

Genes mastermind our lives, yet we are the ones who house, perpetuate, and give the promise of immortality to these biological agents, our genetic gods. In clear, straightforward terms, distinguished evolutionary geneticist John Avise reviews recent discoveries in molecular biology, evolutionary genetics, and human genetic engineering, and discusses the relevance of these findings to issues traditionally reserved for mythology, theology, and faith. It is Avise's contention that current genetic knowledge can inform our attempts to answer typically religious questions—about origins, fate, and meaning.

"[Avise's] account of the role genes play in shaping the human condition is wholly involving . . . In addition to presenting ample biological information in a form accessible to the non-specialist, Avise does a superb job of discussing many of the ethical implications that have arisen from our growing knowledge of human genetics. Just a few of the topics covered are genetic engineering, the patenting of life, genetic screening, abortion, human cloning, gene therapy and insurance-related controversies."

—*Publishers Weekly*

John C. Avise is Professor of Genetics at the University of Georgia and is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 1994 he served as President of the Society for the Study of Evolution. He is the author of *Phylogeography* (Harvard).

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