

E. O. Wilson

- *Insect Societies*
- *Sociobiology*
- *Human Nature*
- Evolutionary psychology
- Behavioral phenotypes
 - War
 - Altruism
 - Religion

David Sloan Wilson

- **Anecdote**
- **Group selection**
 - Darwin
 - Early 20th Century
 - George Williams
 - Sex ratio
 - Altruism
 - Religion

Costs of Religion

- **Hunter/gather existence**
- **Individual**
 - Time
 - Energy
 - Altruism
- **Group**
 - Time
 - Energy

Benefits of Religion

- **Individual**
 - “Understanding”
 - Comfort
- **Group**
 - Cohesiveness
 - Enforcement of group norms
 - Detection of free riders
 - Commitment in battle

Cost-Benefit Analysis

- **Hunter/gather existence**
- **Free riders**
- **Inter-group conflict**
- **Radical egalitarianism**
- **Groups with lots of cooperators**
- **Groups with lots of defectors**
- **Evolution within groups**
- **Evolution between groups**
- **“Faith gene”**

Evolutionary Accounts of Religion

- **Cultural aspects of religion – religion meme**
- **Mind's "big bang"**
- **Biological aspects of religion**
 - Ubiquity
 - Religion as a parasite
 - Religion as a by-product
 - Religion as adaptive
- **Empirical evidence?**

The Ubiquity of Religion as Evidence for a Biological Basis of Religion

e₁. Total ubiquity of religion for at least 50,000 years.

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t₀. Religion has a biological base as either a by-product of other cognitive functions, or as an adaptive trait in its own right.

The Ubiquity of Religion as Evidence for a Biological Basis of Religion

- t₀. Religion has a biological base as either a by-product of other cognitive functions, or as an adaptive trait in its own right.**
 - t₁. Religion has purely cultural origins**
 - t₂. Religion has its origin in a narrow exclusivist tradition.**
 - t₃. Religious pluralism -- Something transcendent and beyond the natural world exists and all of the world's "great" religions are culturally determined attempts to articulate this common Real.**
- Rival explanations?**
 - Best explanation?**

The Ubiquity of Religion as Evidence for Religious Pluralism

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