors. Each box focuses on a specific issue related to cognition and the particular topic covered in that chapter. As Principles of Animal Behavior makes clear, the tapestry of animal behavior is created from weaving all of these components into a beautiful whole. With Dugatkin's exquisitely illustrated, comprehensive, and up-to-date fourth edition, we are able to admire that beauty anew.

At a time of unprecedented expansion in the life sciences, evolution is the one theory that transcends all of biology. Any observation of a living system must ultimately be interpreted in the context of its evolution. Evolutionary change is the consequence of mutation and natural selection, which are two concepts that can be described by mathematical equations. Evolutionary Dynamics is concerned with these equations of life. In this book, Martin A. Nowak draws on the languages of biology and mathematics to outline the mathematical principles according to which life evolves. His work introduces readers to the powerful yet simple laws that govern the evolution of living systems, no matter how complicated they might seem. Evolution has become a mathematical theory, Nowak suggests, and any idea of an evolutionary process or mechanism should be studied in the context of the mathematical equations of evolutionary dynamics. His book presents a range of analytical tools that can be used to this end: fitness landscapes, mutation matrices, genomic sequence space, random drift, quasispecies, replicators, the Prisoner's Dilemma, games in finite and infinite populations, evolutionary graph theory, games on grids, evolutionary kaleidoscopes, fractals, and spatial chaos. Nowak then shows how evolutionary dynamics applies to critical real-world problems, including the progression of viral diseases such as AIDS, the virulence of infectious agents, the unpredictable mutations that lead to cancer, the evolution of altruism, and even the evolution of human language. His book makes a clear and compelling case for understanding every living system—and everything that arises as a consequence of living systems—in terms of evolutionary dynamics.