

DUBLIN CITY  
UNIVERSITY

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**Autopoiesis & Perception**

Edited by

Barry McMullin and Noel Murphy

**School of  
Electronic Engineering**

TECHNICAL REPORT: bmcm9401

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# Autopoiesis and Perception

*Proceedings of a Workshop within ESPRIT BRA 3352*

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY

August 25th & 26th 1992

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Barry McMullin and Noel Murphy

*We have inherited from our forefathers the keen longing for unified, all-embracing knowledge. The very name given to the highest institutions of learning reminds us, that from antiquity and throughout many centuries the universal aspect has been the only one to be given full credit. But the spread, both in width and depth, of the multifarious branches of knowledge during the last hundred odd years has confronted us with a queer dilemma. We feel clearly that we are only now beginning to acquire reliable material for welding together the sum total of all that is known into a whole; but, on the other hand, it has become next to impossible for a single mind fully to command more than a small specialized portion of it.*

*I can see no other escape from this dilemma (lest our true aim be lost forever) than that some of us should venture to embark on a synthesis of facts and theories, albeit with second-hand and incomplete knowledge of some of them—and at the risk of making fools of ourselves.*

—Erwin Schrödinger  
Preface to *What is Life*

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