

9.20 MIT

Classes #32: Practical issues in thinking about and collecting data on adaptations Monday Nov 28, 2005

Reading:

- John Alcock, *The Triumph of Sociobiology* (Oxford 2001), ch 9, pp 189-215.

Study questions: Alcock ch 9

1. Give three examples of the misuse of scientific findings or claims in service of political goals. At least one of these examples should concern sociobiology or Darwinian theory. P 189-192
2. Formulate two statements summarizing a sociobiological finding, in the following manner: For one of them, make it sound like people ought to behave in a certain way. Then re-state the finding in a more objective way. P 193
3. Give an example of a medical issue that can be illumined by sociobiological ideas and data. P 195-196
4. Why are studies of the behavior of white-fronted bee-eaters (birds) relevant to human behavior? P 196-201
5. What does adaptationist thinking (by sociobiologists) predict about human marriage and step families? These predictions have been tested and verified. P 200-203
6. What important kind of data on male-female differences is not mentioned by Alcock (p 204ff)?
7. What is the “naturalistic fallacy” often made by people, including some scientists, who are opposed to sociobiology’s studies of human nature?
8. Is it true that “all rape is an exercise in power” and is not about sexual desires?
9. Answer Q1 in the Appendix for ch 9.