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The role of parasites in host speciation

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Propositions accompanying the PhD thesis:

The role of parasites in host speciation

Testing for parasite-mediated divergent selection at different stages of speciation in cichlid fish

Tiziana Paola Gobbin

1. If we are to gain insights into the nature of selective forces, it must come, I think, from a study of ecology. In particular, it must come from a study of the co-evolution of interacting species, because the main selective forces acting on a species are likely to come from changes in its competitors, its predators, and its parasites. (*John Maynard Smith, 1998*)
2. Given the impact of parasites across all levels of biological organisation, their omission from the design and analyses of ecological studies poses real risks of flawed interpretations for those patterns and processes that ecologists seek to uncover. (*Juan Timi & Robert Poulin, 2020*)
3. Differentiation in parasite infection arise during the divergence process of Lake Victoria cichlid hosts: when host species start to be genetically differentiated, they also start to diverge in their parasite communities. (*this thesis*)
4. Species of monogenean parasites that infect members of the Lake Victoria cichlid radiation do not infect old cichlid lineages and vice versa, suggesting parasites evolved specific adaptations that hamper host switching. (*this thesis*)
5. The contribution of differences in host ecology-related traits to infection divergence outweighs the contribution of differences in immunological traits among incipient species of cichlids. (*this thesis*)
6. A taxonomical name is simply a label that allows communication among scientists, it does not affect what a species actually is nor its intrinsic value. “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet.” (*Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, 1597*)
7. The scientist does not study nature because it is useful to do so. S/he studies it because s/he takes pleasure in it, and s/he takes pleasure in it because it is fascinating, when it is beautiful and when it is ugly. (*modified from Jules Henri Poincaré, 1908*)
8. The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated. The violence begins with the table fork. (*Mahatma Gandhi, 1869-1948*)