

# Books

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**Asimov's Chronology of the World** — Isaac Asimov. This 15-billion-year chronicle covers the history of the world from the Big Bang to 1945. Asimov's overview divides history into blocks of time of varying lengths subdivided by areas of the globe. Because the inner structure is not chronological, he presents his description of significant evolutionary, social, cultural, political, military and technological events as a narrative rather than a timeline, making this an interesting book for browsing as well as a helpful reference. Harper-Collins, 1991, 674 p., hardcover, \$35.00.

**Exons, Introns, and Talking Genes: The Science Behind the Human Genome Project** — Christopher Wills. Writing for lay readers, the author of *The Wisdom of the Genes* explains the details of the multimillion-dollar international effort to map the human genome. Wills covers the science behind the project, the biomedical breakthroughs that led to its creation, the people and politics involved in the project and the ethical questions raised. A fascinating introduction to the mysteries of the human genome and our attempts to unravel them. Includes a helpful glossary of genetic terms. Basic, 1991, 368 p., illus., hardcover, \$23.00.

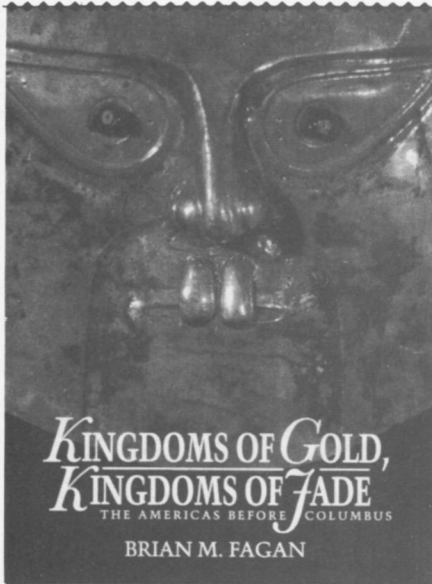
**Healing Gaia: Practical Medicine for the Planet** — James Lovelock. The creator of the Gaia theory — which proposes that the Earth operates as a single living organism — uses the principles of basic medicine to investigate the health of our planet. Lovelock explains the anatomy, biochemistry and physiology of the Gaia system, traces Earth's medical history and describes the unusual symptoms it currently displays, including high atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide and methane, deforested surface patches, air and water pollution and more. A thought-provoking view of the role played by humans on Earth — essentially that of a pathogenic microorganism — and of the possible outcomes of this interaction. Written for general readers and generously illustrated with color photographs, maps and detailed diagrams. Crown, 1991, 192 p., color/b&w illus., hardcover, \$25.00.

**Mirror Worlds: or the Day Software Puts the Universe in a Shoebox . . . How It Will Happen and What It Will Mean** — David Gelertner. Imagine sitting down at your computer and piloting the screen into city hall to view the mayor's press conference, or zooming into your local museum to scan its newest exhibit. These images are real — "mirror worlds" created by a public software program fed by an enormous network of information-gathering devices. Gelertner explains how such programs could be structured, using basic computer components already existing or under development, and how they could be used. A highly speculative but scientifically plausible excursion into the future of computer technology. Oxford U Pr, 1991, 237 p., illus., hardcover, \$24.95.

**Prehistory: The World of Early Man** — Jean Guilaine, Ed. A comprehensive survey of prehistoric cultures around the world, well illustrated with photographs, drawings, maps and diagrams. Covers human evolution, the spread of civilization, the rise of symbolic thought, the appearance of writing and art, the development of early economies, and archaeological methods used to recreate these ancient worlds. Originally published in French in 1986. Facts on File, 1991, 192 p., color illus., hardcover, \$39.95.

**Science Matters: Achieving Scientific Literacy** — Robert M. Hazen and James Trefil. Explains the fundamental principles of modern science and applies these concepts to specific, newsworthy issues in the physical and life sciences. Writing for general readers, the authors review nuclear and particle physics, atomic structure, relativity, genetics and more in an effort to enlighten the estimated 93 percent of adult Americans classified as scientifically illiterate. Originally published in hardcover in 1990. Doubleday, 1991, 294 p., illus., paperback, \$12.00.

**Vanishing Amazon** — Mirella Ricciardi. A spectacular visual tribute to the threatened Indian tribes of the Amazon basin. The author lived among the Kampa, Maruba and Yanomami tribes for 3½ months, keeping a personal diary — which provides the book's text — and photographing daily tribal life. Her stunning color and black-and-white portraits offer an intimate and poignant glimpse of the remarkable world of Amazonian tribes, which are estimated to be disappearing at a rate of one tribe per year in Brazil alone. Abrams, 1991, 240 p., color/b&w illus., hardcover, \$49.50.



Spectacular, exotic, sophisticated civilizations with cities as large as Constantinople; powerful chiefs ruling in splendor in the Mississippi Valley; tiny hunter-gatherer bands living much as their ancestors had done for more than 10,000 years . . .

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—from the publisher

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