

Definition

Entelenomy

Jong Bhak¹

1. Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology, Ulsan, South Korea

Entelenomy denotes self-generated purposiveness: systems act “for the sake of maintaining and extending their own organized existence” because their internal dynamics, information flows, feedback loops, and constraints, necessarily produce directionality.

Key features

Intrinsic: Purpose emerges from within the system itself, not from external selection pressures.

Informational: Directionality is encoded in information processing, control, and memory.

Computational: Systems behave as self-updating algorithms that stabilize and extend their own structure.

Scale-independent: Applies from physical and chemical systems to biological, cognitive, and socio-technical systems.

Cosmological continuity: Purpose-capacity exists from the earliest conditions of the universe and is elaborated, not invented, by life.

Contrast with teleonomy

Teleonomy (classical): Apparent purpose explained as a by-product of Darwinian **natural selection** acting on organisms.

Entelenomy: Purpose is a **fundamental property of organized systems**, with natural selection being one expression of deeper informational dynamics.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.