



# **Understanding Origins: Contemporary Views on the Origins of Life, Mind and Society (Boston Studies in the Philosophy and History of Science)**

*Francisco J. Varela, J.P. Dupuy*

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The main intention of this book is to bring together contributions from biology, cognitive science, and the humanities for a joint exploration of some of the main contemporary notions dealing with the understanding of origins in life, mind and society. The question of origin is inseparable from a web of hypotheses that both shape and explain us. Although origin invites examination, it always seems to elude our grasp. Notions have always been produced to interpret the genesis of life, mind, and the social order, and these notions have all remained unstable in the face of theoretical and empirical challenges. In any given period, the central ideas on origin have had a mutual resonance frequently overlooked by specialists engaged in their own particular fields. As a consequence, this book should be of interest to a wide audience. In particular, for all those engaged in the social sciences and the philosophy of science, it is a unique document, since bridges to the natural sciences in a mutually illuminating way are hard to find. Whether as a primary source or as inspirational reading, we feel this book has a place in every library. The material comes from an international meeting held in September 13-16, 1987 at Stanford University, organized by F. Varela and J.-P. Dupuy at the request of the Program of Interdisciplinary Research of Stanford University. We are grateful to Rene Girard, the Program Director, for making it possible with the help of the Mellon Foundation.

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