

**Zeitschrift:** Archives des sciences et compte rendu des séances de la Société  
**Herausgeber:** Société de Physique et d'Histoire Naturelle de Genève  
**Band:** 42 (1989)  
**Heft:** 1: Archives des Sciences

**Artikel:** Polarity : from dipoles to biopolarizations. II. Addenda and indexes  
**Autor:** Turian, Gilbert  
**Nachwort:** Epilogue  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-740081>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 29.09.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## EPILOGUE (complement to pp. 271-273 in I)

The predictor question — What is life? — asked by the brilliant physicist Erwin Schrödinger in 1945 has since been partially answered by the cracking of the enigma of the genetic code. However, it still leaves open the question of “How does this one-dimensional code specify a three-dimensional organism?”, a question relevant of topobiology (Edelman, 1988). At this epigenetic level, organizational principles of inanimate objects appear to be still valid even though complexified for animate ones. Preeminent among such universal principles is polarity emerged from the primary asymmetries of particulate matter (see I.B) and multi-expanded into the numerous biopolarities.

To bridge genetics and epigenetics still remains the great question of how genes control the transduction of the intrinsic molecular polarities into those cellular and organismic biopolarities? The bridge starts to be completed at the cellular level with the recent unravelling of genes controlling polarity of cytoskeletal macromolecules such as actin, myosin and tubulins (see IV.E), themselves somehow related to known cell positioning as exemplified by our *Allomyces* “sexual dipoles” (Plate I). However, the link remains elusive at the organismic level where some types of interaction should intervene between macromolecular polarities and DNA-controlled directional (head or foot in the Hydra model) morphogenetic gradients.

I renew my gratefulness to ARIANE FEHR for her trustful technical help.