



The Systems View of Life: A Unifying Vision

By Professor Fritjof Capra, Pier Luigi Luisi

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Over the past thirty years, a new systemic conception of life has emerged at the forefront of science. New emphasis has been given to complexity, networks, and patterns of organisation, leading to a novel kind of 'systemic' thinking. This volume integrates the ideas, models, and theories underlying the systems view of life into a single coherent framework. Taking a broad sweep through history and across scientific disciplines, the authors examine the appearance of key concepts such as autopoiesis, dissipative structures, social networks, and a systemic understanding of evolution. The implications of the systems view of life for health care, management, and our global ecological and economic crises are also discussed. Written primarily for undergraduates, it is also essential reading for graduate students and researchers interested in understanding the new systemic conception of life and its implications for a broad range of professions - from economics and politics to medicine, psychology and law.

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"A magisterial study of the scientific basis for an integrated worldview grounded in the wholeness that generations of one-eyed reductionists could not see. The authors succeed brilliantly!"

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"... gives us a sound synthesis of the best science and theory on the connectedness of all living things, the dynamics of emergence and self-organization as conceived by Francisco Varela. This volume offers a profound framework for understanding our place on the planet, for better or worse. And if we apply the insights offered by Capra and Luisi, it will be for the better ... should be required reading for today's young, tomorrow's leaders, and anyone who cares about life on this planet."

Daniel Goleman, author of Emotional Intelligence and Ecological Intelligence

"What is life? What is a human being? How can new discoveries about nature and ourselves keep us from becoming the first self-endangered species? Capra and Luisi's dazzling synthesis explains how moving beyond mechanistic, linear, reductionist habits is revealing startling new answers to perennial questions of philosophy and practice. Sir Francis Bacon's goal of 'the enlargement of the bounds of Human Empire, to the effecting of all things possible' has put humanity in serious trouble. But today, rebuilding our thinking, language, and actions around Darwin, not Descartes, and around modern biology, not outmoded physics, creates rich new options. Driven by the co-evolution of business with civil society, these can build a fairer, healthier, cooler, safer world. The Systems View of Life is a lucid, wide-ranging guide to living maturely, kindly, and durably with each other and with other beings on the only home we have."

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Rob Kall, OpEdNews.com

"... a valuable overview of the discipline."

Stephen Lewis, The Biologist

About the Author

Fritjof Capra is a founding director of the Center for Ecoliteracy in Berkeley, California, and serves on the faculty of Schumacher College, Devon. He is a physicist and systems theorist, and has been engaged in a systematic examination of the philosophical and social implications of contemporary science for the past 35

years.

Pier Luigi Luisi is Professor in Biochemistry at the University of Rome 3. He started his career at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETHZ) where he became full professor in Chemistry and initiated the interdisciplinary Cortona Weeks. His main research focuses on the experimental, theoretical and philosophical aspects of the origin of life and self-organisation of synthetic and natural systems.

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