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Astronomy Book Club

THE COSMOLOGICAL MILKSHAKE: A SEMI- SERIOUS LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THINGS

ROBERT EHRLICH

Illustrated by Gary Ehrlich

"A delightful stroll through the nooks and crannies of the natural world. If you've ever wondered how close a moon can get to a planet, or how tall a tree can grow, this book is for you."—James S. Trefil, author of *A Scientist in the City*

These bite-sized essays and cartoons entertain while they educate you about the sizes of stuff in the universe: how big, how small, how much, how far, how fast, how hot, how old—from the innards of atoms to the farthest quasars. Robert Ehrlich is Professor of Physics at George Mason University.

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Adverse Reactions -- Thomas Maeder. Forty-four years ago, a wonder antibiotic called chloramphenicol became available. Unfortunately, some people taking chloramphenicol developed aplastic anemia, an often fatal disease affecting bone marrow. One thousand people — only a small portion of those who took the drug — died over the course of several years; however, Maeder contends that proper warnings were not issued. Through numerous interviews, he chronicles the development, marketing, and subsequent investigation of chloramphenicol, offering a compelling narrative about the motives and business practices of pharmaceutical companies, the FDA, and physicians. Morrow, 1994, 480 p., hardcover, \$27.95.

Choices in Healing: Integrating the Best of Conventional and Complementary Approaches to Cancer — Michael Lerner. Featured on the PBS series *Healing and the Mind*, Lerner's Commonweal Cancer Help Program incorporates a variety of alternative cancer treatments with mainstream therapies. This well-balanced and thoroughly documented guide introduces information about traditional medicines, nutrition, mind-body medicine, acupuncture, support groups, and much more. Appendixes note numerous resources. MIT Pr, 1994, 667 p., hardcover, \$24.95.

The Muse in the Machine: Computerizing the Poetry of Human Thought — David Gelernter. Generally, artificial intelligence (AI) researchers have turned their attention to higher-level logical thought—high-focus thought, as Gelernter terms it. However, Gelernter makes a case for the importance of the low-focus thought typical of poets and children. This thinking incorporates emotion and creativity into the thought process and plays a key role in the intelligent and balanced thinking of humans as well as machines. After asserting this theory, he elaborates on the computer program he is developing at Yale University — one that embodies low-focus thought in addition to high-focus logic in an attempt to make a conscious machine. Free Pr, 1994, 211 p., hardcover, \$22.95.

Neandertals: Changing the Image of Man-kind — Erik Trinkaus and Pat Shipman. This is not only an updated account of what we now know about the bones discovered nearly 150 years ago in the German valley of Neander Tal, but also an excellent report of the history of the find. The discovery of these bones fueled the evolutionary debate that would make the reputations of many scientists and signal the downfall of others. With eloquence, Trinkaus and Shipman illustrate the ensuing scandals and shortcomings of the scientists over the years who were afraid to buck traditional ideas about the origins of humans. Originally published in hardcover in 1992. Vin, 1994, 454 p., b&w photos and illus., paperback, \$15.00.

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