



# The Origin of Cultures: Toward a Unified Theory of Human Evolution

*John Lin*

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## **The Origin of Cultures: Toward a Unified Theory of Human Evolution** John Lin

"In this highly original book, John Lin serves up his unique blend of philosophy, psychology, and neuroscience to discover the mechanism of cultural evolution and apply this knowledge to answer many of the big questions of our times. The premise of the book is simple: Only by knowing ourselves as human beings, the kind of creatures we really are, can we hope to understand cultural evolution and find valid answers to our human problems.

There is no way to achieve such understanding without knowing how information is acquired, processed, and transmitted by the human brain, Lin argues. To solve these difficulties, the book takes a radical approach in two steps. Part 1 of the book, *How to Build a Conscious Robot with Feelings*, investigates information processing in the mind by breaking it down into purely mechanical components for analysts and implementation. Part 2, *Cultural Evolution*, uses the findings to formulate an original theory of cultural evolution and apply it to elucidate cultural phenomena such as morality, ideology, and religion.

By delving deeply into the workings of the human mind, this book is the first to address the obstacle faced by memetic theorists in their analysis of culture: that nobody really knows what goes on inside the mind or how mental experiences may direct cultural evolution. Creative, persuasive, and comprehensive, *The Origin of Cultures* is full of insights and revolutionary thinking. It provides novel solutions to many age-old questions, such as those concerning the nature of consciousness, the roles of the unconscious and emotions in human thinking and reasoning, free will, the pursuit of happiness, the goals and mechanisms of cultural evolution, the possibility for a biologically based morality, the truths in ideologies, the origin and validity of religious beliefs, and more.

Determined to knock humankind off its last pedestal of smug self-reassurance, the answers to these questions will change forever our perceptions about the world and ourselves. The aim is not to humiliate or discomfit, however, but to put humanity on a more solid and authentic ground so it can realize its true potential. By giving us a glimpse of what the future can be, this book tells how we as human beings may evolve into a better, fitter, and happier species, living and succeeding in accordance with our nature.—Editorial Press Release

Winner, Silver Medal Finalist of the 2012 IBPA (Independent Book Publishers Association) Benjamin Franklin Book Award in the Category of Science.—Publisher Press Release"

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