

## Books

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**Buzz: The Science and Lore of Alcohol and Caffeine**—Stephen Braun. Find out how two of the most common mind-altering drugs actually produce their wide-ranging effects on our bodies as Braun dissects alcohol and caffeine and their roles in our lives. He offers explanations, based on the latest research, for why both substances are so addictive and how they work within our systems and ultimately affect us in ways we may not even realize. He also answers a number of common questions and tackles some pertinent folklore about how caffeine and alcohol affect everything from sex drive to mental processes. OUP, 1996, 214 p., hardcover, \$25.00.

**The Compleat Cockroach: A Comprehensive Guide to the Most Despised (and Least Understood) Creature on Earth**—David George Gordon. Cockroaches are three times richer in protein than chicken and taste like shrimp, according to Gordon, who tries to boost the reputation of this fascinating entomological specimen. Believed to be about 340 million years old, cockroaches are one of the most enduring and plentiful creatures on the planet, which is probably why they are entrenched in cultures throughout the world, as detailed here. Gordon relays a smorgasbord of information about these bugs, including how to control them without using harmful pesticides. Ten Speed Pr, 1996, 178 p., b&w illus., paperback, \$11.95.

**Deep Atlantic: Life, Death, and Exploration in the Abyss**—Richard Ellis. Deep-sea technology is now allowing researchers to troll the ocean floor at least 5 miles down. Ellis surveys the history of such exploration, from submersibles such as William Beebe's bathysphere to robotic diving devices. Focusing mostly on the Atlantic Ocean, Ellis offers readers a glimpse of the unusual fish and sea creatures that thrive in the cold, dark, gravity-defying waters. Through remarkable drawings and descriptive text detailing their discovery and methods of adaptation, Ellis introduces a menagerie of creatures, including clams as big as footballs and the "vampire squid from hell." Knopf, 1996, 395 p., b&w illus., hardcover, \$35.00.

**Inevitable Illusions: How Mistakes of Reason Rule Our Minds**—Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini. How can a jury be presented with irrefutable evidence of guilt and still find the defendant innocent? Why do some people think that New Orleans is on the same longitude as Caracas, Venezuela, when in fact Boston is the correct answer? These are instances of what Piattelli-Palmarini calls "tunnel vision"—cognitive illusions that affect decision making. The author probes this phenomenon and offers a wealth of examples of how we are often susceptible to irrationality no matter how intelligent we are. Originally published in hardcover in 1994. Wiley, 1996, 242 p., paperback, \$15.95.

**Mining the Sky: Untold Riches from the Asteroids, Comets, and Planets**—John S. Lewis. Lewis contends that the U.S. and Russian governments are not exploiting the resources of space, and thereby risk not solving our most challenging problems: energy, renewable resources, and population overload. Lewis describes how asteroids can be mined for precious metals and hollowed out to shelter space-bound homesteaders, among other theories. Addison-Wesley, 1996, 274 p., b&w plates, hardcover, \$26.00.

**Thought Contagion: How Belief Spreads Through Society**—Aaron Lynch. Memes—or actively contagious ideas—was a term first coined some 30 years ago by Richard Dawkins. In this book, Lynch focuses on the emerging science of memetics in an effort to show how ideas and beliefs spread. Parents and the church are two of the strongest initiators of the most potent memes, but how do rumors and fads pervade? Lynch examines a number of typical scenarios in order to develop a conceptual basis for understanding what drives intensely held beliefs and why some go extinct. Basic, 1996, 192 p., hardcover, \$24.00.

**Tube: The Invention of Television**—David E. Fisher and Marshal Jon Fisher. Television is an invention devoid of a particular eureka moment. As the Fishers chronicle, an assortment of lone inventors came close to getting it right, but it wasn't until a couple of executives at RCA grasped its potential that television as we know it began its ascent into the annals of the most influential of all inventions. This retrospective look at how television came to permeate virtually every home provides an insightful look into the whole of television, from invention to marketing and programming, and even into the future. Counterpt DC, 1996, 427 p., hardcover, \$30.00.

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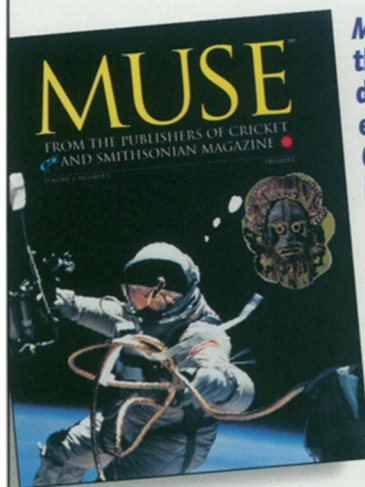
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