

The dual nature of life : interplay of the individual and the genome

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Abstrak

This book from a seasoned biologist offers new insights into the nature of life by illuminating a fascinating architecture of dualities inherent in its existence and propagation. Life is connected with individual living beings, yet it is also a collective and inherently global phenomenon of the material world. It embodies a dual existence of cycles of phenotypic life, and their unseen driver, an uninterrupted march of genetic information whose collective immortality is guaranteed by individual mortality. Although evolution propagates and tunes species of organisms, the beings produced can be regarded merely as tools for the survival and cloning of genomes written in an unchanging code. What are the physical versus informational bases and driving forces of life, and how do they unite as an integrated system? What does time mean for individuals, life on the global scale, and the underlying information? This accessible examination of principles and evidence shows that a network of dualities lies at the heart of biological puzzles that have engaged the human mind for millennia.