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# **The Selfish Gene Richard Dawkins**

*A study of the  
history of life on  
Earth explains  
how microscopic  
life evolved into  
large, complex*

*Page 1/167*

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*animals and  
speculates on the  
various ways in  
which  
biotechnology  
can change our  
thinking about  
evolution and  
complex living  
organisms.  
Until twenty  
years ago we had  
no idea which of  
our genes came*

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*from our father  
and which came  
from our mother.  
We took it for  
granted that our  
genes expressed  
themselves  
identically and  
that there was a  
50/50 chance  
that they came  
from either  
parent. We also  
assumed that*

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*they worked in cooperation with each other. The biggest breakthrough in genetics in the past two decades has been the discovery of genomic imprinting, which allows us to trace genes to the parent of*

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***origin. David Haig has been at the forefront of theorizing these developments. He argues that these "paternally and maternally active genes" comprise less than one percent of our total gene count and are far from being***

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***cooperative. In fact, they have been shown to be in competition with one another. If Haig's theory holds true, imprinted genes exemplify an extraordinary within-individual conflict, while shaking up our fundamental***

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***ideas of what it means to be an individual. This collection of Haig's papers represents a unique comprehensive overview of the state of evolutionary biology. The pages are linked by a commentary***

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*that provides  
background, and  
brings readers  
up-to-date on  
developments  
that occurred  
after the paper's  
original  
publication.  
Since genomic  
imprinting  
touches on many  
areas in the life  
sciences,*

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***including  
evolutionary  
biology and  
developmental  
genetics, Haig's  
work is scattered  
through the  
literature. This  
volume brings  
his work  
together for the  
first time. A  
volume in the  
Rutgers Series in***

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***Human  
Evolution, edited  
by Robert  
Trivers. David  
Haig is an  
associate  
professor of  
organismic and  
evolutionary  
biology at  
Harvard  
University.  
This sparkling  
collection***

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*explores the  
impact of  
Richard Dawkins  
as scientist,  
rationalist, and  
one of the most  
important  
thinkers alive  
today. Specially  
commissioned  
pieces by leading  
figures in  
science,  
philosophy,*

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*literature, and  
the media, such  
as Daniel C.  
Dennett, Matt  
Ridley, Steven  
Pinker, Philip  
Pullman, and the  
Bishop of Oxford,  
highlight the  
breadth and  
range of  
Dawkins'  
influence on  
modern science*

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*and culture, from  
the gene's eye  
view of evolution  
to his energetic  
engagement in  
public debates  
on science,  
rationalism, and  
religion. The  
volume includes  
personal  
reminiscences  
and critical  
debate as well as*

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***accessible  
discussions of  
science - it  
provides a  
stimulating  
tribute to a  
remarkable  
intellectual.  
"Explores key  
patterns of  
meaning  
underlying  
various cultures,  
from ancient***

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*times to the  
present, showing  
how values  
emerge from the  
ways in which  
cultures find  
meaning and how  
those values  
shape the  
future"--  
Essays on  
morality,  
mortality, and  
much more from*

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***the New York  
Times-bestselling author of The  
Selfish Gene and  
The God  
Delusion. This  
early collection  
of essays from  
renowned  
evolutionary  
biologist Richard  
Dawkins is an  
enthusiastic  
declaration, a***

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*testament to the  
power of  
rigorous  
scientific  
examination to  
reveal the  
wonders of the  
world. In these  
essays, Dawkins  
revisits the  
meme, the unit  
of cultural  
information that  
he named and*

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**wrote about in  
his  
groundbreaking  
work, *The Selfish  
Gene*. Here also  
are moving  
tributes to  
friends and  
colleagues,  
including a  
eulogy for  
novelist Douglas  
Adams, author of  
*The Hitchhiker's***

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***Guide to the  
Galaxy;  
correspondence  
with fellow  
biologist Stephen  
Jay Gould;  
commentary on  
the events of  
9/11; and visits  
with the famed p  
aleoanthropologi  
sts Richard and  
Meave Leakey at  
their African***

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*wildlife preserve.  
Ending with a  
vivid note to  
Dawkins's ten-  
year-old  
daughter,  
reminding her to  
remain curious,  
ask questions,  
and live the  
examined life, A  
Devil's Chaplain  
is a fascinating  
read by "a man*

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***of firm opinions,  
which he  
expresses with  
clarity and  
punch”  
(Scientific  
American).***

***Dawkins explains  
and argues how  
the theory of  
evolution by  
natural selection  
refutes the  
creationist***

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***watchmaker  
theory that  
posits a divine  
creator.***

***A brilliant book  
celebrating  
improbability as  
the engine that  
drives life, by the  
acclaimed author  
of The Selfish  
Gene and The  
Blind  
Watchmaker.***

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***The human eye is so complex and works so precisely that surely, one might believe, its current shape and function must be the product of design. How could such an intricate object have come about***

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*by chance?*

*Tackling this  
subject—in  
writing that the  
New York Times  
called "a masterp  
iece"—Richard  
Dawkins builds a  
carefully  
reasoned and  
lovingly  
illustrated  
argument for  
evolutionary*

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***adaptation as the  
mechanism for  
life on earth. The  
metaphor of  
Mount  
Improbable  
represents the  
combination of  
perfection and  
improbability  
that is  
epitomized in the  
seemingly  
"designed"***

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***complexity of  
living things.  
Dawkins  
skillfully guides  
the reader on a  
breathtaking  
journey through  
the mountain's  
passes and up its  
many peaks to  
demonstrate that  
following the  
improbable path  
to perfection***

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*takes time.*

*Evocative  
illustrations  
accompany  
Dawkins's  
eloquent  
descriptions of  
extraordinary  
adaptations such  
as the teeming  
populations of  
figs, the intricate  
silken world of  
spiders, and the*

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***evolution of  
wings on the  
bodies of  
flightless  
animals. And  
through it all  
runs the thread  
of DNA, the  
molecule of life,  
responsible for  
its own destiny  
on an unending  
pilgrimage  
through time.***

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***Climbing Mount  
Improbable is a  
book of great  
impact and skill,  
written by the  
most prominent  
Darwinian of our  
age.***

***The 'selfish gene'  
is one of the  
most  
controversial  
subjects in  
modern genetics,***

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*and one with a  
major bearing on  
the nature vs.  
nurture debate -  
the chief subject  
of the so-called  
'Darwin wars'.*

[\*Selected  
Writings in the  
Life Sciences  
Altruism and  
Sexual Selection  
from Darwin to  
Today\*](#)

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the Dawn of  
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*Since Dawkins popularized the notion of the selfish gene, the question of how these selfish genes work together to construct an organism remained a mystery. Now, standing atop a*

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*wealth of new  
research, Itai  
Yanai and Martin  
Lercher—pioneers  
in the field of  
systems  
biology—provide a  
vision of how  
genes cooperate  
and compete in the  
struggle for life.  
How did the*

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*replication bomb  
we call "life" begin  
and where in the  
world, or rather, in  
the universe, is it  
heading? Writing  
with characteristic  
wit and an ability to  
clarify complex  
phenomena (the  
New York Times  
described his style*

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*as "the sort of science writing that makes the reader feel like a genius"), Richard Dawkins confronts this ancient mystery. Key Ideas From The Selfish Gene - Richard Dawkins A landmark work in the field of biology*

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*and evolution The  
Selfish Gene is a  
landmark 1976  
work in the field of  
biology: It puts the  
gene at the center  
of the process of  
evolution and  
explains how,  
when this is taken  
into account,  
genes must be*

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*seen as "selfish."  
Author Richard  
Dawkins then uses  
this theory of gene  
selfishness to  
explain the  
massive variety of  
animal behavior  
observable on  
Earth. Who is it for  
?- 'Everyone  
interested in the*

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*universe and their place in it.' - Any student of biology or anyone with an interest in biology*

*About the Author Richard Dawkins is an evolutionary biologist and author of influential and popular*

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*science books  
such as The Blind  
Watchmaker and  
The Extended  
Phenotype. He is  
also a committed  
atheist and an  
active critic of  
religion, to this end  
publishing his book  
The God Delusion  
and setting up the*

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*Richard Dawkins  
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Reason and  
Science.*

*With a new  
epilogue to the  
40th anniversary  
edition.*

*The Selfish Gene  
is a classic  
exposition of  
evolutionary*

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*thought. In it  
Professor Dawkins  
articulates a gene's  
eye view of  
evolution - a view  
giving centre stage  
to these persistent  
units of  
information, and in  
which organisms  
can be seen as  
vehicles for the*

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*replication of genes. The book provoked widespread and heated debate, which in part led Dawkins to write The Extended Phenotype, in which he gave a deeper clarification of the central*

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*concept of the  
gene as the unit of  
selection, as well  
as contributing his  
own development  
of this insight. For  
the first time, The  
Extended Selfish  
Gene brings these  
two books  
together, by  
including two key*

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*chapters from The  
Extended  
Phenotype. These  
chapters provide  
Dawkins's detailed  
and powerful  
response to two  
issues raised by  
critics of The  
Selfish Gene: the  
accusations of  
genetic*

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*determinism (the idea that our behaviour is entirely determined by our genes), and of "adaptationism" (that all traits are indiscriminately perceived to be adaptations resulting from natural selection).*

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*While written in particular for the biology community, Dawkins's clarity of expression allows these chapters to be accessible to all who are seriously engaged with the gene's eye view and its implications. The*

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*imaginative,  
powerful, and  
stylistically brilliant  
Selfish Gene not  
only brought the  
insights of Neo-  
Darwinism to a  
wide audience, but  
galvanized the  
biology community,  
generating much  
debate and*

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*stimulating whole  
new areas of  
research. Forty  
years later, its  
insights remain as  
significant as on  
the day it was  
published. Along  
with the two extra  
chapters, The  
Extended Selfish  
Gene includes a*

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*new epilogue to  
The Selfish Gene  
from the author  
which highlights  
the relevance of  
the gene's eye  
view to  
evolutionary  
biology today.  
Richard Dawkins  
provides excellent  
examples of his*

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*reasoning and  
interpretation skills  
in The Selfish  
Gene. His 1976  
book is not a work  
of original  
research, but  
instead a careful  
explanation of  
evolution,  
combined with an  
argument for a*

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*particular interpretation of several aspects of evolution. Since Dawkins is building on other researchers' work and writing for a general audience, the central elements of good reasoning are vital*

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*to his book:  
producing a clear  
argument and  
presenting a  
persuasive case;  
organising an  
argument and  
supporting its  
conclusions. In  
doing this,  
Dawkins also  
employs the crucial*

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*skill of interpretation: understanding what evidence means; clarifying terms; questioning definitions; giving clear definitions on which to build arguments. The strength of his reasoning and*

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*interpretative skills played a key part in the widespread acceptance of his argument for a gene-centred interpretation of natural selection and evolution - and in its history as a bestselling classic of science writing.*

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*\* Our summary is short, simple and pragmatic. It allows you to have the essential ideas of a big book in less than 30 minutes. As you read this summary, you will discover that in nature, altruism does not*

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*exist. All living  
species are  
genetically selfish.  
You will also  
discover : that your  
genes have  
created you for  
their own survival;  
that your children  
will be naturally  
selfish, but that you  
have the means to*

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*change that  
through culture;  
that in terms of  
reproduction, the  
male is less  
involved than the  
female; that since  
the appearance of  
modern man,  
genetic evolution is  
no longer the only  
type of evolution in*

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*the world. The selfish gene theory is another facet of Darwin's theory. Rather than focusing on the individual organism, it takes the point of view of genetics. Your genes survived in a world where*

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*competition was raging, so the predominant quality in a gene that thrived is certainly ruthless selfishness. A selfishness that inevitably affects individual behavior. But by understanding*

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*what your genes  
are tending  
towards -  
selfishness - you  
may have a  
chance to  
counteract them  
and achieve what  
no other species  
has ever achieved:  
becoming an  
altruistic individual.*

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regain control of  
your identity? \*Buy  
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bestseller, critically  
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*25 languages. Still as relevant and influential today as ever, The Selfish Gene has become a classic exposition of evolutionary thought. Professor Dawkins articulates a gene's eye view of*

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*evolution that not only brought the insights of Neo-Darwinism to a wide audience, but galvanised the biology community, generating much debate and stimulating whole new areas of research. This 30th*

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*anniversary edition  
includes a new  
introduction from  
the author as well  
as the original  
prefaces and  
foreword, and  
extracts from early  
reviews.*

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Born to parents  
who were  
enthusiastic

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naturalists, and  
linked through his  
wider family to a  
clutch of  
accomplished  
scientists, Richard  
Dawkins was  
bound to have  
biology in his  
genes. But what  
were the  
influences that

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shaped his life?  
And who inspired  
him to become the  
pioneering  
scientist and public  
thinker now  
famous (and  
infamous to some)  
around the world?  
In An Appetite for  
Wonder we join  
him on a personal

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journey from an  
enchanted  
childhood in  
colonial Africa,  
through the  
eccentricities of  
boarding school in  
England, to his  
studies at the  
University of  
Oxford's dynamic  
Zoology

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Department, which  
sparked his radical  
new vision of  
Darwinism, The  
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Dawkins's honest  
self-reflection,  
touching  
reminiscences and  
witty anecdotes,  
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to understand the private influences that shaped the public man who, more than anyone else in his generation, explained our own origins.

A thoughtful new look at the entwined histories

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of genetic  
medicine and  
eugenics, with  
probing discussion  
of the moral risks  
of seeking human  
perfection  
An ethologist  
shows man to be a  
gene machine  
whose world is one  
of savage

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competition and  
deceit

PLEASE NOTE:

This is a  
companion to  
Richard  
Dawkins's The  
Selfish Gene and  
NOT the original  
book. Preview:  
The Selfish Gene  
(1976) by Richard

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Dawkins outlines theories and research in the field of evolutionary biology to explain the importance of the gene as the most significant unit of analysis in natural selection. The common

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understanding of natural selection is that altruistic behavior has evolutionary advantages because on average, it benefits the species as a whole... Inside this companion to the book: · Overview

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Book · Important  
People · Author's  
Style and  
Perspective ·  
Intended Audience  
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and religion

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analysis of

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landmark treatise

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coverage of his

later popular works

The Magic of

Reality (2011) and

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The Greatest  
Show on Earth  
(2011),and a new  
chapter on  
Dawkins as a  
popularizer of  
science Tackles  
Dawkins' hostile  
and controversial  
views on religion,  
and examine the  
religious

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implications of his  
scientific ideas  
including a  
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'selfish gene'  
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accessible and  
engaging style that  
will appeal to  
anyone interested  
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understanding the  
interplay between  
science and  
religion

In this hugely  
entertaining sequel  
to the New York  
Times bestselling  
memoir An  
Appetite for  
Wonder, Richard  
Dawkins delves

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deeply into his  
intellectual life  
spent kick-starting  
new conversations  
about science,  
culture, and  
religion and writing  
yet another of the  
most audacious  
and widely read  
books of the  
twentieth

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century—The God  
Delusion. Called  
“one of the best  
nonfiction writers  
alive today”  
(Stephen Pinker)  
and a “prize-  
fighter” (Nature),  
Richard Dawkins  
cheerfully,  
mischievously,  
looks back on a

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lifetime of tireless  
intellectual  
adventure and  
engagement.

Exploring the halls  
of intellectual  
inquiry and  
stardom he  
encountered after  
the publication of  
his seminal work,  
The Selfish Gene;

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affectionately  
lamprooning the  
world of academia,  
publishing, and  
television; and  
studding the pages  
with funny stories  
about the great  
men and women  
he's known,  
Dawkins offers a  
candid look at the

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events and ideas that encouraged him to shift his attention to the intersection of culture, religion, and science. He also invites the reader to look more closely at the brilliant succession of ten influential

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books that grew naturally out of his busy life, highlighting the ideas that connect them and excavating their origins. On the publication of his tenth book, the smash hit, *The God Delusion*, a

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“resounding trumpet blast for truth” (Matt Ridley), Richard Dawkins was catapulted from mere intellectual stardom into a circle of celebrity thinkers dubbed, “The New Atheists”—including

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Christopher  
Hitchens, Sam  
Harris, and Daniel  
Dennett.

Throughout *A Brief  
Candle in the  
Dark*, Dawkins  
shares with us his  
infectious sense of  
wonder at the  
natural world, his  
enjoyment of the

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absurdities of human interaction, and his bracing awareness of life's brevity: all of which have made a deep imprint on our culture.

An evolutionary biologist argues against the belief that sexual

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behavior is governed by genes, identifying an intricate interplay among humans that involves day-to-day survival, reproduction, and learned cultural factors.

In The Selfish

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Gene, Richard

Dawkins

crystallized the  
gene's eye view of  
evolution

developed by W.D.

Hamilton and

others. The book

provoked

widespread and

heated debate.

Written in part as a

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response, The  
Extended  
Phenotype gave a  
deeper clarification  
of the central  
concept of the  
gene as the unit of  
selection; but it did  
much more  
besides. In it,  
Dawkins extended  
the gene's eye

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view to argue that the genes that sit within an organism have an influence that reaches out beyond the visible traits in that body - the phenotype - to the wider environment, which can include other individuals.

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So, for instance, the genes of the beaver drive it to gather twigs to produce the substantial physical structure of a dam; and the genes of the cuckoo chick produce effects that manipulate

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the behaviour of  
the host bird,  
making it nurture  
the intruder as one  
of its own. This  
notion of the  
extended  
phenotype has  
proved to be highly  
influential in the  
way we  
understand

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evolution and the natural world. It represents a key scientific contribution to evolutionary biology, and it continues to play an important role in research in the life sciences. The Extended

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## ABOUT THE BOOK

In a 2006 interview with Meet the Author, the year when The Selfish Gene celebrated its 30th anniversary, Richard Dawkins had this to say: "...If I had to write it again, I wouldn't write it very differently. It has been described as a revolutionary book, in

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one respect it is. But it's only a revolutionary way in looking at orthodox Darwinian natural selection. It helps to look at it in this revolutionary way. It could equally well have been called "the Altruistic Animal," because if you have selfish genes, which only means that

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natural selection works at the level of the gene; if you have selfish genes, then you may have altruistic individuals. And that's what the book is about." What Dawkins describes as "revolutionary," others have construed as controversial. When The Selfish Gene was first

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published in 1976, it created a number of waves within the study evolutionary biology, largely dominated by Darwinian doctrine. (One could say it made a splash in the gene pool.) If Darwin's idea of natural selection was based on the concept of "survival of the

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fittest,” then why does altruism exist between individuals? Why aren't all living things selfish in a cut-throat battle for survival? Dawkins strove to explain altruism in *The Selfish Gene*, with the argument that altruistic behavior can be explained through the selfishness of our genes. EXCERPT

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FROM THE BOOK If it runs away, chase it! If it comes at you, fight back.) In a relationship such as prey versus predator, Dawkins explains possible strategies. A retaliator doesn't attack aggressively, but will act in a threatening manner. If the opponent attacks first, the retaliator will,

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as you guessed, retaliate. Retaliators behave based upon their opponent's behavior, making them conditional strategists. In addition to retaliators, there are two other kinds of conditional strategies: bullies and prober-retaliators. A bully attacks until an opponent strikes

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back, in which case, the bully immediately retreats. Prober-retaliators are essentially retaliators, but can initiate an attack like a bully, and if the opponent fights back, will defend itself. In these strategies, the retaliator is an ESS, the prober-retaliator is nearly stable, and the

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bully is not stable.

Chapter 6:

Genemanship The

key point of this chapter is that genes might be able to assist replicas of itself that are sitting in other bodies. If so, this would appear as individual altruism but it would be brought about by gene selfishness. (88) In

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the previous chapter, Dawkins explained aggression through individual, independent selfish machines. However, individuals have relatives, in the form of siblings, cousins, parents, etc., all of whom share many of the same genes. Each selfish gene then, has its loyalties

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divided among different individuals; the selfish gene is every replica of itself. Dawkins explains how a gene selected for kin-altruism, could survive in the gene pool. A gene that suicidally saves five cousins would not be numerous in a population of individuals, however,

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if it saved five brothers or ten first cousins would. The minimum requirement for a suicidal altruistic gene to be a successful one in the gene pool would have to “save more than two siblings/children/parents, more than four half-siblings/uncles/aunts/nephews/nieces/grandparents/grandchild

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dren, or more than eight first cousins, etc.”

Renowned philosopher Mary Midgley explores the nature of our moral constitution to challenge the view that reduces human motivation to self-interest. Midgley argues cogently and convincingly that

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simple, one-sided accounts of human motives, such as the 'selfish gene' tendency in recent neo-Darwinian thought, may be illuminating but are always unrealistic. Such neatness, she shows, cannot be imposed on human psychology. She returns to Darwin's

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original writings to show how the reductive individualism which is now presented as Darwinism does not derive from Darwin but from a wider, Hobbesian tradition in Enlightenment thinking. She reveals the selfish gene hypothesis as a cultural accretion that

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is just not seen in nature. Heroic independence is not a realistic aim for Homo sapiens. We are, as Darwin saw, earthly organisms, framed to interact constantly with one another and with the complex ecosystems of which we are a tiny part. For us, bonds are not just restraints but also

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modern humans  
back through  
four billion  
years of life on  
our planet. As  
the pilgrimage  
progresses, we  
join with other  
organisms at  
the forty  
"rendezvous  
points" where

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we find a  
common  
ancestor. The  
band of pilgrims  
swells into a  
vast crowd as  
we join first  
with other  
primates, then  
with other  
mammals, and  
so on back to

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