



The Philosophy of Biology: An Episodic History (Hardback)

By David J. DePew, Marjorie Grene

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, United Kingdom, 2004.

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Is life different from the non-living? If so, how? And how, in that case, does biology as the study of living things differ from other sciences? These questions are traced through an exploration of episodes in the history of biology and philosophy. The book begins with Aristotle, then moves on to Descartes, comparing his position with that of Harvey. In the eighteenth century the authors consider Buffon and Kant. In the nineteenth century the authors examine the Cuvier-Geoffroy debate, pre-Darwinian geology and natural theology, Darwin and the transition from Darwin to the revival of Mendelism. Two chapters deal with the evolutionary synthesis and such questions as the species problem, the reducibility or otherwise of biology to physics and chemistry, and the problem of biological explanation in terms of function and teleology. The final chapters reflect on the implications of the philosophy of biology for philosophy of science in general.



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