

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*Anthropology demands the open-mindedness with which one must look and listen, record in astonishment and wonder that which one would not have been able to guess.*

*--Margaret Mead*

As you're reading Gould and Lewontin (1979) and Williams and Nesse (1991), please consider the following questions in order to prepare for class discussion.

### PART A:

1. What is the adaptationist program as described by Gould and Lewontin (1979)?
2. What do Gould and Lewontin think of the adaptationist program?
3. What do Gould and Lewontin offer as an alternative? How do these alternatives differ from the adaptationist program?
4. Do Gould and Lewontin necessarily oppose an adaptive explanation for a particular trait or behavior? Why or why not?

### PART B:

5. In one sentence, what is the paper by Williams and Nesse (1991) about? Where did you find this information in the paper?
6. Williams and Nesse (1991) provide a table of phenomena associated with infectious disease (Table 2). Why have they categorized things in this way? Do you think that in practice, these different effects could be easily separated from one another?
7. Williams & Nesse state, "Bacterial pathogens may complete a million cycles of fission within the lifetime of one human host, and there may be more pathogens in one individual than the earth's human population. Even in one host, a pathogen can be expected to produce highly improbable mutations many times and to evolve significantly in response to even minute selection forces (1991:7)." Why do they make this claim?

8. Williams & Nesse state, “Conventional wisdom has it that prolonged host-parasite association leads to a gradual reduction in virulence, with obligate mutualism as the final stage of extended association (1991:7).” Why does “conventional wisdom” make this claim? What alternatives do Williams & Nesse present?
9. What do Williams & Nesse offer to us as readers about how to predict the possible evolution of virulence?
10. Do Williams and Nesse agree or disagree with Gould and Lewontin? Where do you find evidence?
11. Do Williams and Nesse support the adaptationist program? Where do you find evidence?
12. What would Gould and Lewontin say about Lepowski’s adaptive claim as given in our in-class scenario?
13. What would Williams and Nesse say about Lepowski’s adaptive claim as given in our in-class scenario?
14. What questions do you have about these readings? How do you think they relate to the Paper 1 Prompt?

➡ Beyond Expos:

*When reading an article, paper, or essay, look beyond the content to also consider its tone, structure, and audience. Do the authors use first person? Third person? What sorts of evidence do they use, and how is it presented (quotes, paraphrases, tables, etc)? Why might the author(s) have chosen this type of evidence? Does it depend on the intended audience of the essay? How?*

*Asking yourself these types of questions can teach you a lot about writing in different fields, and the expectations for your own writing in your various courses.*