

Intentional Selection

Second Edition

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Dedicated to the Kiwi Farms

It has been brought to my attention the weakness of a specific idea, and I know how to fix it.

The issue lies with something known as “natural selection”. Language reveals metaphysics, and this word is frequently used to denote selection forces happening in the wild by supposedly natural causes, which, although standard in biological discourse, suffers from a conceptual shortcoming. The phrase suggests a passive, impersonal force shaping the development of life through “natural” causes. While functionally correct, it is a myopic and confused view, lacking the nuance of mind, and being too narrow in its use. It even suggests this non understanding when one claims that “natural selection caused this”: what they are admitting to is that some thing did do the selection, and with it the investigator also admits that he doesn't know what that thing is, relying upon the claim from nature for his causative mechanism.

The impairment happens to be with the term “selection”, and a better understanding of it will improve clarity. To select is not simply to filter outcomes by algorithm or accident: it is an act of abstract thought. This problem is metaphysical in nature, and is from the mind category. This aspect of selection is often ignored, but it is its most important part: that some living, thinking, spiritual thing took the responsibility upon themselves, given the chance, to make a choice.

This decision to choose, even when constrained by limited knowledge, carries weight. For if the underlying nature of reality resists total epistemological closure, then every act of choice is haunted by the shadow of what was not chosen. The opportunity cost is metaphysical in addition to practical: each selection excludes all others. This immediate consequence is lived. A certain opportunity cost is paid by the agent, in addition to everyone else, every time they select, and the bill is collected in the form of absence from and an inability to know of every other decision that could have been made instead.

The price can not be ignored, and, like the objectivists do, one can claim that what one desires is all that they ever wanted anyway, and in their selfishness they retreat into themselves, whatever the cost carried by others around them.

Intentional selection is the view that all meaningful acts of selection require a chooser: a spirit or soul capable of weighing, valuing, and enacting decisions amidst alternatives that cannot all be known or foreseen in advance or ever.