most beautiful contributions ever made to the Evolution of Man’, it was eventually totally ignored and left to die!

The fundamental issue here is that until the human condition was explained humans couldn’t cope with the truth of the importance of nurturing in human life, and while I am finally presenting the compassionate framework that makes it psychologically safe to admit the importance of nurturing, the explanation is still being rejected because although humans are now defended the problem remains of having to confront so much denied truth about our human condition. As pointed out in Part 3:10, truth day is also exposure day; it is, in fact, the long anticipated ‘judgment day’—so while it is ultimately a ‘day’ of compassionate understanding, not condemning ‘judgment’, there is still a great deal of denied truth to have to suddenly encounter and accept. In terms of the progress of new ideas in science, especially ideas that challenge established paradigms, their reception invariably follows a pattern whereby the old paradigm doesn’t want to move to the new one, not only because it’s confronting but because scientists are attached to the paradigm they have either created (or contributed to) or become accustomed to. The philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer summarised the stages of resistance new ideas in science have historically had to undergo when he ‘said that the reception of any successful new scientific hypothesis goes through predictable phases before being accepted’. First, ‘it is ridiculed’ and ‘violently opposed’.

Second, after support begins to accumulate ‘it is stated that it may be true but it’s not particularly relevant’. Third, ‘after it has clearly influenced the field [including members of the establishment quickly remodelling/plagiarising the ideas as their own discoveries, which unfortunately is something I have experienced] it is admitted to be true and relevant but the same critics assert that the idea is not original’. Finally, ‘it is accepted as being self-evident’ (compiled from two references to Schopenhauer’s quote—New Scientist, 15 Nov. 1984 and PlanetHood, Ferencz & Keyes, 1988). The physicist Max Planck succinctly described the historical reality of scientific progress when he said that ‘science progresses funeral by funeral’ (see his Scientific Autobiography, 1948), while the famous playwright George Bernard Shaw warned of the true nature of progress when he wrote that ‘All great truths begin as blasphemies’ (from his play Annajanska, 1919).

Part 4:12H The Multilevel Selection theory

Part 4:12H-i Introduction

In Part 4:12E it was described how humans’ wonderful moral instinctive self or soul has been dismissed by Evolutionary Psychologists as not the unconditionally selfless, genuinely altruistic, truly loving entity it really is, but as a form of reciprocal selflessness—basically as nothing more than a subtle form of selfishness. Among those making this assertion were Richard Dawkins, who said, ‘Much as we might wish to believe otherwise, universal love and the welfare of the species as a whole are concepts that simply do not make evolutionary sense…we are born selfish’, and Robert Wright, who said, ‘moral guidance’ is a euphemism’, and E.O. Wilson, who summarised 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.’

In Part 4:12F I described how a backlash of revulsion developed towards this denigration of our wonderful moral instinctive self as nothing more than a subtle form of selfishness. I recounted how Stephen Jay Gould attacked the right-wing, selfishness-justifying biological thinking as ‘Cardboard Darwinism’, ‘Darwinian fundamentalism’, ‘ultra-Darwinism’ and ‘hyper-Darwinian’, and how, in 1979, Gould and Richard Lewontin attempted
to present a left-wing, selflessness-emphasising counter theory based on a by-products-of-natural-selection explanation to argue for the existence of our unconditionally selfless, genuinely altruistic moral instincts. In summarising his argument in 1997, Gould stated that ‘Natural selection may be the biggest crane [but]...you need a lot of cranes to build something so splendid and variegated [as life’s history in its full grandeur]’. He was arguing that the ‘grande[st]’, most amazing creation of all in ‘life’s history’, which is humans’ unconditionally selfless, genuinely altruistic, truly loving, moral instinctive self or soul, was developed by a matrix of by-products of natural selection—‘a lot of cranes’ acting in conjunction with ‘natural selection’. As pointed out in Part 4:12G, our unconditionally selfless, moral instincts did come about as a result of a by-product of natural selection, namely the nurturing, love indoctrination process, but, unable to admit this unbearably confronting truth of the importance of nurturing, Gould and Lewontin’s unspecified by-products-of-natural-selection explanation couldn’t and ultimately didn’t succeed in actually explaining the origins of our unconditionally selfless moral instincts—they only created the illusion that it had been explained.

Basically, this matrix, unspecified by-products of natural selection attempt by the left-wing to counter Evolutionary Psychology’s abhorrent dismissal of our moral soul as nothing more than a subtle form of selfishness had failed, leaving the left-wing scrambling to find some way to defend their pseudo idealistic, selflessness-justifying philosophy for living with the agony of the human condition. A human-condition-avoiding, yet unconditionally-selfless-moral-instincts-admitting counter to the right-wing’s selfishness-justifying denigration of our moral instincts still had to be found.

But what could left-wing biologists come up with? The biological reality they faced is that genes are necessarily selfish; genetic traits do have to reproduce if they are to become established in a species, and an unconditionally selfless trait doesn’t tend to reproduce—that being the definition of unconditional selflessness: doing something for others without incurring any personal benefit, such as ensuring your genes reproduce. A very powerful reason why unconditionally selfless traits don’t tend to reproduce is because extreme competition exists amongst sexually reproducing individuals to ensure their genes reproduce, so if an unconditionally selfless trait were to emerge it would be exploited by all those who were being selfish—if someone in a group says, in effect, ‘I’m going to help others’, the others are going to, in effect, reply, ‘By all means, go right ahead because it can only help me reproduce my genes—but don’t expect me to help you.’ Selflessness is going to be subverted, undermined by opportunist cheaters or free riders. So the reality seemingly is that an unconditionally selfless, genuinely altruistic, truly loving, completely concerned-with-the-larger-whole-not-yourself, moral instinctive orientation to life cannot, outside the love indoctrination opportunity, become established within a species.

Certainly, self-sacrificing genetic traits that do reproduce and therefore aren’t unconditionally selfless can be developed by natural selection, but an unconditionally self-sacrificing moral instinctive orientation to life, such as we humans have, seemingly cannot be developed by natural selection outside the love indoctrination situation. As described in my brief denial-free description of the development of order of matter on Earth in Part 4:12B, self-sacrificing genetic traits that do reproduce and therefore aren’t unconditionally selfless can be developed within a sexually reproducing individual—such as leaves sacrificing their lives when they are dropped by a tree in winter; or our body’s skin cells giving their lives so that our body can carry on; or, in the elaborated sexually reproducing individual situation, when worker bees give their lives to protect their colony; or, in the temporarily elaborated sexually reproducing individual situation, when hunting dogs delay their own reproduction to selflessly help raise their parents’ subsequent offspring—
because the reproductive part of the sexually reproducing individual, namely the tree’s or our body’s reproductive parts, or the queen bee, or the queen dog, reproduces them. The genes for the leaves/skin cells/worker bees/helper dogs do reproduce, which means their self-sacrifice is not unconditionally selfless, truly altruistic.

So how could the left-wing find a human-condition-avoiding argument for the development of unconditionally selfless, moral instincts among sexually reproducing individual humans? There was only one situation that had ever been envisaged that offered a way for human-condition-avoiding left-wing biologists to argue the case for unconditionally selfless moral instincts, and that was group selection, or, more accurately, ‘between-group selection’. The argument for between-group selection, which was very briefly described in Part 4:12D, runs like this, while within a group of sexually reproducing individuals selflessness is always going to be subverted, if there are two groups in competition against each other and one has members who are more able to behave selflessly and help each other then that group will have an advantage over the other group that doesn’t have such selfish, cooperative members, which means that unconditionally selfless cooperation supposedly could be able to be selected for. While within groups the selfish are more likely to succeed, in competition between groups, those that are able to behave selflessly, consider the welfare of the group above their own welfare, and thus be more cooperative, are more likely to succeed. Put simply, within groups the selfish are likely to succeed, but in competition between groups, groups of altruists are more likely to succeed; theoretically, groups of cooperators can out-compete groups of non-cooperators, thereby ensuring their genes, including the ones that predispose them to cooperation, are handed down to future generations.

In The Descent of Man, Charles Darwin canvassed this possibility of between-group selection developing unconditional selflessness, writing that ‘It must not be forgotten that although a high standard of morality gives but a slight or no advantage to each individual man and his children over the other men of the same tribe, yet that an increase in the number of well-endowed men and advancement in the standard of morality will certainly give an immense advantage to one tribe over another. A tribe including many members who, from possessing in a high degree the spirit of patriotism, fidelity, obedience, courage, and sympathy, were always ready to aid one another, and to sacrifice themselves for the common good, would be victorious over most other tribes; and this would be natural selection’ (1871, ch.5). But while Darwin did think about the theoretical possibility of between-group selection developing unconditional selfless instincts in humans, he never pursued the idea—presumably because when, as mentioned earlier, Darwin said that our ‘moral sense affords the best and highest distinction between man and the lower animals’ (ibid, ch.4) he was recognising just how extraordinary and wonderful humans’ moral instincts are; he was sound enough to acknowledge that our moral instincts are truly altruistic, that they want to be unconditionally selfless towards all of life, that they are universally loving. As is going to be emphasised, the very idea that our moral instinctive self or soul is derived from aggressively attacking and warring against other groups of humans does not ring at all true, just as it would not have rung true for Darwin. It does not equate at all with what we all intuitively know about what our born-with, instinctive moral conscience wants us to feel and how it wants us to behave towards all humans, and even towards all creatures—indeed towards all of life—which is to feel and behave lovingly towards all things. Our instinctive orientation is to love, not be at war with other people, and to argue otherwise is, in truth, as abhorrent as the right-wing’s denigration of the nature of our moral soul as nothing more than a subtle form of selfishness.

And so, in his soundness and integrity of thought, Darwin would have felt uncomfortable with the idea that our moral instincts could possibly be derived from
strategic warring between groups, and that discomfort would have led to his resistance to developing it into a full-blown theory to explain our moral instincts. As has been described already, Darwin dabbled with the idea of by-products of natural selection being involved in the creation of our moral instincts, and he also canvassed the notion of nurturing playing a role, but he chose not to develop even these ideas that do resonate as being honest into an explanation for the origin of our moral instincts—because, as has been mentioned, he presumably didn’t feel secure enough to engage in ideas that involved fully confronting the human condition. Being a biologist of great integrity, Darwin was cautious in all his thinking about the biology of human behaviour, as evidenced by the fact that he avoided that all-important issue in his main book, *The Origin of Species*. So while Darwin *did* canvas the merits of between-group selection in *The Descent of Man*, he didn’t pursue it. As William Hamilton recognised, while in the early, ‘naive’ 1900s, ‘almost the whole field of biology stampeded in the direction of accepting the idea of group-emphasising selection’...

**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.331).

However, while Darwin chose not to develop the idea of between-group selection being able to produce unconditionally selfless instincts into a theory, other biologists haven’t been so scrupulous. And so, when the left-wing needed to counter the right-wing’s abhorrent selfishness-justifying dismissal of our moral instincts as nothing more than a subtle form of selfishness, it was the between-group selection for unconditionally selfless instincts argument that they resorted to.

But to do so was not easy, because for left-wing biologists to take up the between-group selection argument for unconditional selflessness they not only had to overlook what, in truth, we all know about our born-with, instinctive moral conscience, which is that it doesn’t want us to war with other humans, they also had to find a way to counter a particular problem that all thoughtful biologists could see lay with the idea of between-group selection of unconditional selflessness. Obviously within a group of sexually reproducing individuals selflessness is always going to be exploited and subverted by opportunistic cheaters or mercenary free-riders, however, *even in the situation where a group with altruists were to succeed in competition with other groups, the winning altruistic group would still likely be subverted by cheaters within the group. Even if altruism is advantageous in the between-group situation, within *any* group at all, one successfully competing with another group or not, altruists are liable to be exploited by selfish free-riders who refrain from behaving altruistically. In a group of altruists there will almost certainly be a dissenting minority who refuse to make any sacrifice, and if there is just one selfish rebel prepared to exploit the altruism of the rest, then that individual will be more likely to survive and have children who will tend to inherit his selfish traits and so, after several generations, this altruistic group will be over-run by selfish individuals. Further, even if by chance a purely altruistic group without any opportunistic rebels occurs it is very difficult to see how it would not eventually be contaminated by the migration of selfish individuals from neighbouring groups. As mentioned in Part 4:12D, in his devastating critique of group-emphasising biological thinking that appears in his book *Adaptation and Natural Selection*, George Williams emphasised that while ‘between-group selection’ of unconditional selflessness is theoretically possible, he concluded that in reality it is ‘not strong enough’ to overcome genetic selfishness. As he emphasised in his Preface to the 1996 reprint of *Adaptation and Natural Selection*: ‘I concluded [in *Adaptation and Natural Selection*]...that group selection was not strong enough to produce...[an] adaptation...characterized by organisms’ playing roles that would subordinate their individual interests for some higher value, as in the often proposed benefit to the species’ (p.xii).
Further, the evidence for the improbability, indeed *impossibility*, of between-group selection actually being able to develop a completely concerned-with-the-larger-whole-not-yourself, moral instinctive orientation to life, such as we have, is that it has never been able to be achieved—or, if it was, then sustained over the long-term so as to be in existence today. As emphasised, our species was able to develop such a state but we achieved it through love-indoctrination, *not* through between-group selection.

Further, as was also explained and emphasised in Part 4:12B, the reality amongst sexually reproducing individuals that haven’t been able to develop love-indoctrination is that the more cooperative integration they develop, the more intense becomes the selfish competition to reproduce until eventually the competition becomes so fierce that only dominance hierarchy can contain it. The apparent universality of dominance hierarchy amongst non-human social (relatively integrated) species is evidence that the selfishness of the gene-based natural selection learning or refinement system can’t, outside of love-indoctrination, develop a completely unconditionally selfless, moral instinctive orientation to life like we have.

The reality is that if that most effective form of cooperation of all, namely unconditional selflessness, could have been developed into a complete moral instinctive orientation to life in sexually reproducing individuals then we can expect that it would have been developed many times over in the history of life on Earth—but it hasn’t, except in our situation, and almost amongst bonobos who, as described in Part 8:4, are in the final stages of the love-indoctrination process. (Again, it has to be remembered that self-sacrificing traits can be developed within the sexually reproductive individual, but such traits are not *unconditionally* selfless like ours are because the reproducing parts of the individual, such as the tree/body/queen ant/queen dog in the examples mentioned earlier, do reproduce the genes for the trait.)

As described in Part 4:12D, as a result of what Williams and many other biologists pointed out about the limitations of between-group selection, the whole between-group selection idea was virtually eliminated from biological thinking from the mid to late 1900s—as Richard Lewontin wrote in 1998, *‘group selection has been regarded as an anathema by nearly all evolutionary biologists’* (*‘Survival of the Nicest?’, The New York Review of Books, 22 Oct. 1998*).

Certainly, as described in Part 4:12D, the right-wing were particularly concerned with eliminating the concept of group selection because it meant recognising integration, which involved recognising Integrative Meaning, nevertheless, the points they made about the unlikelihood of between-group selection being able to develop an unconditionally selfless moral instinctive orientation to life seem very true.

BUT, despite all these factors—despite between-group selection being an affront to the truth that we have morals that are all-loving; and despite all the arguments made against it by Williams and many others (in particular that it was difficult to imagine how even winning groups of altruists would not become subverted by selfish opportunists); and despite the left-wing having just as much need as the right-wing to avoid emphasising group selection because of its Integrative Meaning implications—at the end of the day between-group selection remained the one possible theory that left-wing biologists could use to argue that our moral instincts are not a subtle form of selfishness but actually unconditionally selfless; and it was the one possible theory that the left-wing *had to* resort to using if they were to preserve their pseudo idealistic, selflessness-not-selfishness-emphasising, feel-good-and-thus-relieved-of-the-agony-of-the-human-condition strategy for living.

As I often say, when the need for denial is critical any excuse will do—the trick is to have just some excuse, one excuse, any excuse, and then stick to it. And so despite
having fallen into near total disrepute amongst biologists, group selection was resurrected by selflessness-emphasising left-wing biologists. The leading advocate and architect of its resurrection, and its staunchest defender, is the American biologist David Sloan (D.S.) Wilson. In 1994 he and the American science philosopher Elliot Sober published a paper titled ‘Re-introducing Group Selection to the Human Behavioral Sciences’ in a bid to, as they said, ‘re-introduce group selection to human sociobiology as well as to the more traditional branches of the human sciences’ (Behavioral and Brain Sciences 17 (4): pp.585-654). In the paper they mentioned that ‘Group-selection models are the favored turf of biologists and others who feel that people are genuinely altruistic’, and said that ‘We have emphasized group-level functional organization in humans as an antidote to the rampant individualism we see in the human behavioral sciences.’ Four years later, in 1998, D.S. Wilson and Sober published an expanded description of their between-group theory in a book titled Unto Others: The Evolution and Psychology of Unselfish Behavior.

To differentiate it from the early 1900s ‘naive’, ‘good-of-the-species’ type group selection, this selflessness-emphasising left-wing account of the origin of unconditional selflessness was originally called ‘new group selection theory’, but eventually became known as Multilevel Selection theory (MLS) because it encompasses the influence of natural selection at both the individual and group levels, as well as the involvement of cultural and psychological influences. In Unto Others, D.S. Wilson and Sober wrote of ‘Replacing kin selection theory with multilevel selection theory’ (p.332 of 394), and said they were presenting an argument for a ‘plurality of causes of evolutionary change, which can and do occur in different combinations’ (p.331). Referring to natural selection as ‘functionalism’, they wrote that ‘We think that multilevel selection theory provides the beginning of a unified framework within which the legitimate claims of individual level functionalism, group-level functionalism, and antifunctionalism can each be given their due’ (p.331). In addition to having selfish instincts, which they claimed arose from competition between individuals (from ‘individual level functionalism’), and unconditionally selfless instincts, which they claimed arose from between-group competition (‘group-level functionalism’), D.S. Wilson and Sober argued that there were other ‘antifunctional’ influences involved in the evolution of animal behaviour. They explained that by ‘antifunctionalism’ they mean ‘traits [that] have evolved for reasons having nothing much to do with natural selection’, that ‘there is more to evolution than natural selection. In the case of human beings and perhaps of other species, it emphasizes the importance of culture in addition to genes and shows how behaviors can evolve that make sense only through the context of cultural systems that support them’ (p.331). They spoke of ‘variations in customs that exist across cultures’ (p.336), and argued that ‘Natural selection based on cultural variation has produced adaptions that have nothing to do with genes’ (p.337), and referred to ‘the process of some groups replacing other groups’ (p.193) through this claimed ‘cultural group selection’, giving the example of how ‘the Nuer [tribe’s] social system replaced the Dinka [tribe’s] social system because it was better organized at the level of large groups’ (p.189).

What D.S. Wilson and Sober were, in effect, arguing was that animal behaviour, including human behaviour, resulted from natural selection operating not only at the level of the sexually reproducing individual, but also at the level of the group of sexually reproducing individuals, and specifically in the between-group situation. They were also arguing that influences outside the gene-driven natural selection process, in particular cultural influences—so-called ‘antifunctional’ forces—also played a part in the development of behaviours, including the development of unconditionally selfless behaviour in humans.

These multilevel influences will be looked at next, after which I will conclude their analysis with an overall evaluation of its truthfulness or otherwise.
Part 4:12H-ii The individual and group level influence

In launching their defence of group selection in their 1994 paper titled ‘Re-introducing Group Selection to the Human Behavioral Sciences’, D.S. Wilson and Sober referred to Darwin’s recognition of between-group selection, which, to their credit, they admitted Darwin hadn’t pursued, writing in the expanded version of their paper, their 1998 book Unto Others: The Evolution and Psychology of Unselfish Behavior, that Darwin’s ‘practice was to appeal to this process only rarely’ (p.4). From that point on in their 1994 paper, the main focus of D.S. Wilson and Sober’s argument was on convincing their readers that Evolutionary Psychology’s denial of the importance of the group, basically denial of the integrative theme of existence, the ‘nested hierarchy of units’ as they refer to it (such as Williams asserting ‘group-related adaptations don’t exist’, and Dawkins saying ‘there was no such thing as superorganisms’), ‘was just plain wrong’. They pointed out that ‘According to Williams and Dawkins...even sexually reproducing organisms do not qualify as units of selection’, they are only what ‘Dawkins...called “vehicles of selection”’, ‘environments’ for the ‘selfish genes’ to achieve their goal of reproduction. They wondered ‘why genes are suitable candidates for units of selection whereas organisms, groups and so on are not’ and complained that ‘Gene-centered theorists frame-shift downward with enthusiasm but they are much more reluctant to frame-shift upward’ in ‘the biological hierarchy...[of] nested series of units’. They railed against ‘gene-centered theorists...who claimed to explain the social insects without invoking group selection’. This whole criticism of right-wing ‘gene-centered theorists’ was an obvious and easy criticism to make because of course ant and bee superorganisms exist, and of course there is an integrating ‘nested hierarchy’ of order of matter on Earth, but that overlooks the strategy employed when denying an unbearable truth: right-wing Evolutionary Psychologists weren’t worried about the truth, only about finding a possible way of denying Integrative Meaning, which they sought to achieve through promoting their kin selection theory. Again, when the need for denial is critical any excuse will do—it only has to be a reasonably accountable argument and then you simply stick to it like glue. You can see this principle at work in a football match where it doesn’t matter that your team wins only by a point in a very close and long fought game, which in fact indicates that there is virtually no difference in the quality of the two teams—a win is a win, your team’s the best and you have ‘won’ some much-needed relief for your embattled ego and that’s all that matters, unreal or unwarranted as that may be! Players are, very often, not even from the country or region they are representing, so the truth is the win doesn’t at all prove your country or region is the best, but, again, that doesn’t matter, just make sure you come out on top any way you can! So yes, pointing out what is obviously false about Evolutionary Psychology was a good starting point for D.S. Wilson and Sloan’s attack on the right-wing, but, of course, what they were doing by acknowledging group selection was admitting Integrative Meaning and, by so doing, exposing humanity to fearful self-confrontation—but such was the desperation of the left to resist the right that they were prepared to pay that price. I might mention that it appears that the way the left-wing coped with their acknowledgment of Integrative Meaning was by deluding themselves that since they weren’t advocating the involvement of a divine being, a cosmic-magician-type God, there was no problem with recognising Integrative Meaning/teleology/holism; as D.S. Wilson and Sloan put it in Unto Others, ‘Thinking of groups of organic units subject to their own laws of behavior smacked of mysticism, and once holism was purged of mysticism’ (p.329) — with the unsaid words following this phrase seeming to be that ‘there was no problem with holism’. And indeed, in Unto Others Integrative Meaning is fully recognised: ‘Some evolutionary biologists have proposed that the history of life on earth has been marked by a number of major transitions in which previously autonomous units became integrated into higher-level units (J. Maynard Smith & E. Szathmary,

The other part of D.S. Wilson and Sober’s attack on selfishness-justifying, right-wing Evolutionary Psychologists was to argue that there is a way in which, in the between-group selection situation, the winning group of altruists don’t end up becoming subverted by selfish opportunists. This point raises the keystone in their strategy because, remember, the subversion from within even a group of winning altruists was the big problem the left were going to have to disprove in order to successfully resurrect the between-group selection theory.

And so, in Unto Others, D.S. Wilson and Sober put forward an explanation involving between-group selection for how unconditional selflessness/altruism could be developed despite such behaviour being constantly undermined by selfish opportunism. I find it difficult following formulaic, game-theory type arguments, that ‘If you have three apples in the cupboard and you take one out from under the sink then they’ll all pop up in the back shed!’, but we need to consider their thesis, which does have a surprising logic. Using the figures in the theoretical model presented on p.25 of Unto Others, if we imagine there are two groups that both have 100 members and Group S (‘S’ for more Selfish) has 20 percent altruists and Group A (‘A’ for more Altruists) has 80 percent altruists, then the percentage of altruists in the global population would be 50 percent \((0.2\times100 + 0.8\times100)/200\). In the offspring generation, the altruists would have, as predicted, declined in frequency within each group because of the emergence of selfish opportunism, such that Group S now has 18.4 percent altruists and Group A 78.7 percent; however, because altruists are more cooperative and thus more successful in competing and reproducing offspring than those in the other group, the group with more altruists grows larger than the group with fewer altruists, such that Group S now has 1080 members compared to Group A’s 1320 members — so while the proportion of altruists has declined within each group, altruists have actually increased in frequency across the global population from 50 percent to 51.6 percent \((0.184\times1080 + 0.787\times2400)/2400\)!! The success of altruism in this model is an example of a statistical phenomenon known as Simpson’s Paradox (see Unto Others, p.23) — meaning, in this instance, that although altruists are diminishing within each group (because of the ‘subversion from within’ problem), they are increasing overall because the group with a greater proportion of altruists are more successful in competing and reproducing offspring than those in the other group. So, according to this D.S. Wilson and Sober-formulated two-group model, altruists can increase in frequency in the global population, despite the fact that they decrease in frequency within each group. In summarising ‘what is required to produce this
interesting (and for many people counterintuitive) result’, D.S. Wilson and Sober wrote that ‘To be sufficient, the differential fitness of groups...must be strong enough to counter the differential fitness of individuals within groups...[Thus] Altruism can evolve if the process of group selection is sufficiently strong’ (ibid. pp.26-27). In other words, the degree to which the more altruistic group outperforms the more selfish group (in terms of the number of progeny they leave) must be great enough to counter the degree to which the selfish are outperforming the altruists within the groups.

As D.S. Wilson and Sober pointed out, for this model to work, ‘the progeny of both groups disperse and then physically come together before forming new groups of their own’, but if this can occur, and ‘the process be repeated over many generations, altruists will gradually replace the selfish types, just as the selfish types replace the altruists in the one group example’ (ibid. pp.25-26). D.S. Wilson and Sober added that ‘Of course, we must still explain how, generation after generation, altruists tend to find themselves living with altruists, and selfish individuals tend to associate with other selfish individuals’ (p.26). Conceding that these ‘assumptions of our two-group model...may have seemed unlikely’ (p.29), D.S. Wilson and Sober then presented an example from nature where they say this two-group model for the development of altruism is ‘biologically plausible’ (p.29), which is in the life cycle of the Dicrocoelium dendriticum, a trematode parasite that spends the adult stage of its life cycle in the livers of cows and sheep, then two generations within land snails, and then yet another stage in ants, where the parasite migrates to the ant’s brain and forms what is known as the brain worm. Without going into detail of the brain worm’s entire cycle, in terms of the requirement for ‘altruistic and selfish types to become concentrated into different groups’, D.S. Wilson and Sober wrote that in the case of the brain worm, ‘This is accomplished biologically by reproduction within the snails, which concentrates the progeny of the mutant altruist into a single group’ (p.29).

They then addressed other issues and concluded that ‘The brain worm remains a fascinating prima facie example of altruism from the field of natural history, but the conceptually relevant details have only been guessed’ (p.30).

In a review of D.S. Wilson and Sober’s theory, Richard Lewontin summarised their argument thus: ‘If [as a result of between-group selection] some group has, by chance, a higher frequency of altruistic individuals, and if the consequence is a larger number of offspring for the group as a whole, then even though there is some selection against the altruists within each group, altruism may come to characterize the species’ (‘Survival of the Nicest?’, New York Review of Books, 22 Oct. 1998).

To further support their belief that between-group selection can develop unconditionally selfless traits, D.S. Wilson and Sober described how evidence suggests that between-group selection can explain both the occurrence of female-biased sex ratios that some small invertebrate species have (Unto Others, pp.35-43), and the evolution of reduced virulence in some disease organisms (ibid. pp.43-50). They concluded that ‘We have reviewed the examples of sex ratio and disease virulence in detail [because]...they show that group selection is more than “just a theory” and has been documented as well as any theory in evolutionary biology’ (p.50).

In describing the history of the idea of how between-group selection might be able to explain the development of unconditionally selfless traits, D.S. Wilson and Sober referred to William Hamilton, one of the architects behind the demise of group selection theory in the 1960s, reconsidering his position and agreeing that group selection may play a role in evolution. They also referred to that other architect of the demise of group selection, George Williams and his own revised views on group selection, writing that ‘[the reader] may be surprised to learn that even G. C. Williams, the icon of the individual selection movement, has accepted the evidence for group selection as the best explanation of important biological adaptations
such as female-biased sex ratios and reduced virulence in disease organisms’ (ibid. p.7). It should be explained that while Williams did change his mind about group selection in regard to some very specific traits, namely instances of female biased sex ratios and reduced virulence in disease organisms, he remained unconvinced about group selection’s wider applicability, as D.S. Wilson admitted in a later publication ‘In general, however, George retained his worldview and I didn’t convince him about group selection’ (‘Rest in Peace George C. Williams, ScienceBlogs, 10. Sep. 2010). They also discussed John Maynard Smith’s influential 1964 ‘haystack model’ (thus termed because it involved a species of mouse that lived in haystacks) which greatly helped to establish the view ‘that group selection models were too implausible to be taken seriously’ (ibid. p.71). Without going into detail, D.S. Wilson and Sober referred to D.S. Wilson’s 1986 re-analysis of the model in which he ascribed what he regards as more realistic values to the benefits to selfish mice and the costs to altruistic mice. D.S. Wilson has, elsewhere, summarised this modified ‘haystack model’ by saying that ‘It turns out that altruism can evolve by group selection, using reasonable values of b [benefit to recipient] and c [cost to altruist], even when the altruistic gene is initially rare in the total population. The model that led to the rejection of group selection is favorable for group selection after all’ (Blog titled Truth and Reconciliation for Group Selection IX: Anatomy of a Model (continued), 17 Apr. 2009).

So, D.S. Wilson and Sober maintained that ‘altruism can evolve’ by between-group selection ‘after all’, and that group-level natural selection should therefore be included with individual-level natural selection in explaining the evolution of behaviour, especially human behaviour. As mentioned, the validity or otherwise of this argument that we humans have selfish instincts derived from competition between individuals, and selfless instincts arising from competition between groups, will be examined at the conclusion of this analysis of Multilevel Selection, in Part 4:12H-vi. However, I might say here that these situations where between-group selection of unconditionally selfless traits is said to have occurred, namely in the occurrence of female-biased sex ratios that some small invertebrate species have, and the evolution of reduced virulence in some disease organisms, seem so improbable as to be impossible for large mammals who don’t have complex life cycles.

Part 4:12H-iii The influence of culture

In this review of D.S. Wilson and Sober’s Multilevel Selection theory involving the ‘plurality of causes of evolutionary change’ of ‘individual level functionalism, group-level functionalism, and antifunctionalism’, we have, at this stage, looked at their arguments relating to ‘individual level functionalism, group-level functionalism’. What remains to consider are their views on ‘antifunctionalism’, which are ‘traits [that] have evolved for reasons having nothing much to do with natural selection’—specifically, ‘In the case of human beings…the importance of culture’ (Unto Others, p.331). In short, they argued that ‘Natural selection based on cultural variation has produced adaptations that have nothing to do with genes’ (p.337).

The following is an expanded description of D.S. Wilson and Sober’s human cultural evolution argument, in their own words (the italics are as they appear in the text, the underlinings, however, have been added for emphasis): ‘we will make a specific claim about human cultural evolution: In most human social groups, cultural transmission is guided by a set of norms that identify what counts as acceptable behavior. People who violate the norms are subject to punishment or exclusion from the group’ (Unto Others, p.150). ‘Consider two imaginary cultures, the squibs and the squabs. The squibs follow the social norm “Be altruistic to fellow squibs, punish those who don’t, and punish those who fail to punish.” The squabs have the norm “Solve your own problems.” They freely exploit fellow squabs…The altruistic squibs will outperform the quarrelsome squabs in all situations...
that involve between-group processes... The problem of cheaters and freeloaders within groups, which is so often used to argue against the evolution of altruism, is not a problem for the squibs because cheaters and freeloaders are severely punished’ (p.151). ‘Our imaginary example of the squibs and squabs informally describes a theory of cultural group selection that has been developed by Boyd and Richerson’ (p.152). D.S. Wilson and Sober argue that ‘virtually all cultures possess strong social norms that appear designed to promote the well-being of the group’ (p.183) and that ‘Seeing rewards and punishments as products of group selection goes a long way toward explaining how human social groups can be organismic [integrated] even though they do not have the same population structure as clonal organisms or social insect colonies’ (p.149). They claim that ‘mechanisms that substitute for genealogical relatedness probably operate in many species, but they do so especially in human populations, because they require sophisticated cognitive abilities and (in some cases) the cultural transmission of behavior. Thus, multilevel selection theory has the potential to explain not only why humans are ultrasonic, but why they have experienced a unique variety of group selection’ (p.158). To illustrate ‘the process of some groups replacing other groups’ (p.193) through this claimed ‘cultural group selection’, D.S. Wilson and Sober offer the example of how ‘the Nuer [tribe’s] social system replaced the Dinka [tribe’s] social system because it was better organized at the level of large groups’ (p.189).

So, D.S. Wilson and Sober are arguing that because of humans’ ‘sophisticated cognitive abilities’—namely our fully conscious mind—we are able to put in place ‘strong social norms’ or controls to ward against selfish behaviour. This is certainly true, but the questions remain as to how and why humans became fully conscious and divisively behaved in the first place; why did we fully conscious humans become competitive, selfish and aggressive when our instinctive moral conscience’s ideals are to be cooperative, selfless and loving? What is the origin of the human condition, the origin of our less-than-ideal behaviour? Why have we needed both self discipline and imposed discipline? Why did we need to develop such cultural laws of constraint as the Ten Commandments? Certainly, the ‘fallen’, corrupted, psychologically upset state of the human condition emerged and we then had to find ways to control it until we could find the clarifying, reconciling, exonerating, dignifying, uplifting, redeeming, relieving, healing, ameliorating understanding of that ‘fallen’, corrupted, psychologically upset state, but where is the description of that bigger picture that imposed discipline is only a part of? Where is the deeper analysis? The true story about our human condition that biologists are charged with having to scientifically explain is that which appears in the Bible: ‘God created man in his own image’ (Gen. 1:27) (we did once live in that completely integrated, unconditionally selflessly behaved, cooperative, loving ideal state), and then we took the ‘fruit...from the tree of knowledge’ (Gen. 3:3, 2:17) (became conscious), and then we ‘fell from grace’ (derived from the title of Gen. 3, ‘The Fall of Man’) (became corrupted, psychologically upset, angry, egocentric and alienated), and, as a result, were ‘banished...from the Garden of Eden’ (Gen. 3:23) (state of our original innocence (became insecure/guilt-ridden about our fundamental goodness and worth) and became ‘a restless wanderer on the earth’ (Gen. 4:14) (became psychotic and neurotic) until we could find the reconciling, healing understanding of the ‘good and evil’ (Gen. 3:5) in our make-up and, by so doing, become ‘like God, knowing [understanding] good and evil’ (ibid). From being ‘in the image of God’ (Gen. 1:27)—that is, instinctively orientated to the integrative, Godly ideals of being cooperative, selfless and loving—we then had to search for the understanding of our psychologically upset, corrupted, ‘fall[en]’ state that would enable us to become ‘knowing’—that is, cognisant of the integrative, Godly ideals and why we departed from them.

Yes, that is the story we biologists are charged with having to explain—and which now has been explained here in Freedom: Expanded Book I, but which D.S. Wilson
and Sober don’t deal with at all, let alone explain! To argue that ‘norms’ or forms of cultural restraint were important completely misses the bigger issue of the whole journey that the human race has been involved in of seeking ameliorating understanding of our psychologically upset condition. In fact, as will be pointed out shortly in Part 4:12H-vi when the question of ‘What is the truth about Multilevel Selection theory?’ is addressed, D.S. Wilson and Sober’s theory about altruism is just a contorted, bewildered, dishonest—alienated—interpretation of the nature of our human condition.

**Part 4:12H-iv Psychological influence**

A parallel movement to the right-wing, selfishness-emphasising biological account of the origin of altruism has occurred within the social sciences, with some of those working in the fields of psychology, philosophy, economics and political theory seeking to avoid the agony of the human condition by contriving a defence for selfishness that suggests that when we humans do behave selflessly towards others we are only doing so to selfishly derive a future benefit—or at least the warm inner ‘glow of satisfaction’ (*Unto Others*, p.243) that comes from ‘doing good’. Towards the end of *Unto Others*, D.S. Wilson and Sober explore this concept of so-called psychological altruism; as they explain it, while ‘evolutionary biologists define altruism entirely in terms of survival and reproduction...Philosophical and psychological discussions of altruism often concentrate...heavily on motives’ (p.17). According to the latter, ‘The act of helping others does not count as (psychologically) altruistic unless the actor thinks of the welfare of others as an ultimate goal’ (p.6). By way of illustration, D.S. Wilson and Sober refer to the view that ‘Even saints could be regarded as selfish if they perceived their lives of sacrifice as tickets to heaven’ (p.17).

As a result of this abhorrent argument put forward by some in the social sciences that all selfless acts undertaken by humans are actually acts of ‘psychological egoism’ (p.251), or, as it is sometimes termed, ‘competitive altruism’, the truth that humans have an unconditionally selfless, genuinely altruistic, truly loving moral nature fell out of favour amongst psychologists, philosophers, economists and political theorists—just as the truth about our unconditionally selfless moral nature fell out of favour amongst biologists. As D.S. Wilson and Sober put it, just as belief in the existence of ‘Genuinely altruistic traits...became an endangered species in evolutionary biology’ (because ‘such apparently altruistic traits...as human morality...are said to be only apparently altruistic because individuals who help others receive benefits in return [reciprocity] or promote their “genetic self-interest” by helping copies of their own genes that are found in the bodies of others [kin selection]’), so the existence of ‘genuine psychological altruism...[became] an endangered species in the social sciences’ (ibid. p.6). So, D.S. Wilson and Sober were now keenly attempting to counter both the selfishness-justifying, right-wing arguments being put forward by Evolutionary Psychologists and this dismissal in the social sciences of our unconditionally selfless, genuinely altruistic, truly loving moral nature.

Given how desperate humans have been to contrive a way of escaping the agony of the human condition it is not at all surprising that the upset human race actually developed an argument that suggested that when humans were being selfless and caring they were actually being motivated by self-interest—that, for example, people only do charitable acts to earn the praise and respect of others—BUT, such a defence is a disgraceful denigration of the true nature of our wonderful unconditionally selfless, genuinely altruistic, truly loving, fully empathetic moral nature. Apart from it being a complete denial of what we all, in truth, do intuitively know about the nature of our wonderful moral instincts, which is that they are unconditionally selfless, trying to separate biological/evolutionary altruism
from psychological altruism, when the latter has to be derived from the former, doesn't make sense. We have moral instincts—our conscience—that makes our conscious mind aware that to think and behave selfishly is wrong and that to think and behave selflessly is right; we have moral instincts that criticise our conscious mind’s decisions (just as we have instincts that tell our conscious mind to abate our thirst with water; to have a drink), and this criticism from our moral instincts of our mind’s thoughts is central to the creation of our psychologically upset state of the human condition. Our psychological condition is derived from, and related to, our biological condition.

We, the whole of our beings, are biologically derived. All the elements involved in our psychologically upset human condition, namely our instincts and conscious mind, are biologically derived, which makes biology the key to understanding human behaviour. Our psychologically upset state does overlay our moral instinctive soul, but, nevertheless, our soul remains—we are still capable of real love, namely unconditional selflessness, of helping others without any regard for self. Certainly, after we developed our unconditionally selfless moral soul and became conscious, the insecure state of the human condition emerged and we became angry, egocentric and alienated, and, as a result, do often have ulterior motives, such as wanting ‘tickets to heaven’, to derive a warm inner ‘glow of satisfaction’ from being idealistic, and to want to earn the praise and respect of others, but that doesn’t eliminate our ability to think and behave unconditionally selflessly. The existence of our moral soul wasn’t destroyed by the advent of the human condition; indeed, as pointed out, its continued presence in the form of our conscience is why we have suffered so acutely from the insecure state of the human condition—it has made us feel guilty when we behave selfishly. Our capacity to be unconditionally selfless is real, even though we are also capable of being duplicitous and having ulterior motives as a result of suffering from the upset state of the human condition. When Joe Delaney, a professional footballer, acknowledged that ‘I can’t swim good, but I’ve got to save those kids’, just moments before plunging into a Louisiana pond and drowning in an attempt to rescue two boys (TIME mag. 26 Dec. 1983), it was possible, indeed highly probable, that he was being unconditionally selfless. So, while, as I will shortly explain, I don’t agree that D.S. Wilson and Sober’s between-group selection theory explains how we acquired our unconditionally selfless moral instincts, I do agree with their assertion about psychological altruism, that ‘We will not suggest that everyone has a thoroughgoing and saintly dedication to helping others—that people always treat the well-being of others as an end in itself and never think of their own welfare. Rather, our objective will be to show that concern for others is one of the ultimate motives that people sometimes have’ (Unto Others, p.9).

The central question we need to keep asking ourselves is are our moral instincts unconditionally selfless or not, because if they are—and indeed they are—then we do have a conscious awareness that it is right to treat others with unconditional selflessness, and therefore we do have the ability to consciously decide to behave unconditionally selflessly towards others. As D.S. Wilson and Sober put it, ‘If evolutionary altruism is absent in nature, why should psychological altruism be present in human nature?’ (ibid. p.6). Yes, why is it present? That is the real question.

Part 4:12H-v Summary of the Multilevel Selection theory

D.S. Wilson and Sober summarise their theory as follows: ‘Altruism can be removed from the endangered species list in both biology and the social sciences. Groups can qualify as organismic units. Culture can play a vital role in the evolutionary process. And the study of psychological mechanisms can be as evolutionary as the study of behavior. It is heartening to
contemplate the emergence of a legitimate pluralism—for evolutionary theories of social behavior, for theories of psychological motivation, and for the larger intellectual traditions that influence how we think about ourselves and the world around us’ (*Unto Others*, p.337).

**Part 4:12H-vi What is the truth about the Multilevel Selection theory?**

So, what is the truth about D.S. Wilson and Sober’s Multilevel Selection theory; in particular, what is the truth regarding their argument that unconditional selflessness can be developed through between-group selection? Having now considered D.S. Wilson and Sober’s two-group model, it may be possible for between-group selection to develop unconditionally selfless traits in a few situations (such as in the brain worm, female-biased sex ratios and virulence situations perhaps), however, I maintain that the virtual universality of dominance hierarchy amongst social animals evidences just how strong natural selection at the individual level is and therefore that, even in a between-group situation, unconditional selflessness cannot be developed amongst sexually reproducing individual animals. As D.S. Wilson and Sober admitted themselves, the process does ‘seem’ ‘unlikely’. Yes, this between-group selection model where ‘the progeny of both groups disperse and then physically come together before forming new groups of their own’, and where, if this can occur, and ‘the process be repeated over many generations’, and where ‘generation after generation, altruists [somehow] tend to find themselves living with altruists, and selfish individuals [somehow] tend to associate with other selfish individuals’, then ‘altruists will gradually replace the selfish types’, does ‘seem’ ‘unlikely’ even though it is, supposedly, ‘biologically plausible’ and is theorised to have occurred in the brain worm situation.

Richard Dawkins has been extremely critical of the between-group selection argument for the development of unconditionally selfless instincts, saying it is ‘poorly defined and incoherent’ and that ‘Convincing examples are vanishingly hard to find’ (‘The descent of Edward Wilson’, *Prospect* mag. 24 May 2012). I think these comments do capture the sense that between-group selection is such a complex and devious mechanism—involving individuals repeatedly dispersing and then coming together to form groups in which, somehow, altruists associate with altruists and the selfish associate with the selfish—that it is an extremely unlikely mechanism for developing unconditionally selfless instincts in animals. While another comment by Dawkins that ‘biologists with non-analytic minds warm to multilevel selection’ (ibid) is untrue in that supporters of Multilevel Selection are no more ‘non-analytic[al]’, human-condition-avoiding-and-thus-unable-to-think-truthfully-and-thus-effectively—or, as R.D. Laing said, ‘alienated’, ‘asleep’, ‘unconscious’, ‘dead’ and ‘blind’—than Evolutionary Psychologists, the comment does recognise and reveal that supporters of between-group selection are being prejudicially driven by a left-wing, dogmatic, don’t-question-or-think-about-our-imperfect-human-condition-just-be-ideally-behaved agenda to derive a feel-good, ‘warm’ inner glow from supporting the idealistic, selflessness-emphasising between-group selection explanation that says we humans do have unconditionally selfless moral instincts.

In 2011 another prominent right-wing biologist, Jerry Coyne, presented this summary of the perceived limitations of between-group selection’s ability to develop unconditional selflessness, which, aside from the last sentence, I agree with (as usual, the underlinings are my emphasis): ‘Group selection isn’t widely accepted by evolutionists for several reasons. First, it’s not an efficient way to select for traits, like altruistic behavior, that are supposed to be detrimental to the individual but good for the group. Groups divide to form other groups much less often than organisms reproduce to form other organisms, so group selection for altruism would be unlikely to override the tendency of each group to quickly lose its altruists through natural selection favoring
cheaters. Further, we simply have little evidence that selection on groups has promoted the evolution of any trait. Finally, other, more plausible evolutionary forces, like direct selection on individuals for reciprocal support, could have made us prosocial (‘Can Darwinism improve Binghamton?’; The New York Times, 9 Sep. 2011). It wasn’t ‘reciprocal support’ that ‘made us prosocial’, it was another ‘more plausible evolutionary force’—love-indoctrination.

The point should also be made that being unaware of the love-indoctrination explanation for our unconditionally selfless moral instincts meant that both right-wing and left-wing biologists were prone to be seduced by their respective Evolutionary Psychology and between-group selection ‘explanations’ for our moral instincts. They couldn’t help but think, ‘Humans’ moral instincts do exist, so there must be a biological explanation for them and, since there are no other possible explanations for them that aren’t prejudiced [because, of course, they are unable to recognise their own prejudice], it simply has to be due to the theory that I’m putting forward.’ Comments such as ‘If altruism manages to evolve, this indicates that the group-selection process has been strong enough to overwhelm the force pushing in the opposite direction’ (Unto Others, p.33) smack of this ‘It-exists-and-since-there-is-no-other-valid-explanation-it-has-to-be-this-explanation’ seduction and delusion.

So, I don’t at all agree with D.S. Wilson and Sober’s view that ‘group selection is...a significant evolutionary force’ (ibid. p.51), and, as I will explain, I don’t at all agree that between-group selection could have created our completely concerned-with-larger-whole-not-yourself, moral instinctive orientation to life.

I should mention that I do get the impression that D.S. Wilson and Sober are aware that their between-group selection explanation for our uncondition ally selfless moral instincts is flimsy and that to bolster its ‘credibility’ they have resorted to using the same ‘matrix of mechanisms’ device that, as I described in Part 4:12G, other left-wing biologists, like Gould, Lewontin and Sussman, clung to. Yes, D.S. Wilson and Sober’s ‘Multilevel’ account is another ‘matrix of mechanisms’-type explanation where, as they say in their conclusion, along with individual-level selection, ‘Groups can qualify as organismic units. Culture can play a vital role in the evolutionary process. And the study of psychological mechanisms can be as evolutionary as the study of behavior.’ For example, when they said that culture ‘goes a long way toward explaining how human social groups can be organismic’, it was as if they recognised that their between-group selection explanation needed significant help. The truth is that rather than being a factor involved in ‘explaining how human social groups can be organismic’ (can become integrated), cultural restraints actually developed after we became integrated, and after the ‘sophisticated cognitive abilities’ of our conscious mind developed, and, as a result of the conflict that occurred between those two forces, the human condition emerged, at which point all our upset behaviour had to be contained by such cultural restraints as self discipline and then imposed discipline (as explained in Parts 3:11D and 3:11G). Also, the only ‘psychological’ aspect of the human condition referred to by D.S. Wilson and Sober was the issue of the ‘motivation’ or intent behind selfless acts. There was no analysis of the psychology of the human condition at all. So, for them to assert that ‘It is heartening to contemplate the emergence of a legitimate pluralism—for evolutionary theories of social behavior, for theories of psychological motivation, and for the larger intellectual traditions that influence how we think about ourselves and the world around us’ is a complete bluff. Basically, D.S. Wilson and Sober were desperately throwing everything into the melting pot of possibilities to try to create a ‘heartening’, ‘matrix of mechanisms’-type illusion that they had provided a ‘legitimate’ selflessness-emphasising counter to the right-wing’s selfishness-emphasising Evolutionary Psychology!

I will now explain why D.S. Wilson and Sober’s explanations for how we acquired our selfless moral instincts and for why we are selfish are both completely wrong.
Firstly, with regard to how we acquired our selfless moral instincts, even if there are a few complex situations where between-group selection has contributed to the development of unconditionally selfless instincts, it could not possibly have developed our species’ completely concerned-with-the-larger-whole-not-yourself, moral instinctive orientation to life.

As I have stressed, the idea that our moral instinctive self or soul is derived from group vs group conflict does not equate at all with what we all know about what our born-with, instinctive moral conscience wants us to feel and how it wants us to behave towards all humans, and even towards all creatures—indeed towards all of life—which is to feel and behave lovingly towards all things. Our instinctive orientation is to love, not to be at war with other people, and to argue otherwise is in truth as abhorrent as the right-wing’s advocacy of Evolutionary Psychology’s denigration of our moral soul as nothing more than a subtle form of selfishness. No human who is prepared to be truthful (which I appreciate that under the duress of the human condition almost no humans have been prepared to be) would accept that our species’ completely concerned-with-the-larger-whole-not-yourself, moral instinctive orientation to life is driven by an extremely selfish, competitive and divisive cause, namely to give warring groups a competitive advantage. The truth that we all do know about our born-with, instinctive moral conscience is that it doesn’t want us to be at war with other humans—that is the very last thing our moral instincts desire. No, our moral instincts are not derived from competition between groups of humans, they are universally loving.

Further, for our moral instinctive orientation to be as deeply, completely and truly loving as it is requires nurturing in an environment of love—not, as suggested by the between-group selection model, an environment that is firstly one where everyone is basically selfish, and secondly where any selflessness that does occur is continually undermined and under siege from selfish cheaters. Unlike the between-group selection situation, love-indoctrination both develops from and creates a whole environment of love. We are born with an instinctive expectation of being unconditionally loved that comes from a time when our species lived in a nurturing, all-loving situation—but there is no recognition of this in D.S. Wilson and Sober’s Multilevel theory.

Further, the complex, devious, subtle mechanism of repeatedly dispersing and then coming together in groups in which altruists somehow associate with altruists, and the selfish associate with the selfish, isn’t at all consistent with how our universally and always loving, unsophisticated, unsubtle, straightforward, uncomplicated, moral instinctive orientation to life operates.

And further still, instead of creating just a few unconditionally selfless/loving traits, love-indoctrination has given us a complete orientation to love in the sense that while between-group selection may have enabled a rare few unconditionally selfless traits to emerge, its ability to develop unconditional selflessness en masse—many, many unconditionally selfless instincts together—indeed, to develop an entire genetic ethos of unconditional selflessness, a not-occasional-but-in-all-situations, universal, completely concerned-with-the-larger-whole-not-yourself, moral instinctive orientation to life, such as we have, has to be impossible.

In stark contrast, D.S. Wilson and Sober actually concede that their between-group selection theory has not given us a universal, not-occasional-but-in-all-situations, completely unconditionally selfless, concerned-with-the-larger-whole-not-yourself, all-loving, moral instinctive orientation to life. As they say, they are putting forward a multilevel account of human behaviour that involves both selfish instincts derived from
individual-level selection and unconditionally selfless instincts that they claim have resulted from between-group conflict at the group level—and even from ‘antifunctional’ influences such as culture. Indeed, they say that ‘our goal in this book is not to paint a rosy picture of universal benevolence. Group selection does provide a setting in which helping behavior directed at members of one’s own group can evolve; however, it equally provides a context in which hurting individuals in other groups can be selectively advantageous. Group selection favors within-group niceness and between-group nastiness’ (Unto Others, p.9).

So, according to D.S. Wilson and Sober, our original instinctive state was not one of ‘universal benevolence’, but one with instincts for both ‘niceness’ and ‘nastiness’—but that is absolutely untrue. So much of the great literature of the world (especially the work of our greatest thinkers), and all our mythologies, and all our great religious teachings, and even the observations of honest scientists, have recognised that we humans did once live in a completely concerned-with-the-larger-whole-not-yourself, fully cooperative, all-loving, utterly harmonious, totally empathetic, absolutely innocent, ‘Garden of Eden’-like (Gen. 3:23), ‘Golden Age’—the instinctive memory of which is our moral soul. To summarise these many references to our species’ all-loving instinctive past it is worth recalling the following passage from Richard Heinberg’s 1990 book, Memories & Visions of Paradise, which was included earlier in Part 4:6: ‘Every religion begins with the recognition that human consciousness has been separated from the divine [Integrative Meaning orientated] Source, that a former sense of oneness…has been lost…everywhere in religion and myth there is an acknowledgment that we have departed from an original…innocence…the cause of the Fall is described variously as disobedience, as the eating of a forbidden fruit, and as spiritual amnesia [alienation]’ (pp.81-82 of 282). For instance, in the Bible, a passage in Ecclesiastics states that ‘God made mankind upright [uncorrupted], but men have gone in search of many schemes [understandings]’ (7:29). Similarly, Christ spoke of a time when God ‘loved [us] before the creation of the [upset, human-condition-afflicted] world’ (John 17:24), and a time of ‘the glory…before the [upset] world began’ (John 17:5).

The eighth century BC Greek poet Hesiod similarly recognised the pre-human-condition-afflicted, upset-free, completely innocent ‘Golden Age’ in our species’ past in his poem Theogony:

When gods alike and mortals rose to birth / A golden race the immortals formed on earth…Like gods [Integrative-Meaning-orientated beings] they lived, with calm untroubled mind / Free from the toils and anguish of our kind / Nor e’er decrepit age misshaped their frame…Strangers to ill, their lives in feasts flowed by…Dying they sank in sleep, nor seemed to die / Theirs was each good; the life-sustaining soil / Yielded its copious fruits, unbribed by toil / They with abundant goods ’midst quiet lands / All willing shared the gathering of their hands.’

In a more recent literary work, the poet William Wordsworth referred to the instinctive memory that we are born with of a fully cooperative, all-loving, completely Integrative-Meaning-orientated past existence when he wrote that ‘The Soul that rises with us, our life’s Star…cometh from afar…trailing clouds of glory do we come / From God, who is our home’ (Intimations of Immortality, 1807). In his 1931 book The Destiny of Man, the philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev wrote that ‘The memory of a lost paradise, of a Golden Age, is very deep in man’ (tr. N. Duddington, 1960, p.36 of 310). The philosopher Bruce Chatwin was another who recognised the harmony that originally existed between our own instinct and still not fully developed conscious mind when he wrote that ‘[the third century theologian Origen argued that] at the beginning of human history, men were under supernatural protection, so there was no division between their divine and human natures: or, to rephrase the passage, there was no contradiction between a man’s instinctual life and his reason’ (The Songlines, 1987, p.227 of 325). Chatwin also recognised mythology’s acknowledgement that our species did once live in a state of innocence, writing that ‘Every mythology remembers the innocence of the first state: Adam in the Garden, the peaceful Hyperboreans, the Uttarakurus or “the Men of Perfect Virtue” of the Taoists.'
Pessimists often interpret the story of the Golden Age as a tendency to turn our backs on the ills of the present, and sigh for the happiness of youth. But nothing in Hesiod’s text exceeds the bounds of probability. The real or half-real tribes which hover on the fringe of ancient geographies—Atavantes, Fenni, Parrossits or the dancing Spermatophagi—have their modern equivalents in the Bushman, the Shoshonean, the Eskimo and the Aboriginal’ (ibid. p.227). The philosopher Sir Laurens van der Post also acknowledged that ‘before the dawning of individual consciousness’ humans lived in a state of ‘togetherness’ when he wrote that ‘This shrill, brittle, self-important life of today is by comparison a graveyard where the living are dead and the dead are alive and talking [through our soul] in the still, small, clear voice of a love and trust in life that we have for the moment lost… [there was a time when] All on earth and in the universe were still members and family of the early race seeking comfort and warmth through the long, cold night before the dawning of individual consciousness in a togetherness which still gnaws like an unappeasable homesickness at the base of the human heart’ (Testament to the Bushmen, 1984, pp.127-128 of 176). He had also previously written that ‘I spoke to you earlier on of this dark child of nature, this other primitive man within each one of us with whom we are at war in our spirit’ (The Dark Eye in Africa, 1955, p.154 of 159), and that ‘There was indeed a cruelly denied and neglected first child of life, a Bushman in each of us’ (The Heart of The Hunter, 1961, p.126 of 233), describing the relative innocence and empathy of this ‘first child of life’ in us as follows: ‘He [the Bushman] and his needs were committed to the nature of Africa and the swing of its wide seasons as a fish to the sea. He and they all participated so deeply of one another’s being that the experience could almost be called mystical. For instance, he seemed to know what it actually felt like to be an elephant, a lion, an antelope, a steenbuck, a lizard, a striped mouse, mantis, baobab tree, yellow-crested cobra, or starry-eyed amaryllis, to mention only a few of the brilliant multitudes through which he so nimbly moved. Even as a child it seemed to me that his world was one without secrets between one form of being and another’ (The Lost World of the Kalahari, 1958, p.21 of 253). The poet D.H. Lawrence was another who recognised our species’ lost state of sensitive innocence when he wrote that ‘In the dust, where we have buried / The silent races and their abominations [their confronting innocence] / We have buried so much of the delicate magic of life’ (Son of Woman: The Story of D.H. Lawrence, D.H. Lawrence, 1931, p.227 of 402). The philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau also acknowledged the innocence of our original instinctive state and our present corrupted state when he wrote that ‘nothing is more gentle than man in his primitive state’ (The Social Contract and Discourses, 1755; tr. G.D.H. Cole, pub. 1913, Book IV, The Origin of Inequality, p.198 of 269) and ‘Man is born free but is everywhere in chains’ (Le Contrat Social, 1762 [published in English as The Social Contract, 1791]). (Science’s denial of the relative innocence of so-called ‘primitive’ races will be discussed in Part 5:2.)

As has been mentioned, the philosopher Immanuel Kant was so impressed by our all-loving, fully altruistic moral instincts that he had inscribed on his tomb the words, ‘Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me’ (Critique of Practical Reason, 1788). The philosopher John Fiske wrote that ‘in the study of the moral sense we contemplate the last and noblest product of evolution…the existence of a moral sense and moral intuitions…We approve of certain actions and disapprove of certain actions quite instinctively. We shrink from stealing or lying as we shrink from burning our fingers…In short, there is in our psychical structure a moral sense which is…quickly and directly hurt by wrong-doing or the idea of wrong-doing’ (Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy, 1874, Vol. IV, Part II, pp.104, 106, 126). A few years earlier, Charles Darwin had recognised this truth of our species’ fully integrated orientation to behaving unconditionally selflessly when he wrote that ‘the moral sense affords the best and highest distinction between man and the lower animals’ (The Descent of Man, 1871, p.495). And we cannot discuss the truth of the existence within us all of an unconditionally selfless, all-loving, innocent, pure, aligned-with-the-ideals, original instinctive self or soul without citing the words of history’s greatest philosopher, Plato,
who, long ago, in around 360 BC, wrote that humans have ‘knowledge, both before and at the moment of birth…of all absolute standards...[of] beauty, goodness, uprightness, holiness...our souls exist before our birth’. He continued, ‘the soul is in every possible way more like the invariable’, which he described as ‘the pure and everlasting and immortal and changeless...realm of the absolute...[our] soul resembles the divine’ (Phaedo, tr. H. Tredennick).

A less effusive yet still accurate acknowledgement of humans’ instinctively cooperative state appears in the summary of an assemblage of presentations given by leading thinkers at a 2009 conference on the ‘Man the Hunted and the Origin and Nature of Human Sociality, Altruism and Well-Being’, compiled by the anthropologist Robert Sussman and the psychiatrist and geneticist Robert Cloninger, in which they wrote that ‘We suggest that human beings are naturally cooperative when healthy and only revert to violence under abnormal conditions, as when stressed, abused, neglected or mentally ill’ (Origins of Altruism and Cooperation, 2011, p.ix of 439).

Indeed, even the meaning behind the words used in psychology recognise the truth that humans once lived in an Integrative-Meaning-orientated, fully cooperative, soulful state and that it is our behaviour today that is ‘abnormal’. For a start, the word ‘psychology’ literally means the ‘study of the soul’, derived as it is, according to the Online Etymology Dictionary, from psyche, which comes from the Greek word psykhe, meaning ‘breath, life, soul’, and the Greek word logia, meaning ‘study of’. Yes, ‘psyche’ is another word for soul, as the Penguin Dictionary of Psychology confirms: ‘psyche: The oldest and most general use of this term is by the early Greeks, who envisioned the psyche as the soul or the very essence of life’ (1985). Tellingly, the word ‘psychiatry’ literally means ‘soul-healing’, derived as it is from the term psyche (which again means soul) and the Greek word iatreia, which, according to The Encyclopedic World Dictionary, means ‘healing’. Similarly revealing of what the study of psychology is really all about is the word ‘psychosis’, which literally means ‘soul-illness’, coming as it does from psyche (which again means soul) and osis, which, according to Dictionary.com, is also of Greek origin and means ‘abnormal state or condition’. While dictionary definitions of ‘soul’ are somewhat evasive they still manage to reveal the real significance of the word. For instance, the Concise Oxford Dictionary defines ‘soul’ as ‘the immaterial…moral and emotional part of man’, and as the ‘animating or essential part of us’, while The Macquarie Dictionary describes ‘soul’ as the ‘principle of life, feeling, thought, and action in humans’, and as being ‘the spiritual part of humans regarded in its moral aspect...the seat of the feelings or sentiments’.

Yes, the truth is that we do ‘come from God, who is our home’—our instinctive self or ‘soul resembles the divine’, ‘the very essence of life’, its ‘breath’. And since integrativeness is the theme of existence and thus universal and eternal, our soul is fully representative of the ‘eternal’, ‘pure and everlasting and immortal and changeless...absolute’. D.S. Wilson and Sober’s claim that our original instinctive state is not one of ‘universal benevolence’ but one with instincts for both ‘niceness’ and ‘nastiness’ is absolutely untrue; it’s completely inconsistent with all we know about the nature of our wonderful original instinctive self or soul—which is a state of ‘universal benevolence’!!

Secondly, with regard to why we are selfish, D.S. Wilson and Sober maintain that our selfish behaviour comes from selfish instincts derived from individual-level selection—from sexually reproducing individuals competing with each other for food, shelter, territory and a mate. The truth, as has now been biologically explained, is that through the love-indoctrination process humans were able to overcome the selfish, competitive ‘animal condition’ and develop a completely unconditionally selfless, concerned-with-the-larger-whole-not-yourself, all-loving, moral instinctive orientation to life, which all
the quotes above bear witness to the existence of and which we all know is true if we are prepared to be honest. So the question is, having become completely selflessly behaved, why did we become capable of selfishness, and not just selfishness but extreme anger, brutality and hatred towards our fellow humans? That is the real issue about our less-than-ideally behaved ‘human condition’ that biology had to explain. And the answer to that question is that when our fully conscious mind emerged after the instinctive blocks that exist in all other species’ minds against thinking selflessly and thus truthfully and thus effectively had been breached by the love-indoctrination process (this explanation for how we became conscious was briefly provided at the beginning of Part 3:11 and will be fully presented in Part 8:7B), an upsetting battle broke out between our conscious mind and our already established perfect instinctive orientation to behaving cooperatively and lovingly (this upsetting battle was explained in Parts 3:2 and 3:4). It was this psychological upset, this anger, egocentricity and alienation, that made us capable of selfishness. Until we could explain this reason for why we defied our perfectly loving instincts, we were condemned to a state of insecurity, or what was historically referred to as ‘guilt’, about our fundamental worth and goodness, and, as a result, were forever trying to prove and demonstrate our goodness and worth, and forever trying to relieve ourselves of that insecurity through material reinforcement—and it was this relentless self-preoccupation with trying to prove and demonstrate that we were good and not bad, and to find relief from our insecurity, that explains our selfish behaviour. We became selfish as a result of being psychologically upset.

Again, our human condition is not a result of having developed instincts for being selfish and instincts for being selfless, the conflicting influences of which we then had to consciously try to manage—no, the psychologically upset state of the human condition emerged after we became completely instinctively orientated to a fully integrative, utterly cooperative, unconditionally selfless, all-loving way of living, and after we became fully conscious. Our human condition is a result of a deep insecurity about our meaning and worth as humans, a guilty conscience—the result of which is immense psychosis and neurosis.

That is the fully accountable and thus true explanation of all that we know about our human condition. To again present that perfect description (for it is not an explanation—that had to wait for science to find understanding of the different ways genes and nerves process information) of what we all know about the nature of our human condition from that most voted-for-for-its-truth document in human history, the Bible: ‘God created man in his own image’ (Gen. 1:27) (we did once live in that completely integrated, unconditionally selflessly behaved, cooperative, loving ideal state), and then we took the ‘fruit…from the tree of knowledge’ (Gen. 3:3, 2:17) (became conscious), and then we ‘fell from grace’ (derived from the title of Gen. 3, ‘The Fall of Man’) (became corrupted, psychologically upset, angry, egocentric and alienated), and, as a result, were ‘banished…from the Garden of Eden’ (Gen. 3:23) state of our original innocence (became insecure/guilt-ridden about our fundamental goodness and worth) and became ‘a restless wanderer on the earth’ (Gen. 4:14) (became psychotic and neurotic) until we could find the reconciling, healing understanding of the ‘good and evil’ (Gen. 3:5) in our make-up and, by so doing, become ‘like God, knowing [understanding] good and evil’ (ibid). From being ‘in the image of God’ (Gen. 1:27)—that is, instinctively orientated to the integrative, Godly ideals of being cooperative, selfless and loving—we would search for the understanding of our consciousness-derived-and-induced psychologically upset, corrupted, ‘fall[en]’ state that would finally enable us to become ‘knowing’ (Gen. 3:5)—that is, cognisant of the integrative, Godly ideals and why we departed from them.
So, claiming that the reason we are selfish is because we have selfish instincts derived from having to compete for food, shelter, territory and a mate doesn’t even begin to explain all that we know about the nature of our human condition. It overlooks the fact that our human behaviour involves our unique fully conscious thinking mind. Descriptions of our behaviour, such as arrogant, deluded, optimistic, pessimistic, artificial, superficial, guilty, depressed, inspired, psychotic, alienated, all imply a consciousness-derived psychological dimension to our behaviour. We humans suffer from a consciousness-derived, psychological HUMAN CONDITION, not an instinct-controlled ANIMAL CONDITION—it is unique to us fully conscious humans.

Yes, our selfish condition is psychologically derived, and further, our selfishness is but one expression of our psychologically upset, divisive condition—for beyond selfishness there is the entirety of our psychosis, in particular our egocentricity, anger, depression and alienation, to consider and account for. The truth is there is an immense amount of consciousness-involved psychosis and neurosis in our human condition, not just the psychological ulterior motives that D.S. Wilson and Sober superficially focused on. And as emphasised, culture has played a big part in the human journey, but not in creating the human condition, as D.S. Wilson and Sober assert, but in trying to manage it.

The fact is, D.S. Wilson and Sober’s account of human behaviour contains no acknowledgement of the whole consciousness-involved psychology of our human condition. As such, it’s a completely superficial and artificial interpretation. Any real description and explanation of human nature would deal with the absolute agony of our condition, and the consciousness-derived-and-induced, upset, psychological sickness of alienation, anger and selfish egocentricity that it has produced in us, but none of this real analysis, description and accountable explanation of our human condition is present in D.S. Wilson and Sober’s Multilevel Selection, instincts-for-‘niceness’-and-‘nastiness’-but-not-for-‘universal benevolence’ ‘explanation’. It offers no real confrontation with the issue of the human condition, with our psychosis and neurosis, with our soul and mind sickness, at all, and because it doesn’t, it has not really contributed to or furthered our understanding of human nature. Again, as R.D. Laing said, ‘Our alienation goes to the roots. The realization of this is the essential springboard for any serious reflection on any aspect of present inter-human life.’ Realising/addressing the issue of our psychological and neurological alienation is the essential springboard for any serious reflection on any aspect of present inter-human life.

In summary, our original instinctive state wasn’t composed of selfish instincts derived from individual-level selection and selfless instincts derived from group-level selection as D.S. Wilson and Sober maintain, rather our original instinctive orientation was to behaving in a completely unconditionally selfless, concerned-with-the-larger-whole-not-yourself, all-loving, moral way, an orientation that resulted from the love-indoctrination process. We then became conscious and then psychologically upset and then selfishly self-preoccupied. So, to say that our original instinctive state entailed both selfish and selfless instincts, with the selfless instincts resulting from aggressive warring with other humans, is completely and entirely inconsistent with what we have always known about the nature of our human condition. It is just a contorted, bewildered, dishonest—alienated—interpretation of the nature of our human condition. It is just the sort of rubbish people conjure up when they have lost all access to what it is that we need to explain about ourselves—namely how our original innocent, ‘Garden of Eden’-like state of ‘universal benevolence’ became corrupted, and our ‘fall[en]’, immensely alienated, psychotic and neurotic selfish, self-preoccupied state that we live in today emerged.
Basically, this left-wing, Multilevel Selection account of the origin of our selfish behaviour and of our unconditionally selfless, moral instinctive orientation to life is just as desperate, superficial and ‘smoke-and-mirrors’-dishonest as the kin-selection-based, Evolutionary Psychology, right-wing account that dismissively asserted that “moral guidance” is a euphemism and 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. What D.S. Wilson and Sober have put forward is essentially the old Social Darwinist, ‘The reason we are selfish is because we have instincts derived from having to compete for food, shelter, territory and a mate’-account, with some selfless instincts that were supposedly derived from warring with other groups thrown into the mix. There is no acknowledgement whatsoever of the involvement of that ‘essential springboard for any serious reflection on any aspect of present inter-human life’ of our consciousness-involved, derived and induced psychologically upset, ‘alienation’ that in truth ‘goes to the roots’ of our condition.

Part 4:121 The Theory of Eusociality—the most dangerous lie in human history

Introduction

The question that may arise from what has just been explained about how completely untrue and dishonest D.S. Wilson and Sober’s Multilevel Selection theory is, is why give it all this attention? The answer is because it has been parlayed into the most dangerous lie in human history—so dangerous because the lie is so seductive that it has the potential to keep humanity living in the darkness of alienated denial forever; or at least until the human race becomes extinct from terminal levels of alienation. The Multilevel Selection theory has become the basis of a whole new, supposedly biology-based excuse for humans to use to avoid any confrontation with their psychologically upset human condition—and this latest incarnation is by far the trickiest of all the excuses we have seen.

What has happened is that someone was watching the emergence of the between-group selection argument and saw that it had the potential to be developed into the equivalent of nothing less than a new Bible for the human race, a new description and contexting of the whole issue of our troubled human condition—but, in this instance, it’s a completely dishonest interpretation. It is not hard to guess who that perpetrator is: yes, it is none other than that lord of lying, duke of denial, bishop of bullshit, king of ‘krap’; that master of keeping humanity away from any truth; indeed, the quintessential anti-Christ—Edward O. Wilson himself.

As mentioned in Part 4:12D when his development of Sociobiology was being presented, E.O. Wilson has an extremely astute radar for ideas in biology that have the potential to artificially relieve humans of the unbearable agony of the human condition. Indeed, his antenna for ways to evade the human condition is as astute as St Paul’s was in seeing the potential of Christianity to save the human race from self-destruction while it was waiting to find self-understanding—the big difference being that E.O Wilson’s antenna was for spotting ideas that, while immensely influential, actually have the potential to destroy the human race, not save it.

Paradoxically, D.S. Wilson’s intention when developing the Multilevel Selection theory was to provide a way to counter the right-wing’s selfishness-emphasising theory.