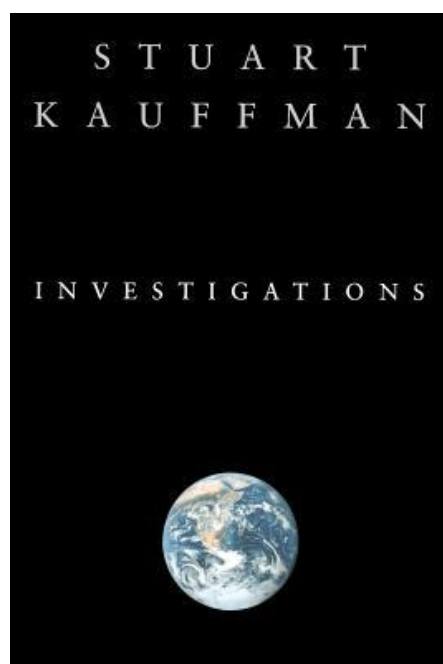




Investigations

Stuart A. Kauffman

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In the tradition of Schrodinger's classic *What Is Life?*, this book is a tour-de-force investigation of the basis of life itself, with conclusions that radically undermine the scientific approaches on which modern science rests--the approaches of Newton, Boltzman, Bohr, and Einstein.

Kauffman's *At Home in the Universe*, which *The New York Times Book Review* called "passionately written" and *Nature* named "courageous," introduced pivotal ideas about order and evolution in complex life systems. In *Investigations*, Kauffman builds on these theories and finds that classical science does not take into account that physical systems--such as people in a biosphere--affect their dynamic environments in addition to being affected by them. These systems act on their own behalf as autonomous agents, but what defines them as such? In other words, what is life? By defining and explaining autonomous agents and work in the contexts of thermodynamics and of information theory, Kauffman supplies a novel answer to this age-old question that goes beyond traditional scientific thinking.

Much of *Investigations* unpacks the progressively surprising implications of his definition. Kauffman lays out a foundation for a new concept of organization, and explores the requirements for the emergence of a general biology that will transcend terrestrial biology to seek laws governing biospheres anywhere in the cosmos. Moreover, he presents four candidate laws to explain how autonomous agents co-create their biosphere and the startling idea of a "co-creating" cosmos.

A showcase of Kauffman's most fundamental and significant ideas, *Investigations* presents a new way of thinking about the basics of general biology that will change the way we understand life itself--on this planet and anywhere else in the cosmos.

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Investigations Details

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Author : Stuart A. Kauffman

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Brett says

I first read this fantastic book when it first came out back in 2000/2001. Have added it back on the to-read pile after reading Steven Johnson's latest, which calls on quite a bit from Investigations.

Ushan says

Kauffman believes that as a mixture of organic chemicals grows ever more complex, it undergoes a phase transition and produces a self-replicator, which is to say, life. Of course, no one has been able to demonstrate it before or since.

Bibs says

Extremely interesting, thought provoking and innovative scientific thinking, but very repetitive. Three stars rating is not due to the quality of the content but the repetitive nature of the book.

Satai says

Nektere kusy, obzvlaste u konce jsou copy-paste z jiných míst. Nebo se to tomu alespon podobá.

Na druhou stranu základní otázka je poměrně nosná a přístup k řešení ne zcela trivialní. Kauffman asi globálně pravdu nemá, ale za zamýšlení stojí. Nektere kusy (autokatalytické site) bych měl rad vykoustle vedle do hutného a kompaktního textu, protože jsou to dobře, testovatelné a asi i celkem pravdivé hypotézy.
