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978-0-521-62425-1 - Biological Individuality: The Identity and Persistence of Living Entities

Jack Wilson

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Biological Individuality

In this book, Jack Wilson brings together two lines of research, theoretical biology and analytic metaphysics, that have dealt with the individuation of living entities in virtual isolation from one another. Wilson presents a new theory of biological individuality that addresses problems that cannot be solved by either field alone. The wide range of unfamiliar and fascinating organisms that he uses to develop his view, including slime molds, parasitic barnacles, and tardigrades, enables him to escape the limitations of theories based on thought experiments and the timeworn examples of organisms on which philosophers have traditionally relied. He presents a more fine-grained vocabulary of individuation based on diverse kinds of living things. This allows him to clarify and resolve previously muddled disputes about individuality in biology and philosophy.

This is a clearly written book of interest to philosophers of biology, metaphysicians, and biologists.

Jack Wilson is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Washington and Lee University.

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