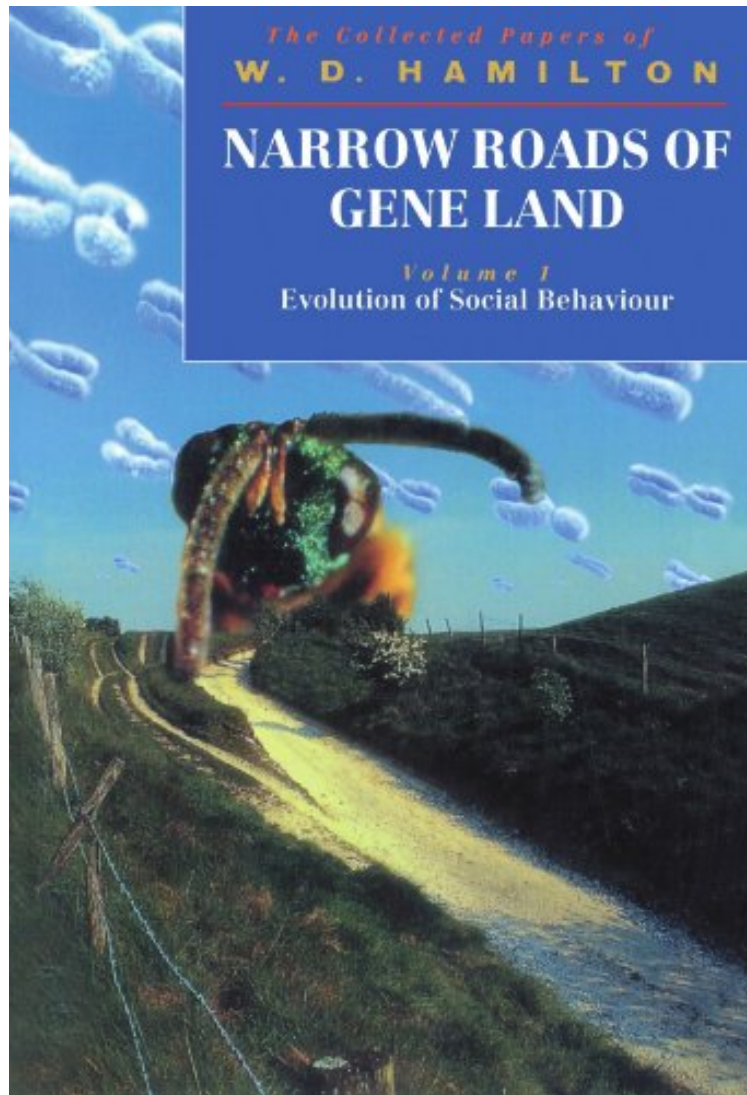


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W. D. Hamilton : Narrow Roads of Gene Land: The Collected Papers of W. D. Hamilton Volume 1: Evolution of Social Behaviour (Narrow Roads of Gene Land Vol. 1) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Narrow Roads of Gene Land: The Collected Papers of W. D. Hamilton Volume 1: Evolution of Social Behaviour (Narrow Roads of Gene Land Vol. 1):

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Disputed but correct nonetheless
By Laurence Chalem
After reading and highly recommending E.O. Wilson's THE SOCIAL CONQUEST OF EARTH, a professor recommended that I read W.D. Hamilton's treatment of the subject, which was disputed by E.O. Wilson. Actually, having read another treatment of the inclusive fitness model, I was more or less confused, because E.O. Wilson was a heavy contributor to the development of the model. Let me back up a little. I gave THE SOCIAL CONQUEST OF EARTH five stars. It was a good, accessible book on the subject. So many folks who gave it a negative review said "it" was wrong. But what was the "it" that was wrong? I thought the book was well written, poetic at times even. And if you look at the discussion leading up to the "it," you'll find that "it" likely. Let me provide these main points. First, Dr. Wilson highlighted a painting by Gauguin. And he really nailed its meaning over the course of the book. "Where do we come from?" "What are we?" "Where are we going?" Wilson tries to answer those questions, first from agreed upon science mixed with likely opinion, and then, finally, where the disagreement looms, from his opinion alone. The human condition, notes Wilson, is "...selfish at one time, selfless at another, the two impulses often conflicted." It is based upon numerous pre-adaptations, according to Wilson, the first being our large size and relative immobility, then us depending more on vision and less on smell than did most other mammals, bipedalism, control of fire, the gathering of small groups at campsites--assemblies--and the eating of meat that sealed the deal to our eusociality. So far so good. The "it" to now, about page 50, is correct. But when Wilson stated that "...it has been popular among serious scientists seeking a naturalistic explanation for the origin of humanity, I among them, to invoke kin selection as a key dynamical force of human evolution." He wrote that "...the foundations of the general theory of inclusive fitness based on the assumptions of kin selection have crumbled, while evidence for it has grown equivocal at best. The beautiful theory never worked well anyway, and now it has collapsed." That's the "it" that reviewers thought--knew to be--wrong. And it is from NARROW ROAD OF GENE LAND, by W.D. Hamilton, that we can read articles on inclusive fitness and decide for ourselves which is the correct view. It is a great "book," though not really a book at all; rather, it is a collection of articles, with articles on the articles written by the author. Here, we get to read what Hamilton was thinking while he wrote his famous articles, and they are as humorous as they are informative. Just one point from E.O. Wilson before closing. He stated that "If the benefit from group membership falls below that from solitary life, evolution will favor departure or cheating by the individual. Taken far enough, the society will dissolve. If personal benefit from group membership rises high enough, or alternatively, if selfish leaders can bend the colony to serve their personal interests, the members will be prone to altruism and conformity." It's hard to disagree with that hypothesis; it is meaningful, true and, like me, I bet you will be able to come up with personal experiences that validate it. It's just that the reasoning is not as Wilson believes it to be, for Hamilton and his theory gave good reason for both; that, is, they are two sides of the same selfish coin. Highly recommended... - lc0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Amazing book by one of the greatest evolutionary biologists
By Mizrob
Just finished the first volume. Amazing book by one of the greatest evolutionary biologists. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I quite happy with it
By giancoli
I bought this used. I quite happy with it, but it looks like the book had too much space in the box it came with and has moved around in it on it's way here. The pages are a little bent due to this. Except that everything is fine.

Why is 'blood thicker than water'? Are we innately violent or pacific? Why are plants and animals sexual? Why do we grow old and die? Such questions have motivated the life-work of W.D. Hamilton, widely acknowledged as the most important theoretical biologist of the 20th century. His papers continue to exert an enormous influence and they are now being republished for the first time. This first volume contains all of Hamilton's publications prior to 1981, a set especially relevant to social behavior, kinship theory, sociobiology, and the notion of 'selfish genes'. Each paper is introduced by an autobiographical essay written especially for this collection. Accessible to non-specialists, this fascinating volume features several of the most read and famous papers of modern biology.

About the Author
W. D. Hamilton is a Royal Society Research Professor in the Department of Zoology at the University of Oxford. He is known throughout the world for his work on social evolution and sexual selection. He is a fellow of the Royal Society and a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. W.D. Hamilton, Department of Zoology, University of Oxford, South Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PS. Tel. 01865-271166.