

# Re: The Anti Science Art Of Evasion

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- *From:* "John Edser" <edser@xxxxxxxxxxx>
  - *Date:* Mon, 27 Jun 2005 01:44:11 -0400 (EDT)
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"Malcolm" regniztar@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx wrote:--

>> JE. Nothing I have written here is original IMO. It most certainly isn't  
>> unconventional.

> M:--

> One of your arguments was that, if we have a number of alleles that  
> contribute to an altruistic trait, such that ABCD is altruistic whilst  
> abcd,  
> aBCD and all the other contributions are non-altruistic, then for the  
> purposes of Hamilton's rule the behaviour will only spread if the  
> benefit  
> is  
> greater than  $r^4$  times cost.  
> (I know that there are other issues concerned with the units in which  
> b  
> and  
> c are measured, which I haven't taken on board fully just yet).  
> Now I haven't heard this from anyone else.

JE:--

I put a similar argument to Felsenstein about 2 year ago within sbe as what I regard is a valid \*DARWINIAN\* simplified (NOT OVERSIMPLIFIED) proposition for the evolution of organism fitness altruism (commonly and confusingly only termed "altruism" by gene centric Neo Darwinists) which included a minimum of gene fitness epistasis within Hamilton's rule (Hamilton et al deleted all of it when  $r^e$  was oversimplified to  $r$  and subsequently fixed to  $r$ ). My understanding of Felsenstein's reply was that this was only a preference and not a necessity. I entirely disagreed but the issue of "preference" Vs "necessity" was never resolved because Felsenstein ceased all communication on the subject. If I remember correctly only Dr Guy Hoelzer (GH) was prepared to discuss it. I strongly suggest you query Felsenstein on this point because he is arguably the most senior poster here (he refuses all communication with myself).

GH's resolution appeared to argue that all models are equally valid, i.e. he appeared to agree with Felsenstein, i.e. deleting e was only a matter of preference. I argued then and continue to argue today that evolutionary theory cannot validly delete ALL gene fitness epistasis otherwise such a grossly oversimplified model is misused whenever it is applied to biology as it was in Hamilton's time and as is applied today. This is because all gene fitnesses, without exception, remain empirically epistatic. Unless Neo Darwinists can come up with at least one empirically based verification of a non epistatic fitness where could only be measured as a documented trait with a polygenetic fitness (the fitness of one trait is the simple addition of the fitnesses of each gene that codes for it) then they cannot validly delete e within  $r^e$  only minimally simplify and not oversimplify it to  $e=2$ . The only response that I remember receiving was that since polygenetic traits actually existed, e.g. human height, then polygenetic fitnesses are a reasonable supposition. They are NOT and we are not dealing with suppositions. Any polygenetic fitnesses allows a non empirically ,i.e. just a heuristic independent level of fitness to exist (as argued by Dawkins et al) to contest and even win over the single Darwinian fertile form level which remains the only empirically based level that we have.

Nobody has proposed even a just duel level of selection theory so no duel selection model can exist because all models are simplifications/oversimplifications of theory. Just saying that two independent levels of selection exist in nature does not constitute a theory of same. I pointed out to Felsenstein that if just one case of organism fitness altruism was ever empirically verified then Darwinian theory would stand refuted. He refused to comment. Felsenstein remains on record as saying he would never discuss cause and effect within evolutionary theory so this is what you have to expect.

> M:-

> In fact it would be nice if

> undergraduates challenged lecturers with similar objections more often at

> our university.

JE:-

IMHO the universities do not reward challenges to authority when they should be engaged in an active search for such challenges, if and only if, both the challenges and what is being taught as scientific theory remains refutable.

> M:-

> One person was teaching evolutionary psychology as an

> established truth (which is his right, and I would happen to agree with

> the

> conclusions but not the presentation) and despite the existence of a

Re: The Anti Science Art Of Evasion

> discussion board not one student took him to task. Very disappointing.

JE:–

When science becomes as authoritarian as religion then this is the type of response you should expect. Karl Popper properly identified the source of such backwardness: a rejection of the process of refutation.

> M:–

> Where did you get the idea from?

JE:–

It was a simple deduction from Darwinism and the empirical facts as we understand them today. My argument was and remains: any competent evolutionary theorist must make exactly the same deduction. The fact that the Neo Darwinists that post here have actively opposed this deduction and have employed blatant evasion of it forces me to conclude they must be incompetent. I do not regard any deduction as "original". IMO all originality has to be inductively based.

Regards,

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- Prev by Date: [\*\*Re: Miller on Submarine Vents\*\*](#)
  - Next by Date: [\*\*Re: specialization momentum\*\*](#)
  - Previous by thread: [\*\*Re: The Anti Science Art Of Evasion\*\*](#)

Re: The Anti Science Art Of Evasion

- Next by thread: ***Re: The Anti Science Art Of Evasion***
- Index(es):
  - ◆ ***Date***
  - ◆ ***Thread***