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Popular Science

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Autumn 2020

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press.princeton.edu

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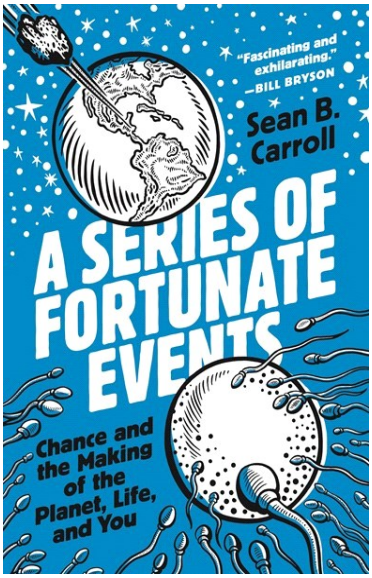
Catalogue Contents



A Series of Fortunate Events

Chance and the Making of the Planet, Life, and You

Sean B. Carroll

"Fascinating and exhilarating—Sean B. Carroll at his very best."—Bill Bryson, author of *The Body: A Guide for Occupants*
From acclaimed writer and biologist Sean B. Carroll, a rollicking, awe-inspiring story of the surprising power of chance in our lives and the world

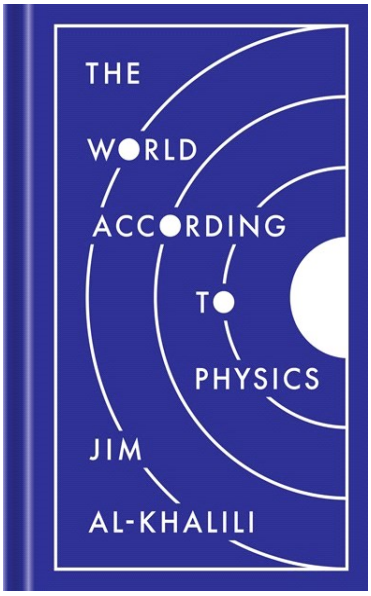
Why is the world the way it is? How did we get here? Does everything happen for a reason or are some things left to chance? Philosophers and theologians have pondered these questions for millennia, but startling scientific discoveries over the past half century are revealing that we live in a world driven by chance. *A Series of Fortunate Events* tells the story of the awesome power of chance and how it is the surprising source of all the beauty and diversity in the living world.

Like every other species, we humans are here by accident. But it is shocking just how many things—any of which might never have occurred—had to happen in certain ways for any of us to exist. From an extremely improbable asteroid impact, to the wild gyrations of the Ice Age, to invisible accidents in our parents' gonads, we are all here through an astonishing series of fortunate events. And chance continues to reign every day over the razor-thin line between our life and death.

This is a relatively small book about a really big idea. It is also a spirited tale. Drawing inspiration from Monty Python, Kurt Vonnegut, and other great thinkers, and crafted by one of today's most accomplished science storytellers, *A Series of Fortunate Events* is an irresistibly entertaining and thought-provoking account of one of the most important but least appreciated facts of life.

9780691201757
$22.95 | £18.99
Hardback
224 pages | 133.35mm : 203.2mm
October 2020

Science / Life Sciences
Princeton University Press



The World According to Physics

Jim Al-Khalili

Quantum physicist, *New York Times* bestselling author, and BBC host Jim Al-Khalili offers a fascinating and illuminating look at what physics reveals about the world

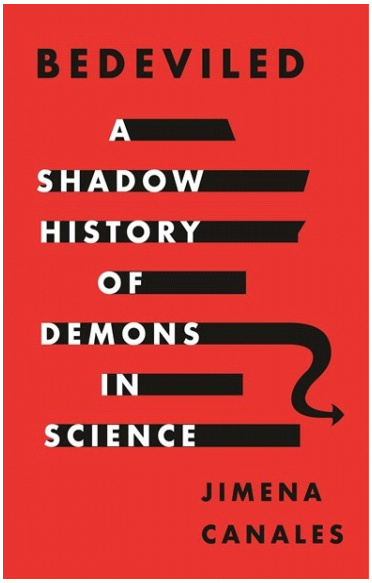
Shining a light on the most profound insights revealed by modern physics, Jim Al-Khalili invites us all to understand what this crucially important science tells us about the universe and the nature of reality itself.

Al-Khalili begins by introducing the fundamental concepts of space, time, energy, and matter, and then describes the three pillars of modern physics—quantum theory, relativity, and thermodynamics—showing how all three must come together if we are ever to have a full understanding of reality. Using wonderful examples and thought-provoking analogies, Al-Khalili illuminates the physics of the extreme cosmic and quantum scales, the speculative frontiers of the field, and the physics that underpins our everyday experiences and technologies, bringing the reader up to speed with the biggest ideas in physics in just a few sittings. Physics is revealed as an intrepid human quest for ever more foundational principles that accurately explain the natural world we see around us, an undertaking guided by core values such as honesty and doubt. The knowledge discovered by physics both empowers and humbles us, and still, physics continues to delve valiantly into the unknown.

Making even the most enigmatic scientific ideas accessible and captivating, this deeply insightful book illuminates why physics matters to everyone and calls one and all to share in the profound adventure of seeking truth in the world around us.

9780691182308
$16.95 | £12.99
Hardback
336 pages | 114.3mm : 177.8mm
February 2020

Science / Physics
Princeton University Press



Bedeviled

A Shadow History of Demons in Science

Jimena Canales

How scientists through the ages have conducted thought experiments using imaginary entities—demons—to test the laws of nature and push the frontiers of what is possible

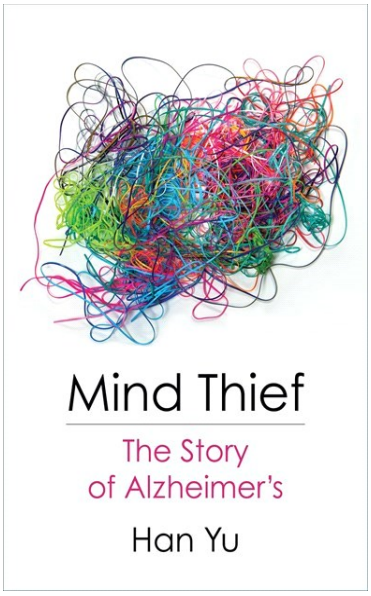
Science may be known for banishing the demons of superstition from the modern world. Yet just as the demon-haunted world was being exorcized by the enlightening power of reason, a new kind of demon mischievously materialized in the scientific imagination itself. Scientists began to employ hypothetical beings to perform certain roles in thought experiments—experiments that can only be done in the imagination—and these impish assistants helped scientists achieve major breakthroughs that pushed forward the frontiers of science and technology.

Spanning four centuries of discovery—from René Descartes, whose demon could hijack sensorial reality, to James Clerk Maxwell, whose molecular-sized demon deftly broke the second law of thermodynamics, to Darwin, Einstein, Feynman, and beyond—Jimena Canales tells a shadow history of science and the demons that bedevil it. She reveals how the greatest scientific thinkers used demons to explore problems, test the limits of what is possible, and better understand nature. Their imaginary familiars helped unlock the secrets of entropy, heredity, relativity, quantum mechanics, and other scientific wonders—and continue to inspire breakthroughs in the realms of computer science, artificial intelligence, and economics today.

The world may no longer be haunted as it once was, but the demons of the scientific imagination are alive and well, continuing to play a vital role in scientists' efforts to explore the unknown and make the impossible real.

9780691175324
$29.95 | £25.00
Hardback
400 pages | 155.45mm : 234.95mm
November 2020

Science / History
Princeton University Press



Mind Thief

The Story of Alzheimer's

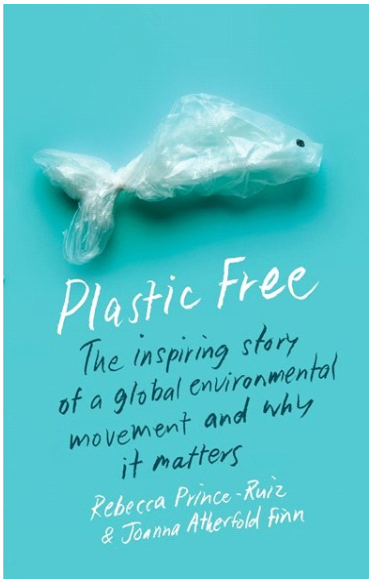
Han Yu

Alzheimer's disease, a haunting and harrowing ailment, is one of the world's most common causes of death. Alzheimer's lingers for years, with patients' outward appearance unaffected while their cognitive functions fade away. Patients lose the ability to work and live independently, to remember and recognize. There is still no proven way to treat Alzheimer's because its causes remain unknown.

Mind Thief is a comprehensive and engaging history of Alzheimer's that demystifies efforts to understand the disease. Beginning with the discovery of "presenile dementia" in the early twentieth century, Han Yu examines over a century of research and controversy. She presents the leading hypotheses for what causes Alzheimer's; discusses each hypothesis's tangled origins, merits, and gaps; and details their successes and failures. Yu synthesizes a vast amount of medical literature, historical studies, and media interviews, telling the gripping stories of researchers' struggles while situating science in its historical, social, and cultural contexts. Her chronicling of the trajectory of Alzheimer's research deftly balances rich scientific detail with attention to the wider implications. In narrating the attempts to find a treatment, Yu also offers a critical account of research and drug development and a consideration of the philosophy of aging. Wide-ranging and accessible, *Mind Thief* is an important book for all readers interested in the challenge of Alzheimer's.

9780231198707
$30.00 | £24.00
Hardback
368 pages | 139.7mm : 215.9mm
March 2021

Science / History
Columbia University Press



Plastic Free

The Inspiring Story of a Global Environmental Movement and Why It Matters

Rebecca Prince-Ruiz, Joanna Atherfold Finn

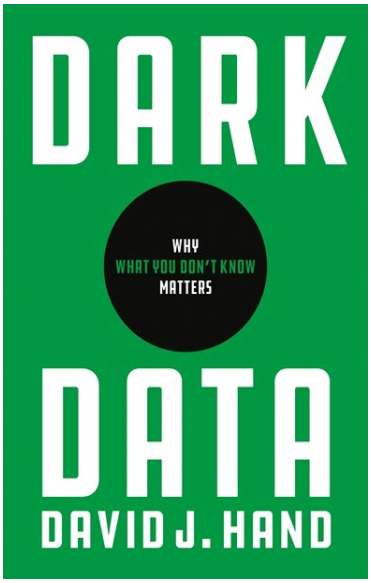
In July 2011, Rebecca Prince-Ruiz challenged herself to go plastic free for the whole month. Starting with a small group of people in the city of Perth, the Plastic Free July movement has grown into a 250-million strong community across 177 countries, empowering people to reduce single-use plastic consumption and create a cleaner future.

This book explores how one of the world's leading environmental campaigns took off and shares lessons from its success. From narrating marine-debris research expeditions to tracking what actually happens to our waste to sharing insights from behavioral research, it speaks to the massive scale of the plastic waste problem and how we can tackle it together. Interweaving interviews from participants, activists, and experts, *Plastic Free* tells the inspiring story of how ordinary people have created change in their homes, communities, workplaces, schools, businesses, and beyond.

It is easy to feel overwhelmed in the face of global environmental problems and wonder what difference our own actions could possibly make. *Plastic Free* offers hope for the future through the stories of those who have taken on what looked like an insurmountable challenge and succeeded in innovative and practical ways, one step—and one piece of plastic—at a time.

9780231198622
$28.00 | £22.00
Hardback
272 pages | 155.575mm : 234.95mm
December 2020

Science / Environmental Science
Columbia University Press



Dark Data

Why What You Don't Know Matters

David J. Hand

A practical guide to making good decisions in a world of missing data

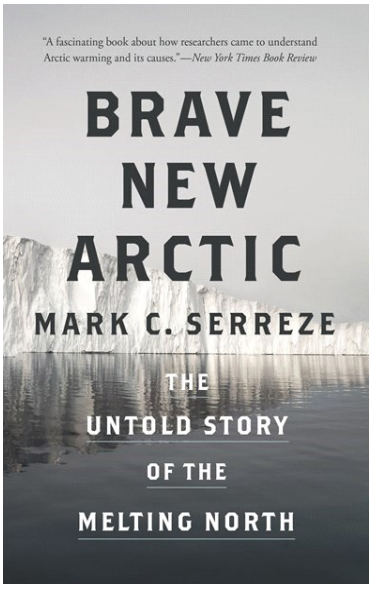
In the era of big data, it is easy to imagine that we have all the information we need to make good decisions. But in fact the data we have are never complete, and may be only the tip of the iceberg. Just as much of the universe is composed of dark matter, invisible to us but nonetheless present, the universe of information is full of dark data that we overlook at our peril. In *Dark Data*, data expert David Hand takes us on a fascinating and enlightening journey into the world of the data we *don't* see.

Dark Data explores the many ways in which we can be blind to missing data and how that can lead us to conclusions and actions that are mistaken, dangerous, or even disastrous. Examining a wealth of real-life examples, from the Challenger shuttle explosion to complex financial frauds, Hand gives us a practical taxonomy of the types of dark data that exist and the situations in which they can arise, so that we can learn to recognize and control for them. In doing so, he teaches us not only to be alert to the problems presented by the things we don't know, but also shows how dark data can be used to our advantage, leading to greater understanding and better decisions.

Today, we all make decisions using data. *Dark Data* shows us all how to reduce the risk of making bad ones.

9780691182377
$29.95 | £25.00
Hardback
344 pages | 139.7mm : 215.9mm
January 2020

Computers / Databases
Princeton University Press



Brave New Arctic

The Untold Story of the Melting North

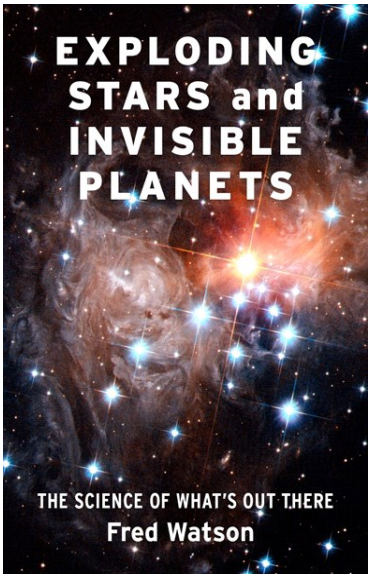
Mark C. Serreze

An insider account of how scientists unraveled the mystery of the thawing Arctic

In the 1990s, researchers in the Arctic noticed that floating summer sea ice had begun receding. This was accompanied by shifts in ocean circulation and unexpected changes in weather patterns throughout the world. The Arctic's perennially frozen ground, known as permafrost, was warming, and treeless tundra was being overtaken by shrubs. What was going on? *Brave New Arctic* is Mark Serreze's riveting firsthand account of how scientists from around the globe came together to find answers. In a sweeping tale of discovery spanning three decades, Serreze describes how puzzlement turned to alarm as researchers concluded that the Arctic is rapidly thawing due to climate change—and humans are to blame.

9780691202655
$17.95 | £14.99
Paperback
272 pages | 139.7mm : 215.9mm
March 2020

SCIENCE / Earth Sciences
Science Essentials
Princeton University Press



Exploding Stars and Invisible Planets

The Science of What's Out There

Fred Watson

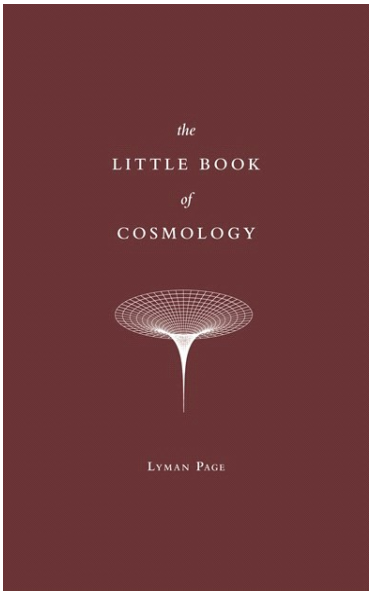
What happens to space and matter near a black hole? Where did the moon come from? How do we know what stars are made of? Are we alone in the universe?

In *Exploding Stars and Invisible Planets*, Fred Watson, an award-winning astronomer, presents the most up-to-date knowledge on hot topics in astronomy and space science, providing a fascinating and entertaining account of the latest research. Watson explains how to find invisible planets around other stars, why dark matter matters, and the future of citizen space travel, all while recounting the seismic shifts in understanding that have taken place during his illustrious career.

The book features illuminating discussions of microbes in space; the dividing line between day and night; exploding stars and light echoes; fast radio bursts and signals from space; meteors, meteorites, and space dust; what happened to the Martian ocean; the seas and lakes of Titan; and the birth of the universe.

9780231195409
$28.00 | £22.00
Hardback
256 pages | 155.575mm : 234.95mm
January 2020

Science / Astrophysics & Space Science
Columbia University Press



The Little Book of Cosmology

Lyman Page

The cutting-edge science that is taking the measure of the universe

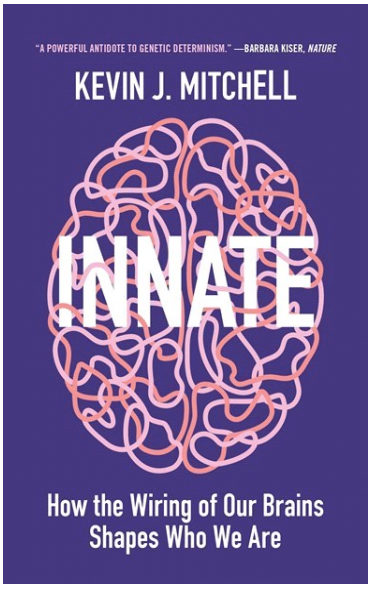
The Little Book of Cosmology provides a breathtaking look at our universe on the grandest scales imaginable. Written by one of the world's leading experimental cosmologists, this short but deeply insightful book describes what scientists are revealing through precise measurements of the faint thermal afterglow of the Big Bang—known as the cosmic microwave background, or CMB—and how their findings are transforming our view of the cosmos.

Blending the latest findings in cosmology with essential concepts from physics, Lyman Page first helps readers to grasp the sheer enormity of the universe, explaining how to understand the history of its formation and evolution in space and time. Then he sheds light on how spatial variations in the CMB formed, how they reveal the age, size, and geometry of the universe, and how they offer a blueprint for the formation of cosmic structure.

Not only does Page explain current observations and measurements, he describes how they can be woven together into a unified picture to form the Standard Model of Cosmology. Yet much remains unknown, and this incisive book also describes the search for ever deeper knowledge at the field's frontiers—from quests to understand the nature of neutrinos and dark energy to investigations into the physics of the very early universe.

9780691195780
$19.95 | £16.99
Hardback
152 pages | 139.7mm : 215.9mm
March 2020

Science / Cosmology
Princeton University Press



Innate

How the Wiring of Our Brains Shapes Who We Are

Kevin J. Mitchell

A leading neuroscientist explains why your personal traits are more innate than you think

What makes you the way you are—and what makes each of us different from everyone else? In *Innate*, leading neuroscientist and popular science blogger Kevin Mitchell traces human diversity and individual differences to their deepest level: in the wiring of our brains. Deftly guiding us through important new research, including his own groundbreaking work, he explains how variations in the way our brains develop before birth strongly influence our psychology and behavior throughout our lives, shaping our personality, intelligence, sexuality, and even the way we perceive the world. Compelling and original, *Innate* will change the way you think about why and how we are who we are.

9780691204154
$18.95 | £15.99
Paperback
312 pages | 133.35mm : 203.2mm
March 2020

SCIENCE / Life Sciences
Princeton University Press

On Gravity

A Brief Tour of a Weighty Subject

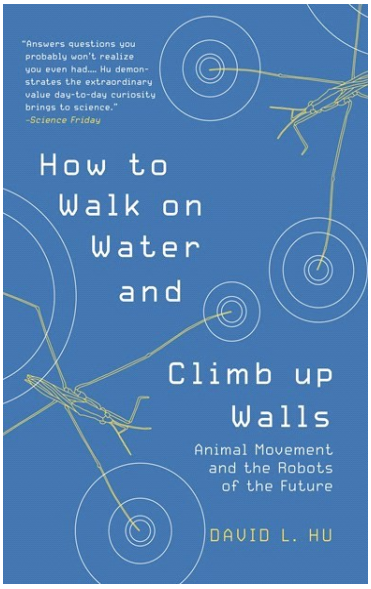
A. Zee

A pithy yet deep introduction to Einstein's general theory of relativity

Of the four fundamental forces of nature, gravity might be the least understood and yet the one with which we are most intimate. *On Gravity* combines depth with accessibility to take us on a compelling tour of Einstein's general theory of relativity. A. Zee begins with the discovery of gravity waves, then explains how gravity can be understood in comparison to other classical field theories, presents the idea of curved spacetime, and explores black holes and Hawking radiation. Zee travels as far as the theory reaches, leaving us with tantalizing hints of the unknown, from the intransigence of quantum gravity to the mysteries of dark matter. Infused with Zee's signature warmth and fresh style, *On Gravity* opens a unique pathway to comprehending relativity, gravity, spacetime, and the workings of the universe.

9780691202662
$14.95 | £12.99
Paperback
192 pages | 139.7mm : 215.9mm
March 2020

Science / Gravity
Princeton University Press



How to Walk on Water and Climb up Walls

Animal Movement and the Robots of the Future

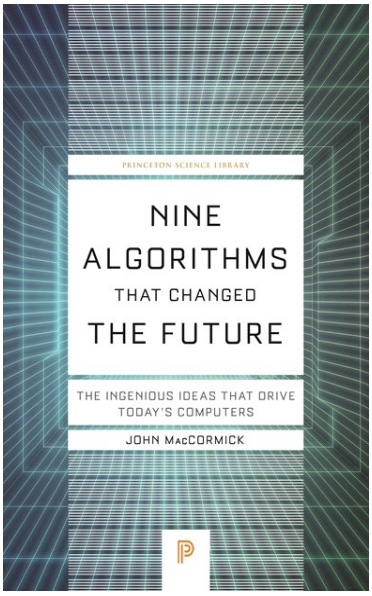
David Hu

Discovering the secrets of animal movement and what they can teach us

Insects walk on water, snakes slither, and fish swim. Animals move with astounding grace, speed, and versatility: how do they do it, and what can we learn from them? *How to Walk on Water and Climb up Walls* takes readers on a wondrous journey into the world of animal motion. From basement labs at MIT to the rain forests of Panama, David Hu shows how animals have adapted and evolved to traverse their environments, taking advantage of physical laws with results that are startling and ingenious. In turn, the latest discoveries about animal mechanics are inspiring scientists to invent robots and devices that move with similar elegance and efficiency. Integrating biology, engineering, physics, and robotics, *How to Walk on Water and Climb up Walls* demystifies the remarkable secrets behind animal locomotion.

9780691204161
$14.95 | £12.99
Paperback
248 pages | 139mm : 195mm
March 2020

Science / Life Sciences
Princeton University Press



Nine Algorithms That Changed the Future

The Ingenious Ideas That Drive Today's Computers

John MacCormick

Nine revolutionary algorithms that power our computers and smartphones

Every day, we use our computers to perform remarkable feats. A simple web search picks out a handful of relevant needles from the world's biggest haystack. Uploading a photo to Facebook transmits millions of pieces of information over numerous error-prone network links, yet somehow a perfect copy of the photo arrives intact. Without even knowing it, we use public-key cryptography to transmit secret information like credit card numbers, and we use digital signatures to verify the identity of the websites we visit. How do our computers perform these tasks with such ease? John MacCormick answers this question in language anyone can understand, using vivid examples to explain the fundamental tricks behind nine computer algorithms that power our PCs, tablets, and smartphones.

9780691209067
$16.95 | £13.99
Paperback
232 pages | 139.7mm : 215.9mm
September 2020

Computers / Programming
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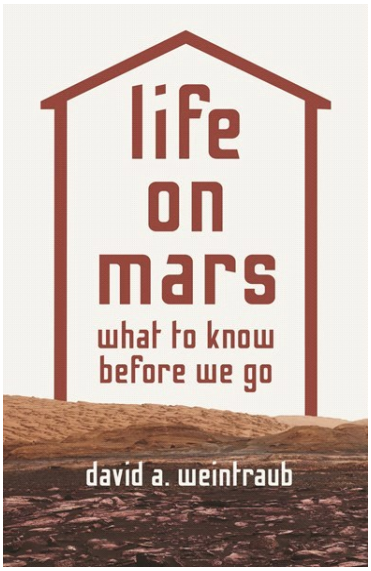
Princeton University Press



Life on Mars

What to Know Before We Go

David A. Weintraub

The search for life on Mars—and the moral issues confronting us as we prepare to send humans there

Does life exist on Mars? The question has captivated humans for centuries, but today it has taken on new urgency. As space agencies gear up to send the first manned missions to the Red Planet, we have a responsibility to think deeply about what kinds of life may already dwell there—and whether we have the right to invite ourselves in. Telling the complete story of our ongoing quest to answer one of the most tantalizing questions in astronomy, David Weintraub grapples with the profound moral and ethical questions confronting us as we prepare to introduce an unpredictable new life form—ourselves—into the Martian biosphere. Now with an afterword that discusses the most recent discoveries, *Life on Mars* explains what we need to know before we go.

9780691209258
$19.95 | £16.99
Paperback
344 pages | 133.35mm : 203.2mm
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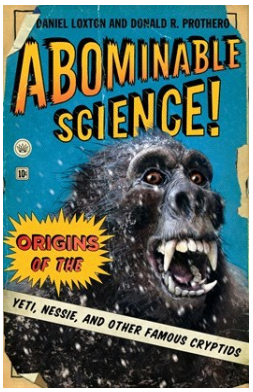
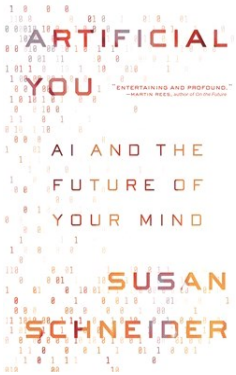
Science / Astronomy
Princeton University Press



Abominable Science!
Origins of the Yeti, Nessie, and Other Famous Cryptids

Daniel Loxton, Donald R. Prothero, Michael Shermer

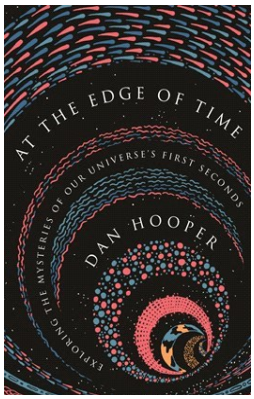
9780231153218
$19.95 | £14.99
Paperback | 2015
Science
Columbia University Press



Artificial You
AI and the Future of Your Mind

Susan Schneider

9780691180144
$24.95 | £22.00
Hardback | 2019
SCIENCE
Princeton University Press



At the Edge of Time
Exploring the Mysteries of Our Universe's First Seconds

Dan Hooper

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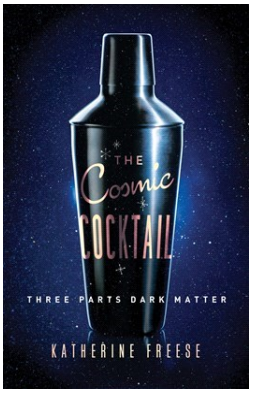
Hardback | 2019
Science
Science Essentials
Princeton University Press



The Cosmic Cocktail
Three Parts Dark Matter

Katherine Freese

9780691169187
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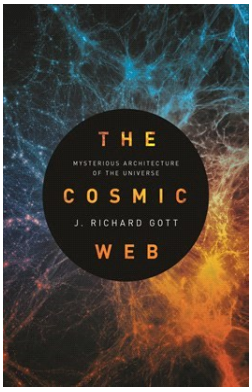
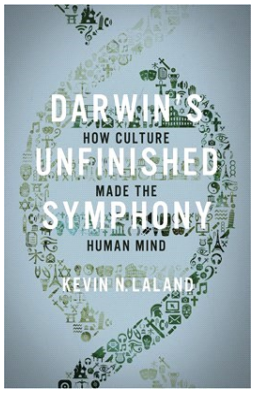
Science Essentials
Princeton University Press



The Cosmic Web
Mysterious Architecture of the Universe

J. Richard Gott

9780691181172
$19.95 | £16.99
Paperback | 2018
Science
Princeton University Press



Darwin's Unfinished Symphony
How Culture Made the Human Mind

Kevin N. Laland

9780691182810
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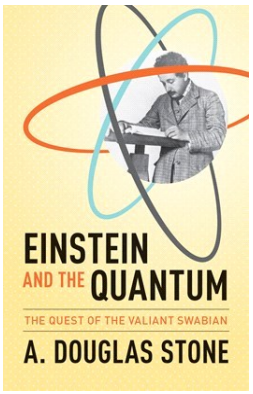
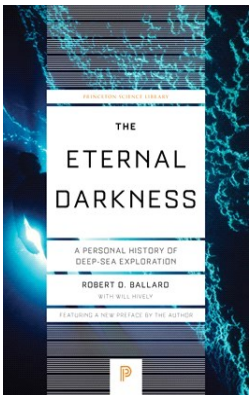
Paperback | 2018
Science
Princeton University Press



Einstein and the Quantum
The Quest of the Valiant Swabian

A. Douglas Stone

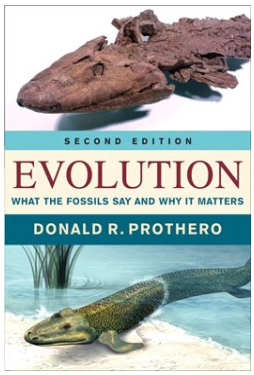
9780691168562
$19.95 | £16.99
Paperback | 2015
Science
Princeton University Press



The Eternal Darkness
A Personal History of Deep-Sea Exploration

Robert D. Ballard, William Hively

9780691175621
$24.95 | £22.00
Paperback | 2017
Science
Princeton Science Library
Princeton University Press



Evolution
What the Fossils Say and Why It Matters

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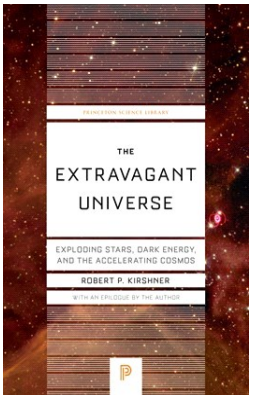

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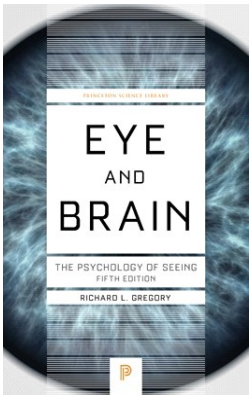

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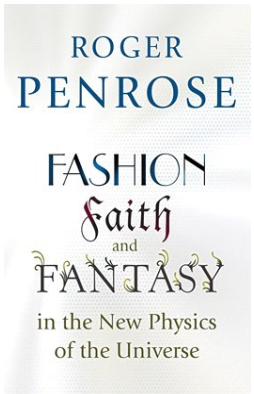

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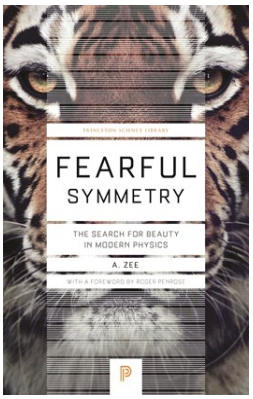

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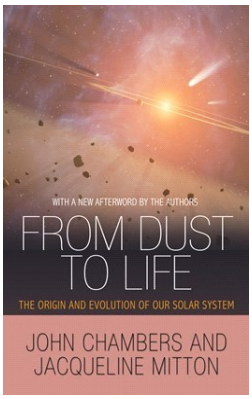

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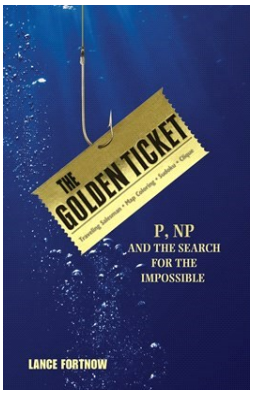

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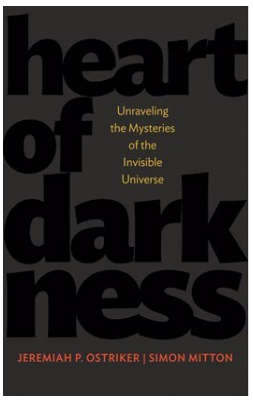

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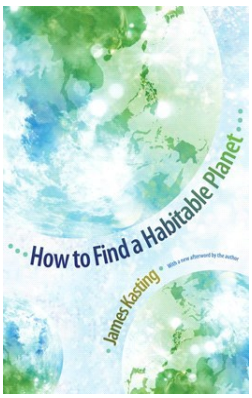

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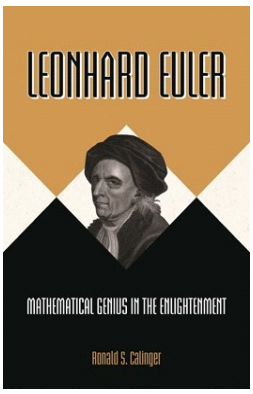

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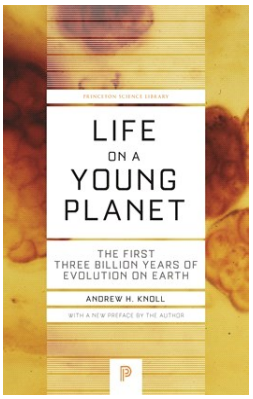

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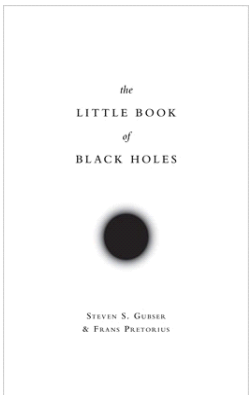

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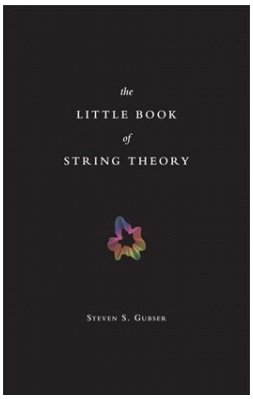

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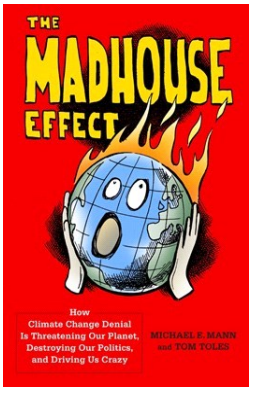

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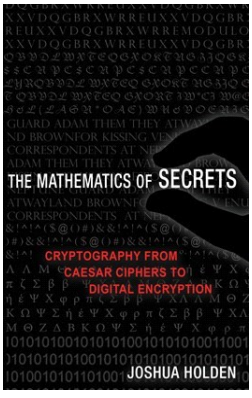

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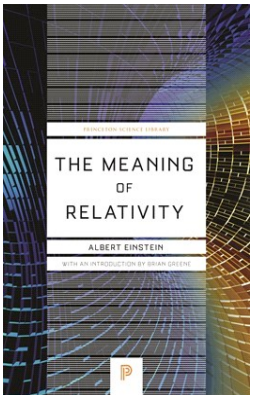

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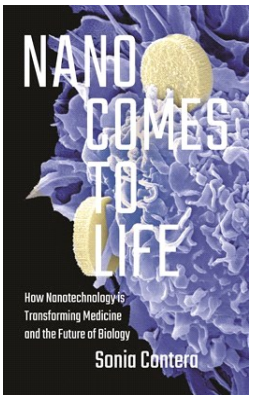

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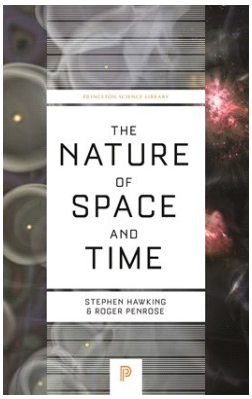

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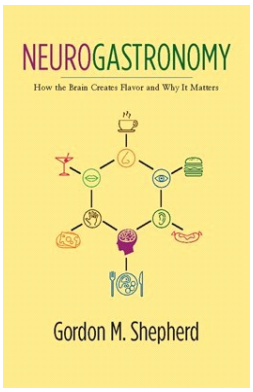

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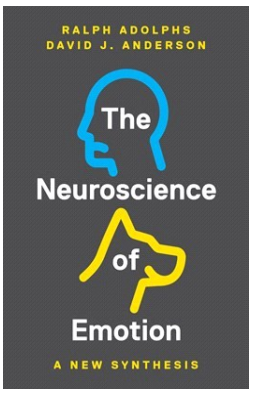

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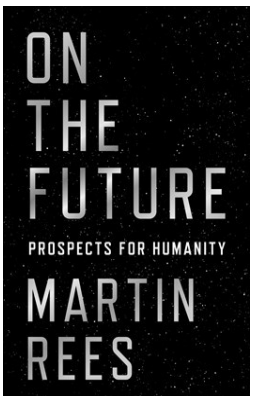

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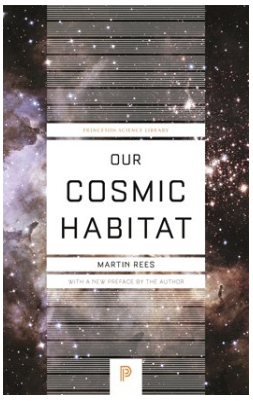

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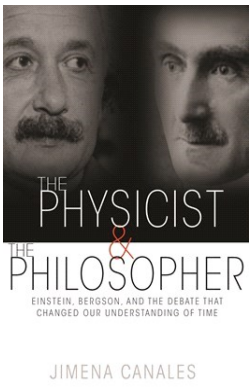

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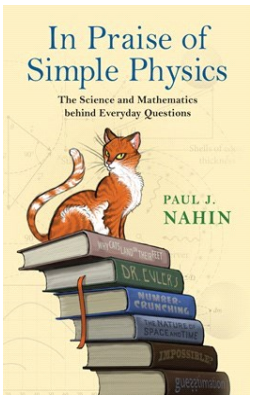

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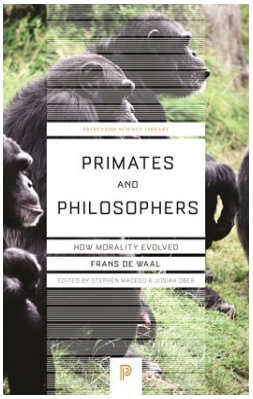

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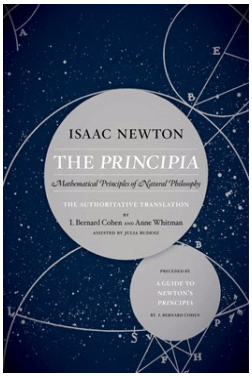

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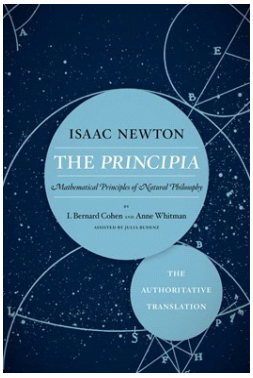

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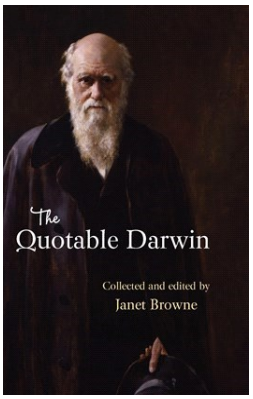

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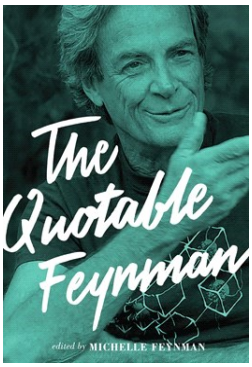

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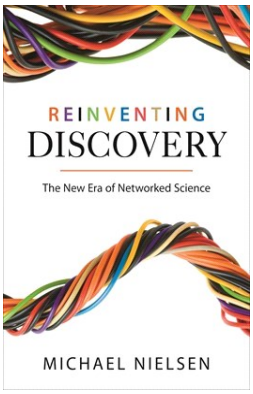

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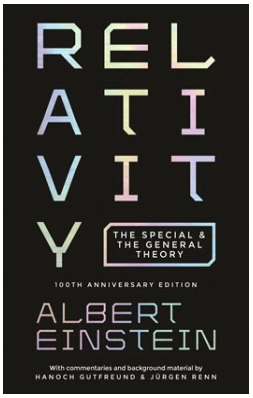

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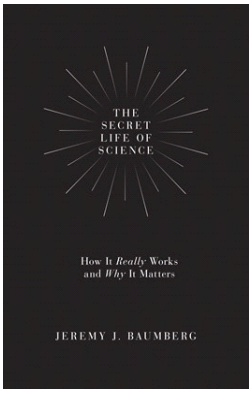

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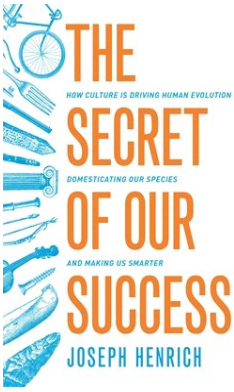

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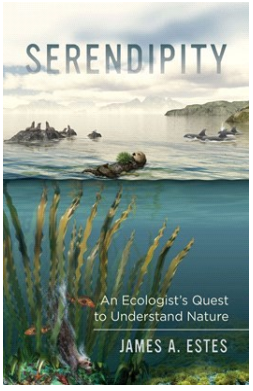

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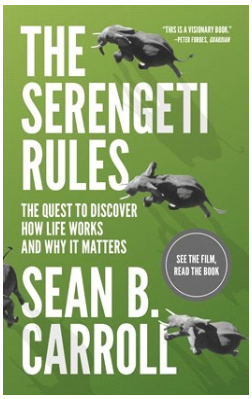

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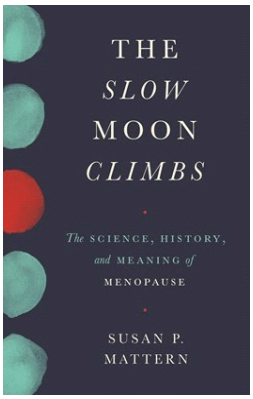

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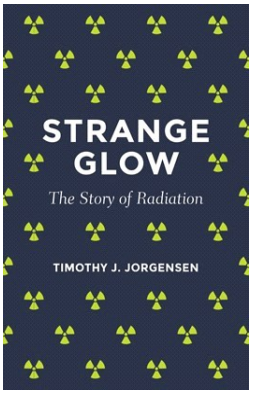

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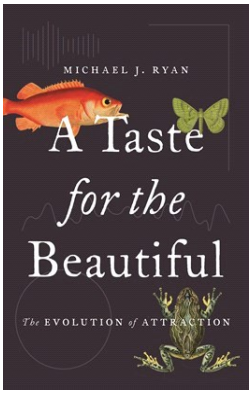

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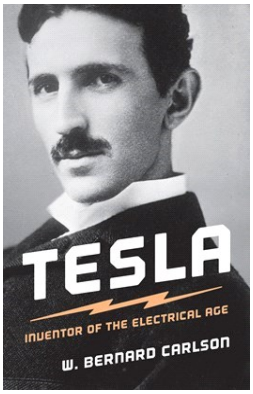

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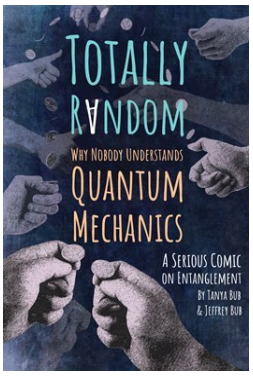

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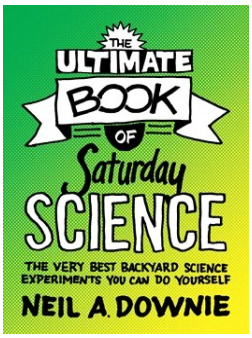

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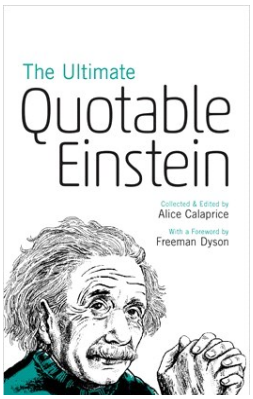

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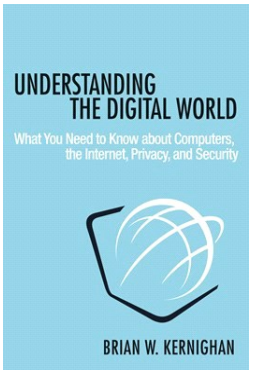

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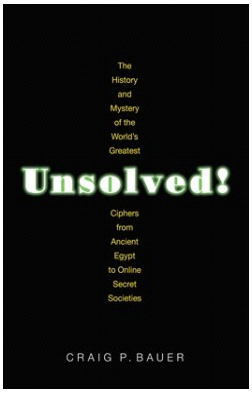

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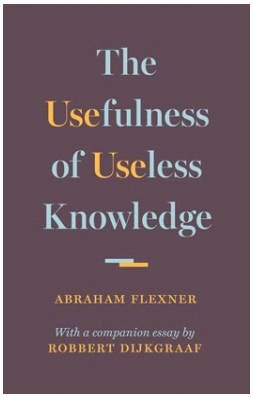

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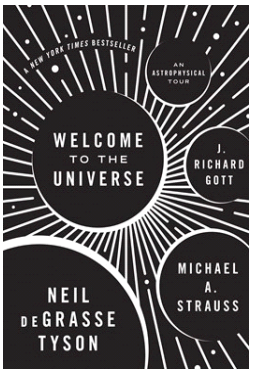

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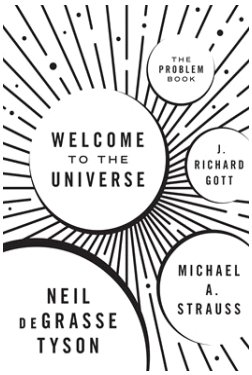

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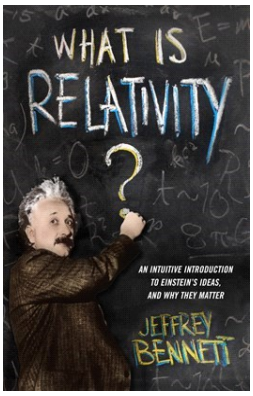

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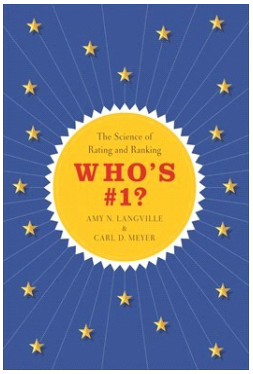

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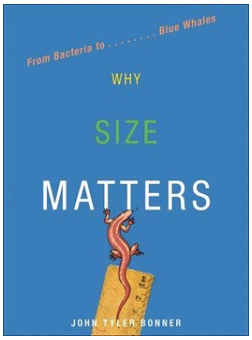

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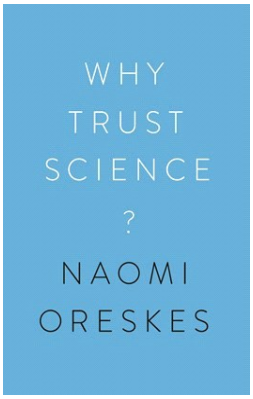

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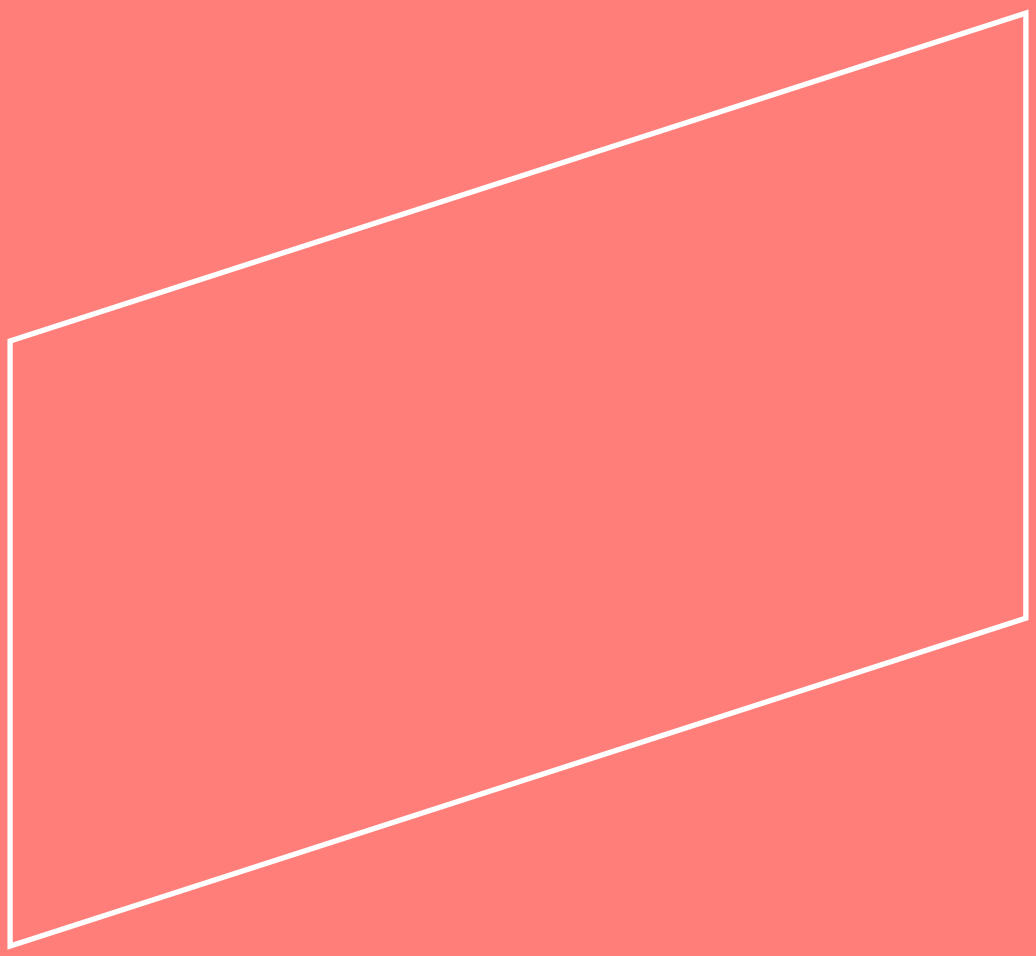

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