



# What is Life? The Next Fifty Years: Speculations on the Future of Biology

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Erwin Schrödinger's book *What is Life?*, which was originally delivered as a set of lectures at Trinity College, Dublin, is perhaps one of the most important scientific books of the twentieth century. It marked the beginning of molecular biology, and stimulated scientists such as Watson and Crick to explore and discover the structure of DNA. The novelty and appeal of *What is Life?* is that Schrödinger addressed the central problems of biology--heredity and how organisms use energy to maintain order--from a physicist's perspective. Fifty years later, at Trinity College, a number of outstanding scientists from a range of disciplines gathered to celebrate the anniversary of Schrödinger's lectures. In this book, they present their views on the current main problems in biology. The contributors are eminent scientists (including two Nobel Laureates) and well-known writers of popular science, including Jared Diamond, Christien de Duve, Manfred Eigen, Stephen Jay Gould, Stuart Kauffman, John Maynard Smith, Roger Penrose, and Lewis Wolpert. They tackle questions on our current understanding of the origin of life, evolution, the origin of human inventiveness, developmental biology, and the basis for consciousness. The book ends with a touching biography by Schrödinger's daughter, Ruth Braunizer. This book will set the stage for biological research into the next century and is essential reading for anyone interested in biology and its future.

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