

# Contents

|          |                                                                                     |           |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Introduction</b>                                                                 | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Viruses, Microorganisms and Molecular Genetics</b>                               | <b>9</b>  |
| 2.1      | Origin and Development of Microorganisms                                            | 10        |
| 2.2      | Basic Concepts of Molecular Genetics                                                | 15        |
| 2.2.1    | Transcription and Translation                                                       | 17        |
| 2.2.2    | Replication                                                                         | 19        |
| 2.2.3    | The Genetic Code: DNA and RNA                                                       | 20        |
| 2.3      | What Is Life? Definitions and Emergence                                             | 28        |
| 2.3.1    | Definitions of Life                                                                 | 28        |
| 2.3.2    | The Emergence of Life                                                               | 34        |
| 2.4      | Are Viruses Living Things? Viruses and the<br>Early Genetics of the RNA World       | 41        |
| 2.4.1    | The Genetics of Viruses                                                             | 45        |
| 2.4.2    | The Relation of Viruses to the Kingdom<br>of Living Beings and Their Classification | 49        |
| 2.4.3    | Prions                                                                              | 56        |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Algorithms, Software and Artificial Intelligence</b>                             | <b>59</b> |
| 3.1      | Software and Hardware                                                               | 60        |
| 3.2      | Algorithms and Computer Programs                                                    | 61        |
| 3.3      | Evolutionary Algorithms                                                             | 67        |
| 3.4      | Artificial Intelligence                                                             | 69        |

v

vi      **Contents**

|          |                                                                                             |            |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>4</b> | <b>Computer Viruses, Computer Worms,<br/>and the Self-Replication of Programs . . . . .</b> | <b>73</b>  |
| 4.1      | “Brain” and the Computer Viruses. . . . .                                                   | 74         |
| 4.2      | Computer Worms and Trojan Horses. . . . .                                                   | 78         |
| 4.3      | On the Analogy Between Biologically<br>Active Viruses and Computer Viruses . . . . .        | 80         |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Information, Genetics, and the Evolution of Life . . .</b>                               | <b>87</b>  |
| 5.1      | What Is Information? Data – Information –<br>Knowledge . . . . .                            | 88         |
| 5.2      | The Coding of Information in Biology<br>and Technology . . . . .                            | 92         |
| 5.3      | The Genetic Code and Information Theory . . . . .                                           | 97         |
| 5.3.1    | Epigenetics. . . . .                                                                        | 102        |
| 5.3.2    | Prions . . . . .                                                                            | 108        |
| 5.4      | Information Coding in Technology . . . . .                                                  | 111        |
| 5.5      | The Meaning of Information with Viruses<br>and Algorithms. . . . .                          | 114        |
| <b>6</b> | <b>The Great Continuum: The Convergence<br/>of Life and Technology . . . . .</b>            | <b>119</b> |
| 6.1      | The Independence of the Systems . . . . .                                                   | 120        |
| 6.2      | The Self-Replication of Artificial Intelligence. . .                                        | 125        |
| 6.3      | The Robots Are Coming: Technical Solutions<br>for Autonomous Systems. . . . .               | 128        |
| <b>7</b> | <b>The Coevolution of Life and Technology:<br/>Summary and Outlook . . . . .</b>            | <b>133</b> |
|          | <b>References . . . . .</b>                                                                 | <b>141</b> |
|          | <b>Index. . . . .</b>                                                                       | <b>151</b> |