



The Selfish Gene

Author: Richard Dawkins
Publisher: Oxford University Press
Pages: 224
ISBN 019857519X

The book was first published in 1976 by Oxford University Press. The book is divided into 13 different chapters. The main argument of this book is that we, and all other animals, are machines created by our genes. Dawkins coined the term The Selfish Gene to express the gene centered view of evolution. After explaining Darwin's theory, the writer starts to point out what is 'Selfishness' and what is 'altruism'. The writer tells about the difficulty he faced to choose the title of the book. He is also afraid that he would also be misunderstood by the readers; he explains his feeling in the following sentence, *I am not advocating a morality based on evolution. I am saying how things have evolved. I am not saying how we humans morally ought to behave. I stress this, because I know I am in danger*

of being misunderstood by those people,
Page 26.

In this book we find many examples that the writer uses to explain the important scientific explanation of his theory. About the term altruism, he gives the common example that the parent, especially what a mother does towards children. We see Dawkins as a master of metaphor in his writing. For example he points out, there is no suggestion that we are puppets to our genes, and have to act in a manner that furthers the benefit of our gene. Dawkins manages to convey the scientific facts in a very simple way where the layperson can easily understand. He does so with the use of plenty of analogies with everyday things.

In the broad sense, gene ideology can be described as; every creature, in the long run, act to maximize the number of its. It is simply the survival of the information in the genes of the individual. Here we see the individual is almost irrelevant to the genes, they are useful containers of the genetic code.

Dawkins also shows that the things move in a certain direction because they have a purpose-a wild animal goes hunting because it is hungry, for the purpose of finding food. Evolution too appears directed. Animals develop fur for the purpose of keeping warm and so on.

The Selfish Gene theory regards the visible organism (the cat, human, flower, amoeba or whatever) as the host. It is like

descendants. Dawkins also describes that the purpose of the evolution is not, as Darwin suggested, survival of the species. the big lumbering robot whose purpose is to replicate the genes it carries in its cells. This is the essence of the selfish gene theory.

What I get from this book is the powerful explanation and the way to clarify some of the important questions of the life. Unlike the Darwin's method to answer question of evolutionary biology, Dawkins reduces all the living to the level of mechanical biological explanations, now a days we can say up to the molecular level. The flow of the information is interesting and includes quite a good amount of biology. It is worth reading for biologists to see the science from a different perspective.

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ESTD: 2007

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