Ecotrophic Character of Primate Evolution

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Editorial

It may have been PT Barnum or the designer of the Field of Dreams who said that if we build it, they will come. While they have been among the first to vocalize the concept, nature actually preempts them in its application. Whether we examine the fossil record or the depths of the sea, we find that nature accommodates whatever niche is afforded by geologic or climatic processes. Is there an environ too hostile for life? Presence not only of bacteria but also of higher forms (e.g., worms) at volcanic vents suggests the adaptability and resilience of life.

The fossil record clearly demonstrates that a new organism fairly rapidly replaces a life form that can no longer survive in a given niche, be it geographically, geologically or biologically-defined. The classic example is that of the various morphotypes of saber tooth tigers, whose extinction and reinvention repeatedly serially replacing those that went extinct. Was primate evolution and convergent evolution.

Development of new ecological niches is followed by intrusion of organisms able to utilize those niches and to modifications/mutations of those invaders and of endemics that facilitate exploitation of new resources. Given establishment of a new ecology, organisms either adapt or go extinct, but the new ecology rarely remains barren. Life will find a way for its utilization.

References