Why Does The World Exist An Existential Detective Story Jim Holt

As The Giving Tree turns fifty, this timeless classic is available for the first time ever in ebook format. This digital edition allows young readers and lifelong fans to continue the legacy and love of a household classic that will now reach an even wider audience. Never before have Shel Silverstein's children's books appeared in a format other than hardcover. Since it was first published fifty years ago, Shel Silverstein's poignant picture book for readers of all ages has offered a touching interpretation of the gift of giving and a serene acceptance of another's capacity to love in return. Shel Silverstein's incomparable career as a bestselling children's book author and illustrator began with Lafcadio, the Lion Who Shot Back. He is also the creator of picture books including A Giraffe and a Half, Who Wants a Cheap Rhinoceros?, The Missing Piece, The Missing Piece Meets the Big O, and the perennial favorite The Giving Tree, and of classic poetry collections such as Where the Sidewalk Ends, A Light in the Attic, Falling Up, Every Thing On It, Don't Bump the Glump!, and Runny Babbit. And don't miss these other Shel Silverstein ebooks, Where the Sidewalk Ends, and A Light in the Attic! “The Knowledge Machine is the most stunningly illuminating book of the last several decades regarding the all-important scientific enterprise.” —Rebecca Newberger Goldstein, author of Plato at the Googleplex A paradigm-shifting work, The Knowledge Machine revolutionizes our understanding of the origins and structure of science. • Why is science so powerful? • Why did it take so long—two thousand years after the invention of philosophy and mathematics—for the human race to start using science to learn the secrets of the universe? In a groundbreaking work that blends science, philosophy, and history, leading philosopher of science Michael Strevens answers these challenging questions, showing how science came about only once thinkers stumbled upon the astonishing idea that scientific breakthroughs could be accomplished by breaking the rules of logical argument. Like such classic works as Karl Popper’s The Logic of Scientific Discovery and Thomas Kuhn’s The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, The Knowledge Machine grapples with the meaning and origins of science, using a plethora of vivid historical examples to demonstrate that scientists willfully ignore religion, theoretical beauty, and even philosophy to embrace a constricted code of argument whose very narrowness channels unprecedented energy into empirical observation and experimentation. Strevens calls this scientific code the iron rule of explanation, and reveals the way in which the rule, precisely because it is unreasonably close-minded, overcomes individual prejudices to lead humanity inexorably toward the secrets of nature. “With a mixture of philosophical and historical argument, and written in an engrossing style” (Alan Ryan), The Knowledge Machine provides captivating portraits of some of the greatest luminaries in science’s history, including Isaac Newton, the chief architect of modern science and its foundational theories of motion and gravitation; William Whewell, perhaps the greatest philosopher-scientist of the early nineteenth century; and Murray Gell-Mann, discoverer of the quark. Today, Strevens argues, in the face of threats from a changing climate and global pandemics, the idiosyncratic but highly effective scientific knowledge machine must be protected from politicians, commercial interests, and even scientists themselves who seek to open it up, to make it less narrow and more rational—and thus

to undermine its devotedly empirical search for truth. Rich with illuminating and often delightfully quirky illustrations, The Knowledge Machine, written in a winningly accessible style that belies the import of its revisionist and groundbreaking concepts, radically reframes much of what we thought we knew about the origins of the modern world.

Robert Lanza is one of the most respected scientists in the world a US News and World Report cover story called him a genius and a renegade thinker, even likening him to Einstein. Lanza has teamed with Bob Berman, the most widely read astronomer in the world, to produce Biocentrism, a revolutionary new view of the universe. Every now and then a simple yet radical idea shakes the very foundations of knowledge. The startling discovery that the world was not flat challenged and ultimately changed the way people perceived themselves and their relationship with the world. For most humans of the 15th century, the notion of Earth as ball of rock was nonsense. The whole of Western, natural philosophy is undergoing a sea change again, increasingly being forced upon us by the experimental findings of quantum theory, and at the same time, toward doubt and uncertainty in the physical explanations of the universes genesis and structure. Biocentrism completes this shift in worldview, turning the planet upside down again with the revolutionary view that life creates the universe instead of the other way around. In this paradigm, life is not an accidental byproduct of the laws of physics. Biocentrism takes the reader on a seemingly improbable but ultimately inescapable journey through a foreign universe our own from the viewpoints of an acclaimed biologist and a leading astronomer. Switching perspective from physics to biology unlocks the cages in which Western science has unwittingly managed to confine itself. Biocentrism will shatter the readers ideas of life--time and space, and even death. At the same time it will release us from the dull worldview of life being merely the activity of an admixture of carbon and a few other elements; it suggests the exhilarating possibility that life is fundamentally immortal. The 21st century is predicted to be the Century of Biology, a shift from the previous century dominated by physics. It seems fitting, then, to begin the century by turning the universe outside-in and unifying the foundations of science with a simple idea discovered by one of the leading life-scientists of our age. Biocentrism awakens in readers a new sense of possibility, and is full of so many shocking new perspectives that the reader will never see reality the same way again.

'Why is there a world rather than nothing at all?' remains the most curious and most enduring of all metaphysical mysteries. Moving away from the narrower paths of Christopher Hitchens, Roger Penrose and Stephen Hawking, the celebrated essayist Jim Holt now enters this fascinating debate with his broad, lively and deeply informed narrative that traces all our efforts to grasp the origins of the universe.With sly humour and a highly original personal approach Holt takes on the role of cosmological detective. Suggesting that we might have been too narrow in limiting our suspects to God and the Big Bang, he tracks down, among others, an eccentric Oxford philosopher, a Nobel Laureate physicist, a French Buddhist monk, and John Updike just before he died, to pursue this cosmic puzzle from every angle. As he pieces together a solution - while offering useful insights into time, consciousness, and eternity - he sheds fascinating new light on the meaning of existence.

From bestselling writer David Graeber—“a master of opening up thought and stimulating debate” (Slate)—a powerful argument against the rise of meaningless, unfulfilling

jobs…and their consequences. Does your job make a meaningful contribution to the world? In the spring of 2013, David Graeber asked this question in a playful, provocative essay titled “On the Phenomenon of Bullshit Jobs.” It went viral. After one million online views in seventeen different languages, people all over the world are still debating the answer. There are hordes of people—HR consultants, communication coordinators, telemarketing researchers, corporate lawyers—whose jobs are useless, and, tragically, they know it. These people are caught in bullshit jobs. Graeber explores one of society’s most vexing and deeply felt concerns, indicting among other villains a particular strain of finance capitalism that betrays ideals shared by thinkers ranging from Keynes to Lincoln. “Clever and charismatic” (The New Yorker), Bullshit Jobs gives individuals, corporations, and societies permission to undergo a shift in values, placing creative and caring work at the center of our culture. This book is for everyone who wants to turn their vocation back into an avocation and “a thought-provoking examination of our working lives” (Financial Times).

A paradigm-shifting blend of science, religion, and philosophy for the agnostic, spiritual-but-not-religious, and scientifically minded reader Many people are fed up with the way traditional religion alienates them, perpetuates conflict, vilifies science, and undermines reason. Nancy Abrams—a philosopher of science, lawyer, and lifelong atheist—is among them, but she has also found freedom in imagining a higher power. In A God That Could Be Real, Abrams explores a radically new way of thinking about God. She dismantles several common assumptions about God and shows why an omniscient, omnipotent God that created the universe and plans what happens is incompatible with science—but that this doesn’t preclude a God that can comfort and empower us. Moving away from traditional arguments for God, Abrams finds something worthy of the name “God” in the new science of emergence: just as a complex ant hill emerges from the collective behavior of individually clueless ants, and just as the global economy emerges from the interactions of billions of individuals’ choices, God, she argues, is an “emergent phenomenon” that arises from the staggering complexity of humanity’s collective aspirations and is in dialogue with every individual. This God did not create the universe—it created the meaning of the universe. It’s not universal—it’s planetary. It can’t change the world, but it helps us change the world. A God that could be real, Abrams shows us, is what humanity needs to inspire us to collectively cooperate to protect our warming planet and create a long-term civilization.

Living in a "perfect" world without social ills, a boy approaches the time when he will receive a life assignment from the Elders, but his selection leads him to a mysterious man known as the Giver, who reveals the dark secrets behind the utopian facade.

One of TIME's Ten Best Nonfiction Books of the Decade "Meet the new Stephen Hawking . . . The Order of Time is a dazzling book." --The Sunday Times From the bestselling author of Seven Brief Lessons on Physics, comes a concise, elegant exploration of time. Why do we remember the past and not the future? What does it mean for time to "flow"? Do we exist in time or does time exist in us? In lyric, accessible prose, Carlo Rovelli invites us to consider questions about the nature of time that continue to puzzle physicists and philosophers alike. For most readers this is unfamiliar terrain. We all experience time, but the more scientists learn about it, the more mysterious it remains. We think of it as uniform and universal, moving steadily from past to future, measured by clocks. Rovelli tears down these assumptions one by one,

revealing a strange universe where at the most fundamental level time disappears. He explains how the theory of quantum gravity attempts to understand and give meaning to the resulting extreme landscape of this timeless world. Weaving together ideas from philosophy, science and literature, he suggests that our perception of the flow of time depends on our perspective, better understood starting from the structure of our brain and emotions than from the physical universe. Already a bestseller in Italy, and written with the poetic vitality that made Seven Brief Lessons on Physics so appealing, The Order of Time offers a profoundly intelligent, culturally rich, novel appreciation of the mysteries of time.

The renowned science writer, mathematician, and bestselling author of Fermat's Last Theorem masterfully refutes the overreaching claims the "New Atheists," providing millions of educated believers with a clear, engaging explanation of what science really says, how there's still much space for the Divine in the universe, and why faith in both God and empirical science are not mutually exclusive. A highly publicized coterie of scientists and thinkers, including Richard Dawkins, the late Christopher Hitchens, and Lawrence Krauss, have vehemently contended that breakthroughs in modern science have disproven the existence of God, asserting that we must accept that the creation of the universe came out of nothing, that religion is evil, that evolution fully explains the dazzling complexity of life, and more. In this much-needed book, science journalist Amir Aczel profoundly disagrees and conclusively demonstrates that science has not, as yet, provided any definitive proof refuting the existence of God. Why Science Does Not Disprove God is his brilliant and incisive analyses of the theories and findings of such titans as Albert Einstein, Roger Penrose, Alan Guth, and Charles Darwin, all of whose major breakthroughs leave open the possibility— and even the strong likelihood—of a Creator. Bolstering his argument, Aczel lucidly discourses on arcane aspects of physics to reveal how quantum theory, the anthropic principle, the fine-tuned dance of protons and quarks, the existence of anti-matter and the theory of parallel universes, also fail to disprove God.

An illuminating, entertaining tour of the physical imperfections that make us human We humans like to think of ourselves as highly evolved creatures. But if we are supposedly evolution’s greatest creation, why do we have such bad knees? Why do we catch head colds so often—two hundred times more often than a dog does? How come our wrists have so many useless bones? Why is the vast majority of our genetic code pointless? And are we really supposed to swallow and breathe through the same narrow tube? Surely there’s been some kind of mistake. As professor of biology Nathan H. Lents explains in Human Errors, our evolutionary history is nothing if not a litany of mistakes, each more entertaining and enlightening than the last. The human body is one big pile of compromises. But that is also a testament to our greatness: as Lents shows, humans have so many design flaws precisely because we are very, very good at getting around them. A rollicking, deeply informative tour of humans’ four billion year long evolutionary saga, Human Errors both celebrates our imperfections and offers an

unconventional accounting of the cost of our success.

The bestselling author of The Elegant Universe and The Fabric of the Cosmos tackles perhaps the most mind-bending question in modern physics and cosmology: Is our universe the only universe? There was a time when "universe" meant all there is. Everything. Yet, a number of theories are converging on the possibility that our universe may be but one among many parallel universes populating a vast multiverse. Here, Briane Greene, one of our foremost physicists and science writers, takes us on a breathtaking journey to a multiverse comprising an endless series of big bangs, a multiverse with duplicates of every one of us, a multiverse populated by vast sheets of spacetime, a multiverse in which all we consider real are holographic illusions, and even a multiverse made purely of math--and reveals the reality hidden within each. Using his trademark wit and precision, Greene presents a thrilling survey of cutting-edge physics and confronts the inevitable question: How can fundamental science progress if great swaths of reality lie beyond our reach? The Hidden Reality is a remarkable adventure through a world more vast and strange than anything we could have imagined.

'Brilliant and fascinating. No one is better at making the recondite accessible and exciting' Bill Bryson Britain's most famous mathematician takes us to the edge of knowledge to show us what we cannot know. Is the universe infinite? Do we know what happened before the Big Bang? Where is human consciousness located in the brain? And are there more undiscovered particles out there, beyond the Higgs boson? In the modern world, science is king: weekly headlines proclaim the latest scientific breakthroughs and numerous mathematical problems, once indecipherable, have now been solved. But are there limits to what we can discover about our physical universe? In this very personal journey to the edges of knowledge, Marcus du Sautoy investigates how leading experts in fields from quantum physics and cosmology, to sensory perception and neuroscience, have articulated the current lie of the land. In doing so, he travels to the very boundaries of understanding, questioning contradictory stories and consulting cutting edge data. Is it possible that we will one day know everything? Or are there fields of research that will always lie beyond the bounds of human comprehension? And if so, how do we cope with living in a universe where there are things that will forever transcend our understanding? In What We Cannot Know, Marcus du Sautoy leads us on a thought-provoking expedition to the furthest reaches of modern science. Prepare to be taken to the edge of knowledge to find out if there's anything we truly cannot know.

Why Does the World Exist?: An Existential Detective StoryW. W. Norton & Company

In recent years, a number of works have appeared with important implications for the age-old question of the existence of a god. These writings, many of which are not by theologians, strengthen the rational case for the existence of a god, even as this god may not be exactly the Christian God of history. This book brings

together for the first time such recent diverse contributions from fields such as physics, the philosophy of human consciousness, evolutionary biology, mathematics, the history of religion, and theology. Based on such new materials as well as older ones from the twentieth century, it develops five rational arguments that point strongly to the (very probable) existence of a god. They do not make use of the scientific method, which is inapplicable to the question of a god. Rather, they are in an older tradition of rational argument dating back at least to the ancient Greeks. For those who are already believers, the book will offer additional rational reasons that may strengthen their belief. Those who do not believe in the existence of a god at present will encounter new rational arguments that may cause them to reconsider their opinion.

Have you ever wondered why we're here, what it all means? In Life! Why We Exist. And What We Must Do to Survive, Martin Walker reveals that the laws of space and time shape our form and purpose, and that by acting on this purpose we can ensure the continued survival of life on earth. Life! guides us toward the inescapable conclusion that life's persistence is our number-one goal; this goal not only shapes everything we do, think, and feel, but holds our future in the balance. With its compelling and fascinating description of the origins of morality, spirituality, politics, and love, Life! stands on its own as a work of great literature. In its contribution to human understanding, it is the most important book since Darwin's The Origin of Species. Why do we exist? Why does anything exist? Rationalists would argue that the answer lies in a complete and comprehensive understanding of the physical aspects of the universe. Those with a more spiritual outlook might claim that science only tells part of the story, that the ultimate answer rests on faith. And philosophers may raise an eyebrow at any attempt to achieve an ultimate answer. But what if we were to trace a path from the origins of the universe to the present day, examining how the forms of existence have appeared and developed over time, would we be able to discern some pattern and purpose that is otherwise obscure? Martin Walker has spent his life seeking to understand why things are the way they are. Martin studied Physics at St. John's College, Oxford, and now lives in Brooklyn, New York, with his wife, Hope, his daughter, Dorothy, and his son, Zane. The idea that the meaning of life can be found in the fundamental principles of existence came to him during a waking dream on a trans-Atlantic flight. Martin did not rest until he had uncovered the principles that shape our dreams, hopes and fears. In Life!, he shares the fruits of his discovery. Part scientist, part philosopher, part poet, Martin succeeds in bridging the gap between science and spirituality in prose that is compelling, inspirational, and seductive.

Bestselling author and acclaimed physicist Lawrence Krauss offers a paradigm-shifting view of how everything that exists came to be in the first place. “Where did the universe come from? What was there before it? What will the future bring? And finally, why is there something rather than nothing?” One of the few prominent scientists today to have crossed the chasm between science and

popular culture, Krauss describes the staggeringly beautiful experimental observations and mind-bending new theories that demonstrate not only can something arise from nothing, something will always arise from nothing. With a new preface about the significance of the discovery of the Higgs particle, A Universe from Nothing uses Krauss's characteristic wry humor and wonderfully clear explanations to take us back to the beginning of the beginning, presenting the most recent evidence for how our universe evolved—and the implications for how it's going to end. Provocative, challenging, and delightfully readable, this is a game-changing look at the most basic underpinning of existence and a powerful antidote to outmoded philosophical, religious, and scientific thinking.

In 1967, after a session with a psychiatrist she'd never seen before, eighteen-year-old Susanna Kaysen was put in a taxi and sent to McLean Hospital. She spent most of the next two years in the ward for teenage girls in a psychiatric hospital as renowned for its famous clientele—Sylvia Plath, Robert Lowell, James Taylor, and Ray Charles—as for its progressive methods of treating those who could afford its sanctuary. Kaysen's memoir encompasses horror and razor-edged perception while providing vivid portraits of her fellow patients and their keepers. It is a brilliant evocation of a "parallel universe" set within the kaleidoscopically shifting landscape of the late sixties. Girl, Interrupted is a clear-sighted, unflinching document that gives lasting and specific dimension to our definitions of sane and insane, mental illness and recovery.

With no memory of the car accident itself, 17-year-old Mia must come to terms with never really knowing what happened one horrific winter's day that changed her life forever.

INSTANT NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER A Science News favorite science book of 2019 As you read these words, copies of you are being created. Sean Carroll, theoretical physicist and one of this world's most celebrated writers on science, rewrites the history of 20th century physics. Already hailed as a masterpiece, Something Deeply Hidden shows for the first time that facing up to the essential puzzle of quantum mechanics utterly transforms how we think about space and time. His reconciling of quantum mechanics with Einstein's theory of relativity changes, well, everything. Most physicists haven't even recognized the uncomfortable truth: physics has been in crisis since 1927. Quantum mechanics has always had obvious gaps—which have come to be simply ignored. Science popularizers keep telling us how weird it is, how impossible it is to understand. Academics discourage students from working on the "dead end" of quantum foundations. Putting his professional reputation on the line with this audacious yet entirely reasonable book, Carroll says that the crisis can now come to an end. We just have to accept that there is more than one of us in the universe. There are many, many Sean Carrolls. Many of every one of us. Copies of you are generated thousands of times per second. The Many Worlds Theory of quantum behavior says that every time there is a quantum event, a world splits off with everything in it the same, except in that other world the quantum event didn't happen. Step-by-step in Carroll's uniquely lucid way, he tackles the major objections to this otherworldly revelation until his case is inescapably established. Rarely does a book so fully reorganize how we think about our place in the universe. We are on the threshold of a new understanding—of where we are in the cosmos, and what we are made of.

INSTANT NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER “One of the most important books I’ve ever read—an indispensable guide to thinking clearly about the world.” – Bill Gates “Hans Rosling tells the story of ‘the secret silent miracle of human progress’ as only he can. But Factfulness does much more than that. It also explains why progress is so often secret and silent and teaches readers how to see it clearly.” —Melinda Gates "Factfulness by Hans Rosling, an outstanding international public health expert, is a hopeful book about the potential for human progress when we work off facts rather than our inherent biases." - Former U.S. President Barack Obama Factfulness: The stress-reducing habit of only carrying opinions for which you have strong supporting facts. When asked simple questions about global trends—what percentage of the world’s population live in poverty; why the world’s population is increasing; how many girls finish school—we systematically get the answers wrong. So wrong that a chimpanzee choosing answers at random will consistently outguess teachers, journalists, Nobel laureates, and investment bankers. In Factfulness, Professor of International Health and global TED phenomenon Hans Rosling, together with his two long-time collaborators, Anna and Ola, offers a radical new explanation of why this happens. They reveal the ten instincts that distort our perspective—from our tendency to divide the world into two camps (usually some version of us and them) to the way we consume media (where fear rules) to how we perceive progress (believing that most things are getting worse). Our problem is that we don’t know what we don’t know, and even our guesses are informed by unconscious and predictable biases. It turns out that the world, for all its imperfections, is in a much better state than we might think. That doesn’t mean there aren’t real concerns. But when we worry about everything all the time instead of embracing a worldview based on facts, we can lose our ability to focus on the things that threaten us most. Inspiring and revelatory, filled with lively anecdotes and moving stories, Factfulness is an urgent and essential book that will change the way you see the world and empower you to respond to the crises and opportunities of the future. --- “This book is my last battle in my life-long mission to fight devastating ignorance...Previously I armed myself with huge data sets, eye-opening software, an energetic learning style and a Swedish bayonet for sword-swallowing. It wasn’t enough. But I hope this book will be.” Hans Rosling, February 2017.

'My road to atheism was paved by science . . . But, ironically, so was my later journey to God.' ---Lee Strobel During his academic years, Lee Strobel became convinced that God was outmoded, a belief that colored his ensuing career as an award-winning journalist at the Chicago Tribune. Science had made the idea of a Creator irrelevant---or so Strobel thought. But today science is pointing in a different direction. In recent years, a diverse and impressive body of research has increasingly supported the conclusion that the universe was intelligently designed. At the same time, Darwinism has faltered in the face of concrete facts and hard reason. Has science discovered God? At the very least, it's giving faith an immense boost as new findings emerge about the incredible complexity of our universe. Join Strobel as he reexamines the theories that once led him away from God. Through his compelling and highly readable account, you'll encounter the mind-stretching discoveries from cosmology, cellular biology, DNA research, astronomy, physics, and human consciousness that present astonishing evidence in The Case for a Creator. Also available in mass market and audio CD editions.

If all things in the world can be considered as sources of aesthetic experience, then art no longer holds a privileged position. Rather, art comes between the subject and the world, and any aesthetic discourse used to legitimize art must also necessarily serve to undermine it. Following his recent books Art Power and The Communist Postscript, in Going Public Boris Groys looks to escape entrenched aesthetic and sociological understandings of art--which always assume the position of the spectator, of the consumer. Let us instead consider art from the position of the producer, who does not ask what it looks like or where it comes from, but why it exists in the first place. Boris Groys is Professor at New York University and Senior Research Fellow at the Academy of Design, Karlsruhe. He is the author of many books, including The Total Art of Stalinism, Ilya Kabakov: The Man Who Flew into Space from His Apartment, Art Power, The Communist Postscript, History Becomes Form: Moscow Conceptualism. e-flux journal Series edited by Julieta Aranda, Brian Kuan Wood, Anton Vidokle

This compelling study of the origins of all that exists, including explanations of the entire material world, traces the responses of philosophers and scientists to the most elemental and haunting question of all: why is anything here—or anything anywhere? Why is there something rather than nothing? Why not nothing? It includes the thoughts of dozens of luminaries from Plato and Aristotle to Aquinas and Leibniz to modern thinkers such as physicists Stephen Hawking and Steven Weinberg, philosophers Robert Nozick and Derek Parfit, philosophers of religion Alvin Plantinga and Richard Swinburne, and the Dalai Lama. The first accessible volume to cover a wide range of possible reasons for the existence of all reality, from over 50 renowned thinkers, including Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes, Leibniz, Hume, Bertrand Russell, Stephen Hawking, Steven Weinberg, Robert Nozick, Derek Parfit, Alvin Plantinga, Richard Swinburne, John Polkinghorne, Paul Davies, and the Dalai Lama Features insights by scientists, philosophers, and theologians Includes informative and helpful editorial introductions to each section Provides a wealth of suggestions for further reading and research Presents material that is both comprehensive and comprehensible

From Jim Holt, the New York Times bestselling author of Why Does the World Exist?, comes an entertaining and accessible guide to the most profound scientific and mathematical ideas of recent centuries in When Einstein Walked with Gödel: Excursions to the Edge of Thought. Does time exist? What is infinity? Why do mirrors reverse left and right but not up and down? In this scintillating collection, Holt explores the human mind, the cosmos, and the thinkers who've tried to encompass the latter with the former. With his trademark clarity and humor, Holt probes the mysteries of quantum mechanics, the quest for the foundations of mathematics, and the nature of logic and truth. Along the way, he offers intimate biographical sketches of celebrated and neglected thinkers, from the physicist Emmy Noether to the computing pioneer Alan Turing and the discoverer of fractals, Benoit Mandelbrot. Holt offers a painless and playful introduction to many of our most beautiful but least understood ideas, from Einsteinian relativity to string theory, and also invites us to consider why the greatest logician of the twentieth century believed the U.S. Constitution contained a terrible contradiction—and whether the universe truly has a future.

National Book Award Finalist. How did humanity originate and why does a species like ours exist on this planet? Do we have a special place, even a destiny

in the universe? Where are we going, and perhaps, the most difficult question of all, "Why?" In The Meaning of Human Existence, his most philosophical work to date, Pulitzer Prize–winning biologist Edward O. Wilson grapples with these and other existential questions, examining what makes human beings supremely different from all other species. Searching for meaning in what Nietzsche once called "the rainbow colors" around the outer edges of knowledge and imagination, Wilson takes his readers on a journey, in the process bridging science and philosophy to create a twenty-first-century treatise on human existence—from our earliest inception to a provocative look at what the future of mankind portends. Continuing his groundbreaking examination of our "Anthropocene Epoch," which he began with The Social Conquest of Earth, described by the New York Times as "a sweeping account of the human rise to domination of the biosphere," here Wilson posits that we, as a species, now know enough about the universe and ourselves that we can begin to approach questions about our place in the cosmos and the meaning of intelligent life in a systematic, indeed, in a testable way. Once criticized for a purely mechanistic view of human life and an overreliance on genetic predetermination, Wilson presents in The Meaning of Human Existence his most expansive and advanced theories on the sovereignty of human life, recognizing that, even though the human and the spider evolved similarly, the poet's sonnet is wholly different from the spider's web. Whether attempting to explicate "The Riddle of the Human Species," "Free Will," or "Religion"; warning of "The Collapse of Biodiversity"; or even creating a plausible "Portrait of E.T.," Wilson does indeed believe that humanity holds a special position in the known universe. The human epoch that began in biological evolution and passed into pre-, then recorded, history is now more than ever before in our hands. Yet alarmed that we are about to abandon natural selection by redesigning biology and human nature as we wish them, Wilson soberly concludes that advances in science and technology bring us our greatest moral dilemma since God stayed the hand of Abraham.

Where do we come from? Are we merely a cluster of elementary particles in a gigantic world receptacle? And what does it all mean? In this highly original new book, the philosopher Markus Gabriel challenges our notion of what exists and what it means to exist. He questions the idea that there is a world that encompasses everything like a container life, the universe, and everything else. This all-inclusive being does not exist and cannot exist. For the world itself is not found in the world. And even when we think about the world, the world about which we think is obviously not identical with the world in which we think. For, as we are thinking about the world, this is only a very small event in the world. Besides this, there are still innumerable other objects and events: rain showers, toothaches and the World Cup. Drawing on the recent history of philosophy, Gabriel asserts that the world cannot exist at all, because it is not found in the world. Yet with the exception of the world, everything else exists; even unicorns on the far side of the moon wearing police uniforms. Revelling in witty thought

experiments, word play, and the courage of provocation, Markus Gabriel demonstrates the necessity of a questioning mind and the role that humour can play in coming to terms with the abyss of human existence.

Major New York Times bestseller Winner of the National Academy of Sciences Best Book Award in 2012 Selected by the New York Times Book Review as one of the ten best books of 2011 A Globe and Mail Best Books of the Year 2011 Title One of The Economist's 2011 Books of the Year One of The Wall Street Journal's Best Nonfiction Books of the Year 2011 2013 Presidential Medal of Freedom Recipient Kahneman's work with Amos Tversky is the subject of Michael Lewis's The Undoing Project: A Friendship That Changed Our Minds In the international bestseller, Thinking, Fast and Slow, Daniel Kahneman, the renowned psychologist and winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics, takes us on a groundbreaking tour of the mind and explains the two systems that drive the way we think. System 1 is fast, intuitive, and emotional; System 2 is slower, more deliberative, and more logical. The impact of overconfidence on corporate strategies, the difficulties of predicting what will make us happy in the future, the profound effect of cognitive biases on everything from playing the stock market to planning our next vacation—each of these can be understood only by knowing how the two systems shape our judgments and decisions. Engaging the reader in a lively conversation about how we think, Kahneman reveals where we can and cannot trust our intuitions and how we can tap into the benefits of slow thinking. He offers practical and enlightening insights into how choices are made in both our business and our personal lives—and how we can use different techniques to guard against the mental glitches that often get us into trouble. Winner of the National Academy of Sciences Best Book Award and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize and selected by The New York Times Book Review as one of the ten best books of 2011, Thinking, Fast and Slow is destined to be a classic.

A study of what would happen to Earth if the human presence was removed examines our legacy for the planet, from the objects that would vanish without human intervention to those that would become long-lasting remnants of humankind.

Nineteenth-century scientist David Starr Jordan built one of the most important fish specimen collections ever seen, until the 1906 San Francisco earthquake shattered his life's work.

From September 2007 to June 2008 the Space Studies Board conducted an international public seminar series, with each monthly talk highlighting a different topic in space and Earth science. The principal lectures from the series are compiled in Forging the Future of Space Science. The topics of these events covered the full spectrum of space and Earth science research, from global climate change, to the cosmic origins of life, to the exploration of the Moon and Mars, to the scientific research required to support human spaceflight. The prevailing messages throughout the seminar series as demonstrated by the lectures in this book are how much we have accomplished over the past 50

years, how profound are our discoveries, how much contributions from the space program affect our daily lives, and yet how much remains to be done. The age of discovery in space and Earth science is just beginning. Opportunities abound that will forever alter our destiny.

Expands the search for the origins of the universe beyond God and the Big Bang theory, exploring more bizarre possibilities inspired by physicists, theologians, mathematicians, and even novelists.

The Washington Post Notable Non-Fiction of 2013 “I can imagine few more enjoyable ways of thinking than to read this book.”—Sarah Bakewell, New York Times Book Review, front-page review Tackling the “darkest question in all of philosophy” with “raffish erudition” (Dwight Garner, New York Times), author Jim Holt explores the greatest metaphysical mystery of all: why is there something rather than nothing? This runaway bestseller, which has captured the imagination of critics and the public alike, traces our latest efforts to grasp the origins of the universe. Holt adopts the role of cosmological detective, traveling the globe to interview a host of celebrated scientists, philosophers, and writers, “testing the contentions of one against the theories of the other” (Jeremy Bernstein, Wall Street Journal). As he interrogates his list of ontological culprits, the brilliant yet slyly humorous Holt contends that we might have been too narrow in limiting our suspects to God versus the Big Bang. This “deft and consuming” (David Ulin, Los Angeles Times) narrative humanizes the profound questions of meaning and existence it confronts.

This groundbreaking volume investigates the most fundamental question of all: Why is there something rather than nothing? The question is explored from diverse and radical perspectives: religious, naturalistic, platonistic and skeptical. Does science answer the question? Or does theology? Does everything need an explanation? Or can there be brute, inexplicable facts? Could there have been nothing whatsoever? Or is there any being that could not have failed to exist? Is the question meaningful after all? The volume advances cutting-edge debates in metaphysics, philosophy of cosmology and philosophy of religion, and will intrigue and challenge readers interested in any of these subjects.

A theoretical physicist and author of the controversial best-seller The Trouble with Physics describes his new approach for thinking about the reality of time and explains his theory about the laws of physics not being timeless but rather capable of evolving.

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER When and how did the universe begin? Why are we here? What is the nature of reality? Is the apparent “grand design” of our universe evidence of a benevolent creator who set things in motion—or does science offer another explanation? In this startling and lavishly illustrated book, Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow present the most recent scientific thinking about these and other abiding mysteries of the universe, in nontechnical language marked by brilliance and simplicity. According to quantum theory, the cosmos does not have just a single existence or history. The authors explain that we ourselves are the product of quantum fluctuations in the early universe, and show how quantum theory predicts the “multiverse”—the idea that ours is just one of many universes that appeared

spontaneously out of nothing, each with different laws of nature. They conclude with a riveting assessment of M-theory, an explanation of the laws governing our universe that is currently the only viable candidate for a “theory of everything”: the unified theory that Einstein was looking for, which, if confirmed, would represent the ultimate triumph of human reason.

Why do we exist? The human mind is not able to find an answer for this question. The answer can only be found on the basis of individual experience. The book presents a possible rational concept based on humans' capacity for love. It describes the path of object-free meditation leading to the answer, and its impact on our personal lives.

David Sloan Wilson, one of the world’s leading evolutionists, addresses a question that has puzzled philosophers, psychologists, and evolutionary biologists for centuries: Does altruism exist naturally among the Earth’s creatures? The key to understanding the existence of altruism, Wilson argues, is by understanding the role it plays in the social organization of groups. Groups that function like organisms indubitably exist, and organisms evolved from groups. Evolutionists largely agree on how functionally organized groups evolve, ending decades of controversy, but the resolution casts altruism in a new light: altruism exists but shouldn’t necessarily occupy center stage in our understanding of social behavior. After laying a general theoretical foundation, Wilson surveys altruism and group-level functional organization in our own species—in religion, in economics, and in the rest of everyday life. He shows that altruism is not categorically good and can have pathological consequences. Finally, he shows how a social theory that goes beyond altruism by focusing on group function can help to improve the human condition in a practical sense. Does Altruism Exist? puts old controversies to rest and will become the center of debate for decades to come.

Reading is a revolutionary act, an act of engagement in a culture that wants us to disengage. In The Lost Art of Reading, David L. Ulin asks a number of timely questions - why is literature important? What does it offer, especially now? Blending commentary with memoir, Ulin addresses the importance of the simple act of reading in an increasingly digital culture. Reading a book, flipping through hard pages, or shuffling them on screen - it doesn't matter. The key is the act of reading, and it's seriousness and depth. Ulin emphasizes the importance of reflection and pause allowed by stopping to read a book, and the accompanying focus required to let the mind run free in a world that is not one's own. Are we willing to risk our collective interest in contemplation, nuanced thinking, and empathy? Far from preaching to the choir, The Lost Art of Reading is a call to arms, or rather, to pages.