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INNER
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“A fascinating and poetic synthesis of current ideas on the emergence of our biofriendly cosmos and its destiny. James Gardner’s ‘Selfish Biocosm’ hypothesis envisions a novel perspective on humankind’s role in the universe.”

—Sir Martin Rees, UK Astronomer Royal, author of *Our Final Hour*, and winner of the 2001 Gruber Prize in Cosmology

“James Gardner tackles the biggest of the Big Questions head on: Why is the universe bio-friendly? This stunning fact cannot be shrugged away as an incidental quirk of nature, but deserves a deep and satisfying explanation. Gardner skillfully interweaves some of the most provocative ideas at the forefront of science to outline a possible explanation—and how extraordinary his explanation turns out to be!”

—Paul Davies, author of *How to Build a Time Machine*, *The Fifth Miracle*, *The Cosmic Blueprint*, and *The Mind of God*, and winner of the Templeton Prize

“A magnificent one-stop account of the history of life. From the beginning of the universe to its end, Gardner tells the entire story in a spellbinding account of how we got here and where we’re going.”

—John Casti, author of *The Cambridge Quintet* and *The One, True, Platonic Heaven*

BIOCOSM

The New Scientific Theory of Evolution:
Intelligent Life Is the Architect of the Universe

James N. Gardner

BIOCOSM: THE NEW SCIENTIFIC THEORY OF EVOLUTION: INTELLIGENT LIFE IS THE ARCHITECT OF THE UNIVERSE by James N. Gardner (Inner Ocean Publishing; publication date 9/9/03; \$29.95 hardcover; \$17.95 trade paperback; distributed by Publishers Group West) outlines a bold hypothesis that

challenges previous paradigms of how the universe began and what its ultimate destiny will be.

Gardner proposes that, much the way human DNA dictates the development of a single cell into a mature adult, the universe itself has a kind of DNA that governs its evolution and characteristics. He argues that the following cosmic attributes, among others, are *designed* to produce intelligent life:

- the strength of gravity
- the precise but essential trace amount of antigravity
- the texture of the primordial fireball that emerged from the Big Bang
- the three-dimensionality of the cosmos

Gardner bases his theory on compelling inter-disciplinary scientific evidence in the fields of physics, biology, biochemistry, astronomy, and cosmology that supports what he calls the Selfish Biocosm hypothesis.

In this scenario, the emergence of intelligent life on Earth is not an aberration or a chance event, but a natural and inevitable result of the evolution of the universe. In the words of Stuart Kauffman of the Santa Fe Institute, “Not we the accidental but we the expected.” Gardner’s hypothesis suggests that intelligent life is a phenomenon that we should expect to witness on other planets as we explore the cosmos.

Furthermore, under Gardner’s theory, the destiny of highly evolved intelligence (perhaps our distant progeny) is to infuse the entire universe with life and then to accomplish the ultimate feat of cosmic reproduction by spawning one or more “baby universes” which will themselves be endowed with life-generating properties.

In using the word “selfish” to describe his hypothesis, Gardner refers to a basic premise of Darwinism—the desire of any living thing to thrive and replicate. Simply put, the Selfish Biocosm hypothesis postulates that the universe is fundamentally organic rather than mechanical and indeed is in the process of coming to life. In Gardner’s view, life and intelligence throughout the cosmos will evolve upward to unimaginably high levels of sophistication and complexity. Thus, his hypothesis subsumes Darwin’s theory within a more encompassing explanation.

JAMES N. GARDNER is an accomplished science essayist and complexity theorist whose peer-reviewed articles on cosmology and evolution have been published in prestigious scientific journals. He has written articles for *WIRED*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Nature Biotechnology*. His scientific papers have appeared in *Complexity*, *Acta Astronautica* and the *Journal of the British Interplanetary Society*. Gardner is a former U.S. Supreme Court law clerk and a former Oregon state senator. He currently reviews science books for *The Sunday Oregonian*.

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The Selfish Biocosm Hypothesis

The Selfish Biocosm hypothesis asserts that:

- the anthropic (or life-friendly) qualities exhibited by our universe can be explained as incidental consequences of a cosmological replication cycle in which a cosmologically extended biosphere plays a key role;
- the emergence of life and intelligence are robust elements of that replication cycle, strongly favored by the physical laws and constants of inanimate nature;
- those laws and constants function as the cosmic counterpart of DNA: they furnish the “recipe” by which the evolving cosmos acquires the capacity to generate life and ever more capable intelligence;
- the process of earthly evolution is a minor subroutine in the process of cosmic ontogenesis (the biological process through which an organism develops from a fertilized egg into a mature adult); and

- the emergence of increasingly intelligent life is a robust phenomenon, strongly favored by the natural process of biological evolution.