



Information Theory And Evolution (2nd Edition)

John Scales Avery

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Information Theory and Evolution discusses the phenomenon of life, including its origin and evolution (and also human cultural evolution), against the background of thermodynamics, statistical mechanics, and information theory. Among the central themes is the seeming contradiction between the second law of thermodynamics and the high degree of order and complexity produced by living systems. This paradox has its resolution in the information content of the Gibbs free energy that enters the biosphere from outside sources, as the author will show. The role of information in human cultural evolution is another focus of the book. The first edition of Information Theory and Evolution made a strong impact on thought in the field by bringing together results from many disciplines. The new second edition offers updated results based on reports of important new research in several areas, including exciting new studies of the human mitochondrial and Y-chromosomal Dna. Another extensive discussion featured in the second edition is contained in a new appendix devoted to the relationship of entropy and Gibbs free energy to economics. This appendix includes a review of the ideas of Alfred Lotka, Frederick Soddy, Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen and Herman E. Daly, and discusses the relevance of these ideas to the current economic crisis. The new edition discusses current research on the origin of life, the distinction between thermodynamic information and cybernetic information, new Dna research and human prehistory, developments in current information technology, and the relationship between entropy and economics.

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