



Randomness in Evolution

John Tyler Bonner

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John Tyler Bonner, one of our most distinguished and insightful biologists, here challenges a central tenet of evolutionary biology. In this concise, elegantly written book, he makes the bold and provocative claim that some biological diversity may be explained by something other than natural selection.

With his customary wit and accessible style, Bonner makes an argument for the underappreciated role that randomness--or chance--plays in evolution. Due to the tremendous and enduring influence of Darwin's natural selection, the importance of randomness has been to some extent overshadowed. Bonner shows how the effects of randomness differ for organisms of different sizes, and how the smaller an organism is, the more likely it is that morphological differences will be random and selection may not be involved to any degree. He traces the increase in size and complexity of organisms over geological time, and looks at the varying significance of randomness at different size levels, from microorganisms to large mammals. Bonner also discusses how sexual cycles vary depending on size and complexity, and how the trend away from randomness in higher forms has even been reversed in some social organisms.

Certain to provoke lively discussion, *Randomness in Evolution* is a book that may fundamentally change our understanding of evolution and the history of life.

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