

Mapping the Terrain: Evolution, Human Nature, & Normative Ethics

Craig A. Boyd, Saint Louis University

Examples



Normative theory



Evolution is ruthless in its winnowing out of the 'weak' and the non-adaptive. The strong can, and should, survive. Social policies and ethics must conform to this pattern if society is to make progress.	Although evolution is ruthless, human morality must resist the demands of the 'selfish gene' in order to make society tolerable. Here, evolution and ethics are at odds with one another.	Evolution contains within it tendencies toward both pro-social and anti-social behaviors. Ethics must find within human nature the prosocial elements and use them to over-come the anti-social elements.	Although evolution produces both pro-social & anti-social behaviors, normative ethics requires a capacity to adjudicate among our competing desires such that we can not only <i>know</i> what to do but can <i>justify</i> it as well
---	---	---	--

Evolution as . . .

