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In the spring of 2011, a diverse group of scientists gathered at Cornell University to discuss their research into the nature and origin of biological information. This symposium brought together experts in information theory, computer science, numerical simulation, thermodynamics, evolutionary theory, whole organism biology, developmental biology, molecular biology, genetics, physics, biophysics, mathematics, and linguistics. This volume presents new research by those invited to speak at the conference.

The contributors to this volume use their wide-ranging expertise in the area of biological information to bring fresh insights into the explanatory difficulties that biological information raises. Going beyond the conventional scientific wisdom, which attempts to explain biological information reductionistically via chemical, genetic, and natural selective determinants, the work represented here develops novel non-reductionist approaches to biological information, looking notably to telic and self-organizational processes. Several clear themes emerged from these research papers: 1) Information is indispensable to our understanding of what life is. 2) Biological information is more than the material structures that embody it. 3) Conventional chemical and evolutionary mechanisms seem insufficient to fully explain the labyrinth of information that is life. By exploring new perspectives on biological information, this volume seeks to expand, encourage, and enrich research on the nature and origin of biological information.

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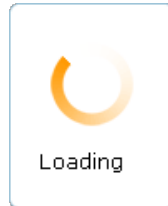
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