

## 9.20 MIT

### Class #28: “The Triumph of Sociobiology”

*Study questions: Alcock ch 10*

1. The first paragraphs of this final chapter are a beautifully concise summary of a major argument of the book. Comment on the following sentence: “In fact, they could not study ‘genetically determined’ behavior even if they wanted to because it does not exist....” Is this too extreme? Use examples in your answer. P 217
2. What explanations for fitness-reducing behaviors have been offered by sociobiologists? P 218-219
3. Why have many social scientists and people in the humanities ignored sociobiology? P 220-221
4. What are the causes you can discern, or have learned about, for the extreme environmentalism in America? (It has been more extreme in America than in Europe.) P 221
5. Appendix ch 10, Q3. *Tattersall believes that he has identified a major weakness of sociobiology. Is he right?*
6. Appendix ch 9, Q2: *Defend sociobiology against the following charge: “Sociobiology predicts that only immoral or amoral actions can evolve. When sociobiologists are confronted with the existence of true altruism and moral behavior, they then change their tune and say that these cases illustrate that human beings are able to resist our evolved impulses. But why would we resist if our actions really have evolved via natural selection?”*

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