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Sommario/riassunto	Why does the United States continue to employ the death penalty when fifty other developed democracies have abolished it? Why does capital punishment become more problematic each year? How can the death penalty conflict be resolved? In <i>The Contradictions of American Capital Punishment</i> , Frank Zimring reveals that the seemingly insoluble turmoil surrounding the death penalty reflects a deep and long-standing division in American values, a division that he predicts will soon bring about the end of capital punishment in our country. On the one hand, execution would seem to violate our nation's highest legal principles of fairness and due process. It sets us increasingly apart from our allies and indeed is regarded by European nations as a barbaric and particularly egregious form of American exceptionalism. On the other hand, the death penalty represents a deeply held American belief in violent social justice that sees the hangman as an agent of local control and safeguard of community values. Zimring uncovers the most troubling symptom of this attraction to vigilante justice in the lynch

mob. He shows that the great majority of executions in recent decades have occurred in precisely those Southern states where lynchings were most common a hundred years ago. It is this legacy, Zimring suggests, that constitutes both the distinctive appeal of the death penalty in the United States and one of the most compelling reasons for abolishing it. Impeccably researched and engagingly written, *Contradictions in American Capital Punishment* casts a clear new light on America's long and troubled embrace of the death penalty.

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Darwin's dice : the idea of chance in the thought of Charles Darwin / /
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Serendipity in science
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Darwin's Dice; Copyright; Contents; Acknowledgments; Introduction; 1 Two faces of chance; 2 Chance transport; 3 Causes and laws of variations; 4 Chance, nature, and intelligence; 5 Darwin's evolving views about chance; 6 "So-Called Spontaneous Variation"; 7 Darwin's architect metaphor; 8 Darwin's giraffes; 9 Chance and free will; 10 Chance and human morality; Appendix: The Primary Sources; Bibliography; General index; Index Nominum

For evolutionary biologists, the concept of chance has always played a

significant role in the formation of evolutionary theory. As far back as Greek antiquity, chance and ""luck"" were understood to be key factors in the evolution of the natural world. Emphasizing chance is an entire way of thinking about nature, and it is also one of the key ideas that separates Charles Darwin from other systematic biologists of his time. Studying the concept of chance in Darwin's writing reveals core ideas in his theory of evolution, as well as his reflections on design, purpose, and randomness in nature's progression over the course of history. In *Darwin's Dice: The Idea of Chance in the Thought of Charles Darwin*, Curtis Johnson examines Darwin's early notebooks, his collected correspondence (now in 19 volumes), and most of his published writing to trace the evolution of his ideas about chance in evolution. This proved to be one of Darwin's most controversial ideas among his reading public, so much so that it drew hostile reactions even from Darwin's scientific friends, not to mention the more general reader. The firestorm of criticism forced Darwin to forge a retreat, not in terms of removing chance from his theory--his commitment to it was unshakable--but in terms of how he chose to present his theory. Briefly, by changing his wording and by introducing metaphors and images (the stone-house metaphor, the evolution of giraffes, and others), Darwin succeeded in making his ideas seem less threatening than before without actually changing his views. Randomness remained a focal point for Darwin throughout his life. Through the lens of randomness, Johnson reveals implications of Darwin's views for religion, free will, and moral theory. *Darwin's Dice* presents a new way to look at Darwinist thought and the writings of Charles Darwin.
