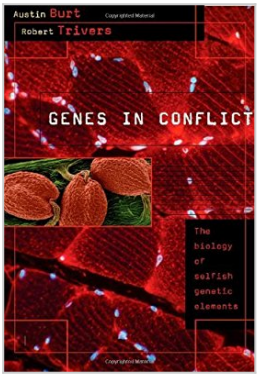

Genes in Conflict

By Austin BURT, Robert Trivers

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Genes in Conflict By Austin BURT, Robert Trivers Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review
Robert Trivers is an under-appreciated genius, and one of history's greatest thinkers in the analysis of behavior and emotion. (Steven Pinker, Johnstone Professor of Psychology, Harvard University, and author of *The Blank Slate* and *How the Mind Works*)

Most of us have met at least one person who stands out as the epitome of logical thinking, someone you can trust to see the flaws in any erroneous conclusion and resolve the needle of signal in a haystack of seemly discordant data. Austin Burt is that person for me, and his new book on genetic conflict reflects this intellectual prowess. (Bill Rice)

Genes in Conflict is a well-written and beautifully organized synthesis that forges a link between evolutionary and molecular biology. It should be read by evolutionary biologists wishing to learn more about the menagerie of selfish genetic elements and by molecular biologists wishing to gain some evolutionary insights into their particular systems. (David Haig)

Just over ten years ago, Trivers joined forces with geneticist Austin Burt for a detailed study of selfish genetic elements, and *Genes in Conflict* is the result of their fruitful collaboration. The book is the first of its kind and admirably fills an empty niche. (James F. Crow *Nature* 2006-03-30)

Genes in Conflict, by evolutionary geneticist Austin Burt and biologist Robert Trivers, is the first book to review the vast empirical literature on selfish genetic elements. It reveals how widespread these elements are in nature, what evolutionary effects they have had on fundamental aspects of the genetic system itself (such as its size, organization, and degree of recombination), and how they influence reproduction, development, and behavior. While enthusiastically addressing the ever-accelerating advance of genetic conflict studies, the authors also take care to identify many open questions. Their fascinating and comprehensive book provides a gold mine for anyone entering the field. (Peter Hammerstein and Edward H. Hagen *Science* 2006-04-28)

Genes in Conflict is an important contribution to biology and to the humanities: for biology, because it collects and represents a comprehensive source of information on the developing understanding of selfish Code; for the humanities, because it forces a reconceptualization of what all of 'life' is, and then perhaps, what it might become. (Nicholas Ruiz III *Metapsychology*)

Genes in Conflict is the first book to review all aspects of this topic in depth… At just over 600 pages, it is a weighty and impressive work, and will undoubtedly serve as the major source of reference for years to come… Few, if any, biologists have expert knowledge on all of these fields, and many of the facts that they describe were unknown to me. I have certainly learnt a lot about systems of which I was ignorant or only dimly aware. For the topics where I do know something, the level of accuracy is very high… *Genes in Conflict* is an outstanding contribution to the literature on evolution, and can be read profitably by all kinds of biologists. (Brian Charlesworth *Current Biology*)

Burt and Trivers offer a comprehensive, extensively referenced description of selfish genetic elements in eukaryotes. The book begins with a summary of these elements, followed in subsequent chapters by in-depth descriptions of specific classes of selfish DNA… In addition to providing a detailed description of various forms of selfish DNA, the book discusses a number of interesting topics relating to these genetic elements… Faculty would find many of these topics a useful springboard for discussions in genetics and other classes.

(P. Guilfoile *Choice*)

Thought provoking… In their 602-page opus, Burt and Trivers provide a plethora of exciting case studies. Although there is no lack of data to discuss, the authors emphasize repeatedly how little we really know about this area of evolution and biodiversity. I found the tone of this book to be very engaging. It is full of details that have been woven together into a very readable, well-organized package. Of importance for the nonspecialist reader, Burt and Trivers succeed in conveying complex concepts in population genetics without using mathematical equations… What a gift to graduate students and all researchers who are just entering this field of evolutionary biology! I found at least a dozen good projects for Ph.D. theses suggested within the pages of this book, and I am sure that there are many more. (Fred Gould *American Scientist* 2006-11-01)

Some genes take advantage of the environment created by the cooperation of most of the others to advance their own rate of transmission. With their book *Genes in Conflict*, Burt and Trivers bring to the forefront this intragenomic treachery, revealing that genetic incompatibilities are diverse in form, widespread in nature…perhaps most provoking is that these conflicts have significantly influenced the evolution of genomes, populations, and species. To this end they have synthesized a huge body of literature with the goal of understanding all aspects of genetic conflict in eukaryotic genomes without ignoring any fact of biology where studies have been done. Much of this literature had lacked previous review… In each chapter Burt and Trivers are careful to demarcate the numerous questions awaiting answer, ending the book with a summary of future directions, as well as a provocative list of host features that they propose have arisen as the result of genetic conflict… This book is an incredible resource for any scientist interested in evolutionary genetics. Burt and Trivers have tackled a huge breadth of topics without sacrificing depth. They are able to compare sometimes seemingly disparate phenomena suggesting numerous connections that are either worthy of further exploration or at least provide the fodder for further debate. This book serves as the perfect primer for those interested in exploring the dark side of the genome and understanding some of the perhaps-underappreciated forces that may have acted to shape it. (Ellen J. Pritham *American Journal of Human Biology*)

In a meticulously assembled, thought-provoking and sometimes deliciously speculative textbook, Burt and Trivers' *Genes in Conflict* documents the selfish genetic elements that populate eukaryotic biology. Reading this book from a narrow viewpoint, one could see it as a recurrent tale of genetic conflict, but even from that perspective, the staggering variety of selfish strategies it discusses alone makes it worth reading. A broader view of this compilation is as a recurrent tale of genetic opportunity, revealing the innovative and insidious nature of genes as they vie with each other in complex sociogenetic negotiations for evolutionary survival… The overwhelming value of the book is the opportunity it highlights, as there are unanswered questions even in the best-studied instances of selfish genes. It both serves as a guidebook and a 'call to arms' for the next generation of inquisitive students, hopefully whetting their appetites and leaving them asking for more. (Harmit S. Malik *Nature Genetics* 2007-05-01)

I highly recommend this volume for all practitioners of evolutionary genetics. It seems particularly suited for graduate seminars and reading groups. Some passages require heavy lifting, even for specialists, but the effort is well worth it. Burt and Trivers have written a masterpiece. (Norman A. Johnson *Quarterly Review of Biology*)

About the Author
Austin Burt is Professor of Evolutionary Genetics, Imperial College London.

Robert Trivers is Professor of Anthropology and Biological Sciences, Rutgers University. Professor Trivers has been named 2007 winner of the Crafoord Prize in Biosciences.

Users Review

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