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The Evolution of Cooperation

Competition is not the only
force that shaped life on earth

SPECIAL REPORT

Physics
Reviews
by **Nobel
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July 2012
ScientificAmerican.com

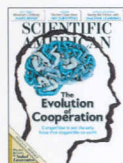


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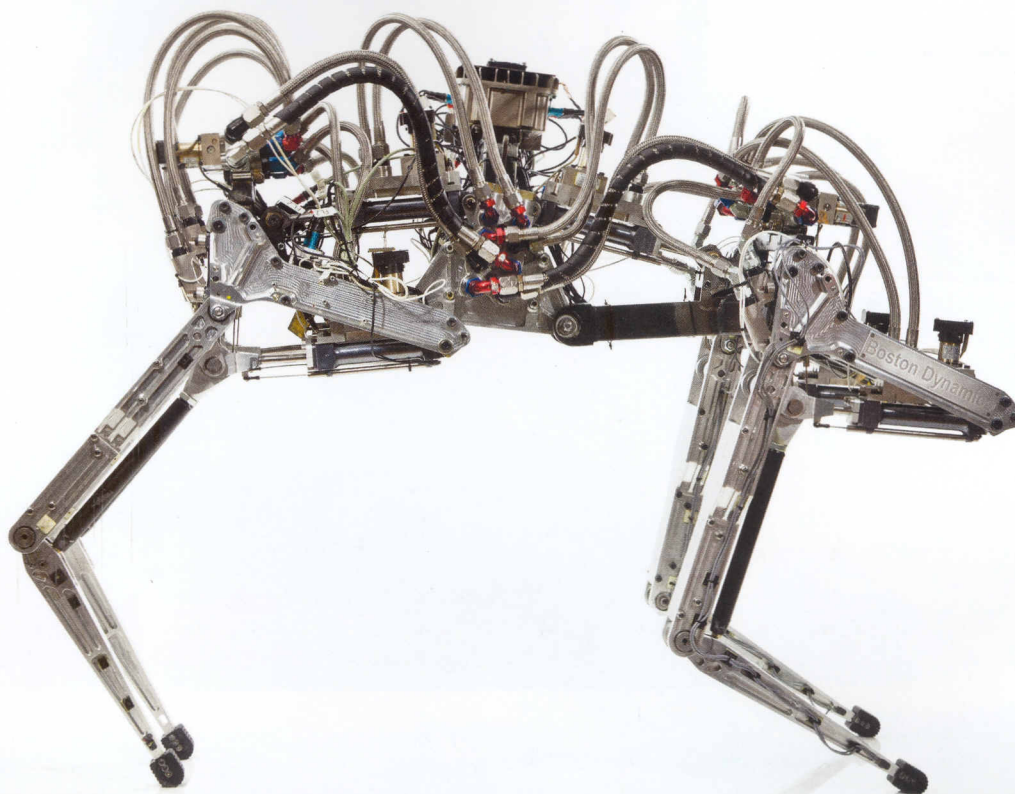
SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN

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ON THE COVER



Although competition is typically viewed as the driving force of evolution, it did not act alone. Cooperation, too, has profoundly shaped the evolution of life on earth—from single-celled organisms to insects and humans. We *Homo sapiens* are especially cooperative, thanks to our peerless ability to communicate using language. Photograph by Stephen Wilkes.



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Along the evolutionary path to *Homo sapiens*, cooperation has played as big a role as competition has.
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Some people carry HIV infections but manage to keep the virus in check naturally. Studying how they do it could lead to new treatments—and maybe a vaccine.
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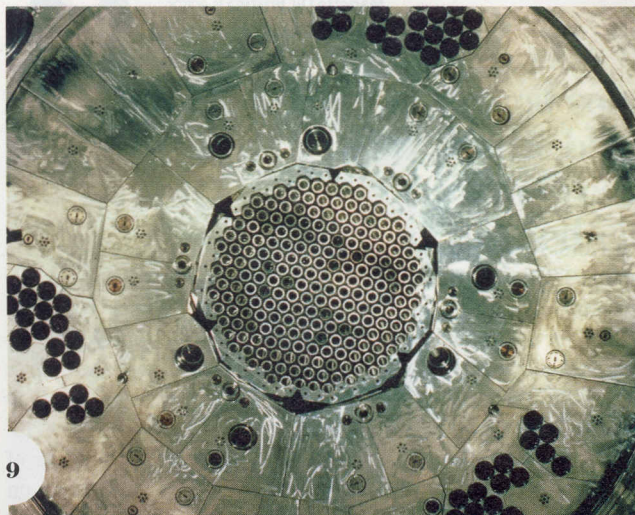
The shifting global distribution of Nobel Prizes.

ON THE WEB

Solutions for the Freshwater Crisis

New technologies are helping to purify water contaminated by pathogens or polluted with chemical agents, such as those used to extract fossil fuels from the earth in hydraulic fracturing, aka fracking.

Go to www.ScientificAmerican.com/jul2012/water



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