

Re: Most important paper in evolutionary biology

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- *From:* "John Edser" <edser@xxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 21 Sep 2005 20:14:33 -0400 (EDT)
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Guy Hoelzer hoelzer@xxxxxxx wrote:-

>I have to disagree with you here, Jim, although not about altruism or kin
>selection. I disagree on another basis that neither Darwin or Wallace ever
>considered: selection at the level of the gene.

JE:-

This proposed event remains an utterly misused heuristic exercise because it cannot be refuted.

>I would argue that Darwin
>and Wallace would agree with the gene-level selection argument in this case
>had they been so aware, just at you think that they would have agreed with
>Hamilton based regarding kin selection and altruism. My examples here
>would
>include meiotic drive and transposable elements. In both of these cases,
>an
>allele can increase in frequency in a population despite decreasing the
>reproductive success of their bearers.

JE:-

Exactly. All this means is that these alleles can never absolutely increase to become as common as other alleles selected at just the fertile organism level unless they provide a mutualised total Darwinian fitness gain for their hapless host. They are acting like mutated cancer cells who likewise, exploit their host to their own detriment.

Mutualism does not exclude non mutualism from appearing it simply states that unless ALL defined fitness entities become mutualised they have no future so they will remain rare and not common events IN NATURE.

>Of course, they can't do this if
>they are lethal or completely castrate their hosts, but that is not the
>issue.

JE:-

It is the issue. Relative gains producing absolute losses remain a loss and

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not a gain in every single case.

- >Transposable elements reproduce independently of their hosts, and
- >some host reproduction is merely a passage into the next generation.
- >Meiotic drive elements pass into the next generation more frequently than
- >normal autosomal alleles on a per host reproduction event.

JE:–

.....AND reduce the total fitness of their host in the process providing the absurd situation where they "cut of their nose to spite their face" and just end up "evolving" towards extinction.

As yet, nobody has documented a case where they INCREASE the total Darwinian fitness of their host. My prediction has always been that this event will one day become empirically verified providing the real reason as to why they only appear to be acting independently. Also, it seems very clear to me that due to extraordinary levels of prejudice, nobody is even looking for such an event.

Regards,

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