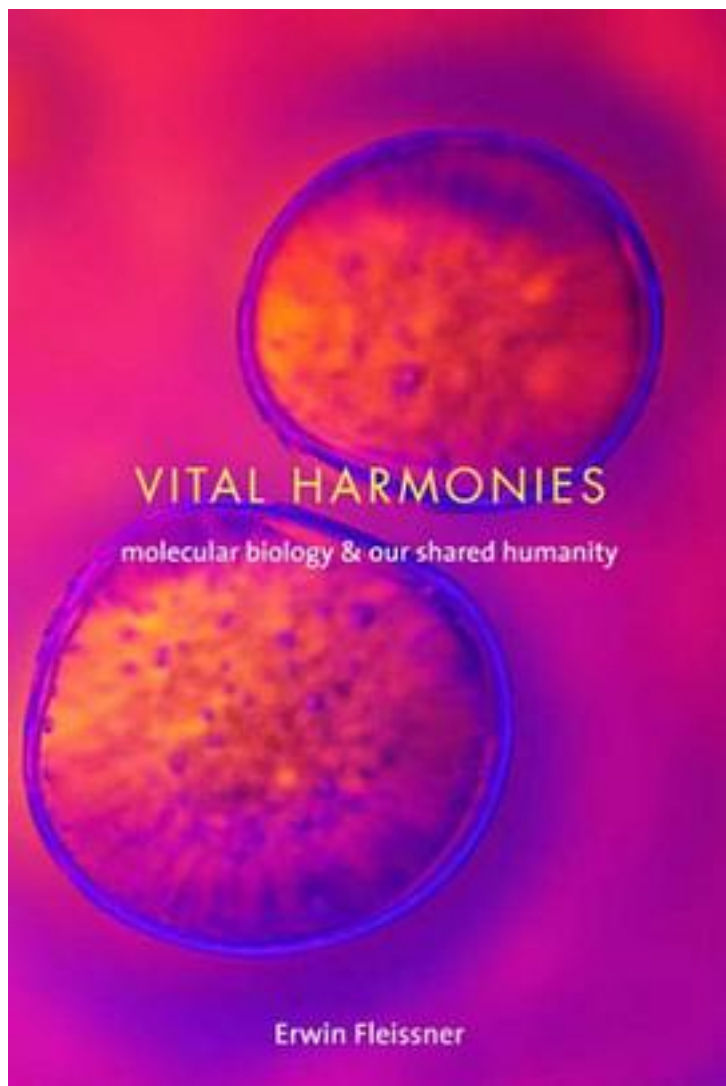


Vital Harmonies



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著者:Fleissner, Erwin

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The year 2003 marked the fiftieth anniversary of James Watson's and Francis Crick's discovery of the structure of DNA, which began a revolution in the biological sciences and radically altered the way humans view life and themselves. In this poetic account Erwin Fleissner, an eminent cancer researcher and teacher, offers a personal and professional reflection on the most significant developments in molecular genetics and cell biology over the past fifty years. Vital Harmonies is a sweeping look at these crucial scientific advances and an insider's perspective on what scientists have actually learned from them. Contrasting the humanistic side of scientific research with more deterministic or "mechanical" explanations of life processes, Fleissner discusses everything from natural selection to the tradition of rational inquiry stemming from the Enlightenment. He goes on to describe the structures of macromolecules and their "organizing" principles as well as cancer genes, stem cells, and the Human Genome Project. He also explores neuronal cells and the emergence of consciousness and how biological evolution is the foundation of our personal reality as well as our global responsibility. Fleissner asserts that scientific investigations cannot negate our essential "humanness" nor should the public fear them. Taking an optimistic perspective, he argues that a deeper knowledge of ourselves as biological entities will provide us, ultimately, with greater health, serenity, and self-knowledge. Vital Harmonies gives readers, whatever their background, an engaging analysis of some of the most important questions facing humanity today.

作者介绍:

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