

A General Theory of Natural Selection: Synopsis

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Received November 26, 1984; February 27, 1985

ABSTRACT: Every change or continuity properly attributed to natural selection can be entirely accounted for as the outcome of one or more self-emplacements of instructions, where

- (1) instructions are minimal behaving structures (including, but not limited to, genes and memes), and
- (2) an instruction emplaces itself when
 - (a) it occurs at a certain spatiotemporal location and
 - (b) it would not occur there/then had it not behaved at a certain prior location.

That microtheoretical formulation, as elaborated in the paper, enables the construction of explicitly naturalistic causal-functional explanations of many phenomena of biological and social science, including some which have resisted selectionist explanation in the past.

In particular, it leads to the idea of a distributed predatory quasi-system: Carried by different organisms, several instructions emplace one another, and thus maintain themselves as a mutualistic group, at the expense of the host organisms (and their other genes and memes).

A notation method is presented for depicting and analyzing event sets of natural selection.

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Evolutionary Theory 7: 168 (March, 1985)

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