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Ragnar Granit

The Purposive Brain

1 The General Nature of Biological Explanations

In dealing with objects of our research whose explanation from the standpoint of present-day sciences is insufficient, greater scientific clarity is achieved by fully realizing what cannot be explained than by stealing a march on science with suppositions. We cannot reach farther than to understand what can be understood and realize what we cannot understand. (*The Autobiography of Berzelius*.)[1]

2 Purpose, Chance, and Causality

Every science that is a science will always have to develop its own peculiar and powerful methods of inference and methods of organizing and structuring its field. It cannot abdicate the search for its own rules and its own symbolic representations of its own empirical conclusions, just on the prospect that, with infinitely elaborate computations and great mathematical insight to pluck out the results, it might some day be quantitatively derivable from some more fundamental discipline. (*cf.* R. Platt, Properties of large molecules that go beyond the properties of their chemical subgroups. *J. Theoret. Biol.* (1961): 342–358.)