

Max Delbruck Encyclopedia Article

Max Delbruck

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1906-1981

German-born American physicist who won the Nobel Prize for physiology or medicine in 1969 for his discoveries concerning the mechanism of viral replication and the genetic structure of bacterial viruses. His early attempts to link quantum physics and the structure of the gene inspired Erwin Schrödinger's book *What is Life?* (1944), a landmark in the history of molecular biology. Delbruck was the leader of the "phage school" of molecular biologists, who considered the bacteriophage the ideal experimental system for solving the riddle of the gene.