

because their bodies are flooded with must-reproduce-their-genes-promoting testosterone'; and 'We want a big house because we are innately territorial'; and 'Fighting and war is just our deeply-rooted combative animal nature expressing itself'; and 'Religions are merely our survival-driven group mentality expressing itself'; and the most common comment of all that 'It's just human nature to be selfish'.

## Chapter 2:10 Sociobiology/Evolutionary Psychology

<sup>196</sup>There were, of course, serious problems with this so-called Social Darwinist contrived excuse that 'nature is selfish and that's why we are'. For starters, it didn't account for instances in nature where selflessness occurs, such as in ant and bee colonies where workers slave selflessly for the whole colony. And secondly, and most particularly, it didn't account for *our* instinctive memory of having lived in a cooperative, loving, 'Garden of Eden'-like existence, which is our selfless, consider-the-welfare-of-others, born-with, instinctive moral nature, the 'voice' of which is our 'conscience'.

<sup>197</sup>Seeking to address these cracks in the argument, biologists developed the theory of Sociobiology, with E.O. Wilson acting as its main proponent. Later known as Evolutionary Psychology, this theory explains, truthfully enough, that worker ants and bees are *not* actually being unconditionally selfless, truly altruistic when serving their colony because, when doing so, they are fostering the queen who reproduces their genes, which means their apparent selfless behaviour is, in fact, just a subtle form of selfishness: they are helping the queen to selfishly reproduce their genes. But in terms of maintaining the primary agenda of avoiding the unbearable and unacceptable issue of the human condition at all costs, this idea of selfless behaviour actually being a subtle form of selfishness, where you indirectly promote the reproduction of your own genes by fostering others who are related to you—your kin—was then not surprisingly, but *in this case* extremely dishonestly, commandeered to explain *our* moral instincts. Yes, it was claimed that *our* moral inclination to help others was no more than an attempt to reproduce our genes by supporting others whose genes we shared, with any anomalies put down to '**misplaced parental behavior**' (George Williams, *Adaptation and Natural Selection*, 1966, p.vii of 307)! As Wilson boldly summarised, '**Morality has no other demonstrable function**' other than to ensure '**human genetic material...will be kept intact**' (*On Human Nature*, 1978, p.167 of 260); even saying that '**Rousseau claimed [that humanity] was originally a race of noble savages in a peaceful state of nature, who were later corrupted...[but what] Rousseau invented [was] a stunningly inaccurate form of anthropology**' (*Consilience*, 1998, p.37 of 374)!!

<sup>198</sup>So, in saying our moral soul is still basically selfish, the old 'nature is selfish and that's why we are selfish' excuse was preserved; the same 'I'm going to determinedly avoid, not confront, the human condition' attitude had been upheld.

<sup>199</sup>The problem that *then* emerged, of course, was that this denigration of our moral self as nothing more than a subtle form of selfishness was both deeply offensive to and entirely inconsistent with what we all in truth know about our moral instincts, which is that they *are* unconditionally selfless, genuinely altruistic. As the journalist Bryan Appleyard pointed out, biologists '**still have a gaping hole in an attempt to explain altruism. If, for example, I help a blind man**

**cross the street, it is plainly unlikely that I am being prompted to do this because he is a close relation and bears my genes. And the world is full of all sorts of elaborate forms of cooperation which extend far beyond the boundaries of mere relatedness'** (*Brave New Worlds: Staying Human in a Genetic Future*, 1998, p.112 of 198).

## **Chapter 2:11 Multilevel Selection theory for eusociality**

<sup>200</sup> This **'gaping hole'** in the theory of Sociobiology/Evolutionary Psychology brings us to the present and the publication in 2012 of E.O. Wilson's *The Social Conquest of Earth*. Yes, once again, it was Wilson who concocted a 'solution' to this problem of the offensiveness of Evolutionary Psychology's denigration of our moral instincts as selfish. Now, to the dismay of his earlier supporters, he has dismissed 'his' previous Evolutionary Psychology theory as **'incorrect', 'inoperable'** and as having **'failed'** (*The Social Conquest of Earth*, pp.143, 180, 181 of 330), proffering in its place a new theory that not only contrives an explanation for our genuinely moral instincts, but takes the art of denial to the absolute extreme by contriving a non-human-condition-confronting explanation of the human condition itself!

<sup>201</sup> Known as Multilevel Selection or **'a New Theory of Eusociality'** (ibid. p.183) (eusociality simply meaning genuine sociality), this theory claims that humans have instincts derived from natural selection operating at the individual level (where members of a species selfishly compete for food, shelter, territory and a mate), *and* instincts derived from natural selection operating at the group level (where, it is claimed, groups of altruistic, cooperative members outcompete groups of selfish, non-cooperative members)—with the supposed selfish individual level instincts being the bad/sinful aspects of our nature, and the selfless, supposed group-selected instincts being the good/virtuous aspect of our nature. According to Wilson, **'Individual selection is responsible for much of what we call sin, while group selection is responsible for the greater part of virtue. Together they have created the conflict between the poorer and the better angels of our nature'** (ibid. p.241). In summary, Wilson asserts that **'The dilemma of good and evil was created by multilevel selection'** (ibid).

<sup>202</sup> Before looking at the way in which the Multilevel Selection theory for eusociality misrepresents, in fact, *avoids*, the real, consciousness-derived, psychological aspect of the human condition, we need to look at the 'group selection' mechanism that Wilson says accounts for our moral sense—because while we certainly *do* have a genuine moral sense, under scrutiny Wilson's theory of how we acquired it completely falls apart.

<sup>203</sup> While it makes sense that, as Wilson states, **'groups of altruists [will] beat groups of selfish individuals'** (ibid. p.243), the biological stumbling block is whether genes, which have to selfishly ensure they reproduce if they are to carry on, can develop self-sacrificing altruistic traits in the first place. (Indeed, the initial premise of group selection makes so much sense that even Darwin canvassed the idea, but with far less arrogance than Wilson, aware as he was of the inherent difficulties of the concept. With regard to Darwin's tentative approach to group selection, one of the leading evolutionary theorists of the twentieth century, William Hamilton, said that **'Darwin had gone [there] circumspectly or not at all'** ('Innate Social Aptitudes of Man: An Approach from Evolutionary Genetics', *Biosocial Anthropology*, ed. R. Fox, 1975, p.135 of 169). I describe