

life
cycle

Man: A Course of Study

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All living things are part of a

life cycle

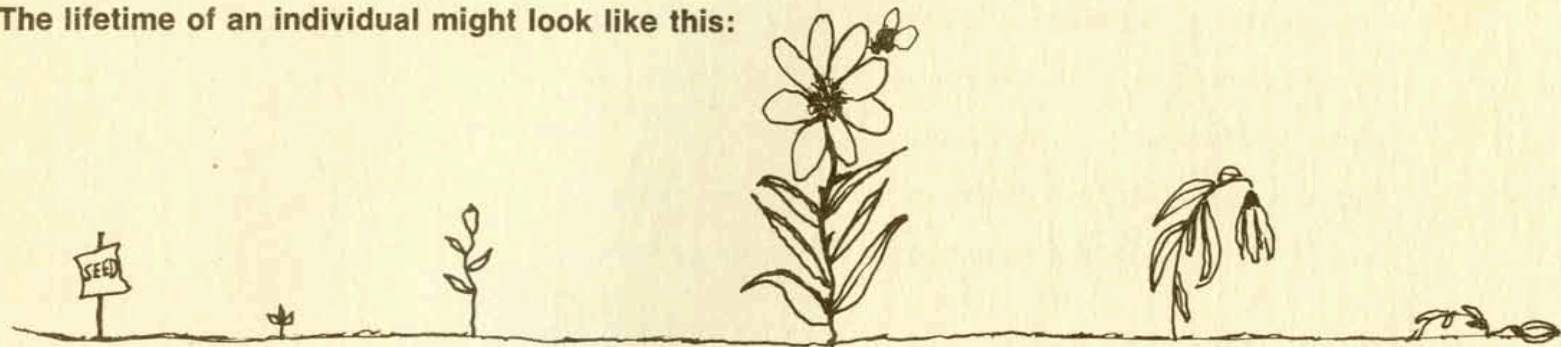
Each plant or animal

BEGINS LIFE GROWS REPRODUCES and **DIES**

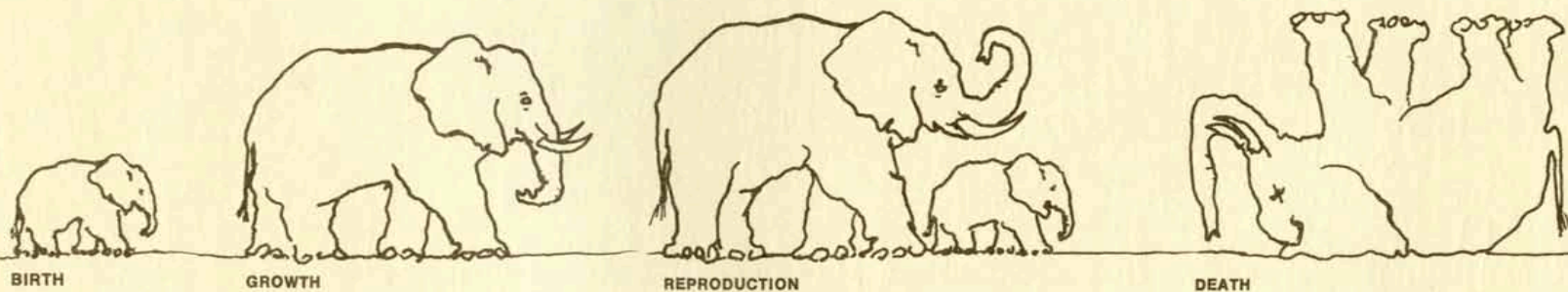
The offspring of that plant or animal follows the same pattern in its lifetime; it too

BEGINS LIFE GROWS REPRODUCES and **DIES**

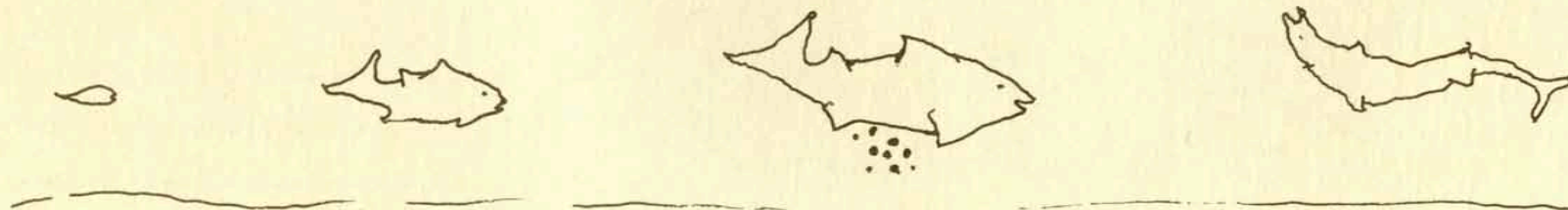
The lifetime of an individual might look like this:



or:

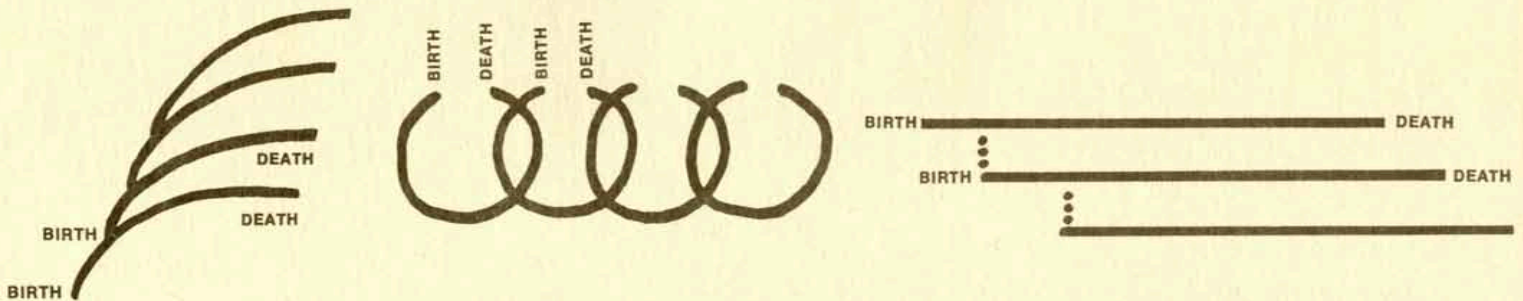


or:



- 4 When one lifetime follows another lifetime follows another lifetime . . . a chain of lifetimes is formed. This chain of lives might be called a life cycle. A group of eagles and a group of men go through the same life cycle. Individuals in each group are born, grow, reproduce and die. The offspring of the eagles as well as the offspring of the men follow the same pattern, and so do their offspring and their offspring's offspring.

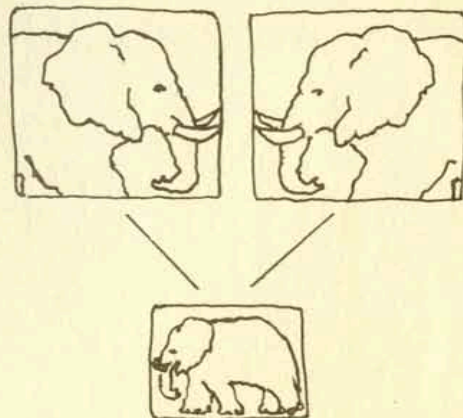
These are pictures that children have drawn of many lives in a cycle:

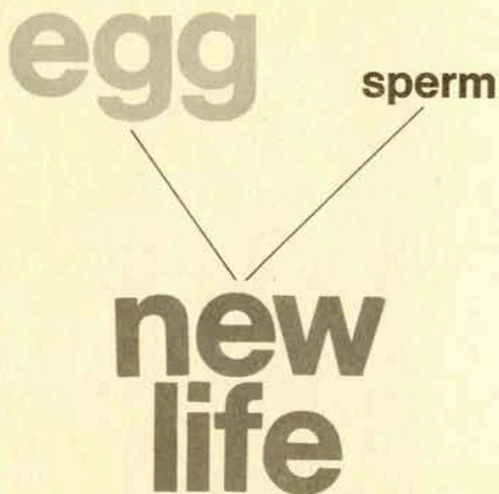


6 **Animals that are related to each other share characteristics. If you think of other humans you are related to, you can find lots of things you have in common with them. Maybe your nose is the same shape as your mother's. Maybe both you and your father have especially good eyesight. Maybe your eyes are the same color as your grandparents' eyes.**

Just as you and the members of your family share characteristics, elephants and their relatives share characteristics, eagles and their relatives share characteristics This is part of the life cycle. When living things reproduce, they pass their characteristics on to their offspring.

For most living things to reproduce, a cell from the male animal must join with a cell from the female animal. The female animal produces tiny cells called eggs. The male animal produces tiny cells called sperm. When the animals mate, an egg and a sperm come together. The tiny cell that is formed when the





egg and the sperm come together is the beginning of new life, a new individual.

Inside the egg and sperm is the information that decides what the new individual is like. The egg carries information from the mother and her ancestors. The sperm carries information from the father and his ancestors.

When the egg and sperm come together, the information is combined. Some of the characteristics of the new individual may be more like those of the father and his ancestors. Others may be more like those of the mother and her ancestors.

Can you imagine how many characteristics are decided upon when a human egg and sperm come together?

hair color	skin color	eye color	
shape of nose	shape of ears	length of fingers	length of arms
ability to see	ability to hear	ability to move	

People guess that

over one hundred thousand characteristics

are decided upon. So many characteristics are combined that there are never two individuals alike.

Whenever two animals reproduce, whether the animals are elephants, giraffes, eagles or men, an egg and sperm come together to begin the new life. The new individual receives a combination of traits from all its ancestors, but it is a new combination, and the new individual is never exactly like any other individual.

Individuals die. But new life continues on and on. No two lives are ever exactly the same, but characteristics are passed down

from generation

to generation

to generation.

