Selfish Dna Encyclopedia Article

Selfish Dna

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.



Contents

Selfish Dna Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Selfish Dna.....3

Selfish Dna

Also known as junk deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), selfish DNA are areas of DNA that have no apparent function, but are passed on from generation to generation. In some cases, the sequences of selfish DNA are repeated (repetitive DNA) and use the "host" organism as a means for survival (survival machine). This phenomena is documented in the Selfish DNA theory, which states that the eukaryotic organisms carrying the replicating DNA are nothing more than survival machines that allow the DNA to survive and reproduce. This type of DNA is generally repetitive in its composition and it is typical of such regions as spacer DNA and satellite DNA.

Recently, the possibility that selfish DNA includes functional genes that are coded with viable characteristics has been suggested, and the selfish DNA theory has been expanded to the selfish DNA/gene theory. Championed by the British author Richard Dawkins in such books as *The Selfish Gene* and *The Blind Watchmaker*, the expanded theory proposes that the "host" organism is not merely a survival machine, but an organism that is affected by the selfish DNA/genes. The selfish DNA is functional, and therefore it can influence its own and its host's survival.