



Darwin's Unfinished Business: The Self-Organizing Intelligence of Nature

Simon G. Powell

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A groundbreaking interpretation of evolution as the work of Nature's intelligence

- Refutes the orthodox view of evolution as a mindless process driven by chance
- Explains why context is more important than mutation in evolutionary innovation
- Shows how, by recognizing Nature's innovative and creative powers, we can overcome our social and environmental challenges with a new green science of evolution

Darwin's theory of evolution is undoubtedly one of the most important scientific ideas of the modern age, explaining the existence of both life and consciousness without recourse to divine intervention. Yet how do we *interpret* evolution? How do we evaluate the ability of Nature to engineer something as exquisite as the genetic code or the human brain? Could it be that evolution is an intelligent process? Is Nature smart? According to most scientists, the answer is no. While humanity may be intelligent and purposeful, the natural processes that crafted us are deemed to be devoid of such attributes.

In a radical move away from orthodoxy, Simon G. Powell extends Darwin's vision by showing that evolution is not just about the survival of the fittest but rather the survival of clever and sensible behavior. Revealing the importance of the context in which things evolve, he explores the intelligent learning process behind natural selection. Rich with examples of the incredibly complex plants, animals, insects, and marine life designed by Nature--from the carnivorous Venus flytrap and the fungus-farming leafcutter ant to the symbiotic microbes found inside the common cow--he shows Nature as a whole to be a system of self-organizing intelligence in which life and consciousness were always destined to emerge. Examining the origins of life and the failure of artificial intelligence to compete with natural intelligence, he explains how our scientifically narrow-minded views on intelligence are now acting as a barrier to our own evolution. As Darwin's unfinished business comes to light and Nature's intelligence is embraced, we learn that Nature's agenda is not simply the replication of genetic matter but of expanding consciousness. By working with Nature's creative and innovative powers instead of against them, we can address today's social and environmental challenges with a new green science of evolution.

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