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Against the Gods: The Remarkable Story of Risk—Peter L. Bernstein. Inevitably, machines break down. People die at an early age. Some airplanes crash. How is probability theory used to manage such risks successfully? Bernstein's story features the thinkers who developed the critical elements of the engines that run modern risk management, from game theory to the challenges of chaos theory. In addition to dissecting related concepts, such as sampling and mean, he tackles the age-old argument of the field: Are the best decisions based on quantification and numbers determined by the patterns of the past or on the more subjective degrees of belief about the uncertain future? Wiley, 1996, 383 p., hardcover, \$27.95.

Are We Unique? A Scientist Explores the Unparalleled Intelligence of the Human Mind—James Trefil. An outstanding popularizer of science delves into the arenas of neuroscience and computer science to assess our status as creatures who possess a unique cerebrum. While we now know that lobsters and octopuses demonstrate intelligence, Trefil contends that no other species is on a par with humans in level or type of intelligence. While he argues that no computer will ever be able to replicate the human mind and its many facets, Trefil does suggest that computers possess a consciousness unique to machines and that computer "minds" will eventually come into their own. Wiley, 1997, 242 p., hardcover, \$24.95.

Deadly Feasts: Tracking the Secrets of a Terrifying New Plague—Richard Rhodes. The Pulitzer prize-winning chronicler of the atomic bomb now renders a spine-chilling account of a variety of deadly brain diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), one of which is mad cow disease. Rhodes reports that TSEs are not new, pointing to Carlton Gajdusek, who won a Nobel prize for his work linking these diseases. Scientists now believe that TSEs are passed by means of cannibalism, whether human (as in the case in a New Guinea tribe) or industrial, when feed containing by-products of infected animals is fed to uninfected animals. This leads many scientists to question the safety of meat and other animal products for humans. S&S, 1997, 259 p., b&w illus., hardcover, \$24.00.

A Guide to Rock Art Sites: Southern California and Southern Nevada—David S. Whitley. This guide provides a glimpse of the kinds of drawings and etchings that can be found at each of 38 sites open to the public, as well as an analysis of what the images reveal about the beliefs of the ancient people who created them. Whitley does so by blending ethnographic records, in-depth field research, and high-tech dating. Directions to the sites and color photographs of each enhance the guide. Mountain Pr, 1997, 218 p., color photos/b&w illus., paperback, \$20.00.

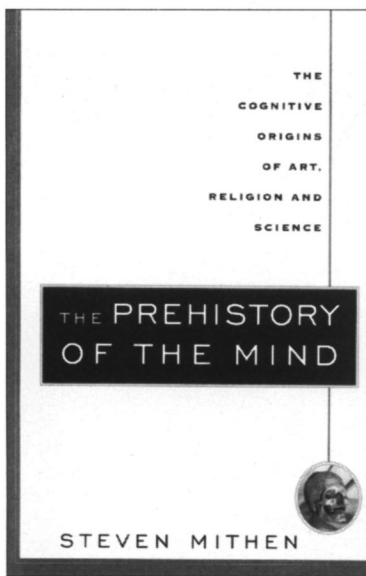
The Trouble with Testosterone: and Other Essays on the Biology of the Human Predicament—Robert M. Sapolsky. Could some religious rituals and rules be the product of obsessive-compulsive disorder? Could our fascination with the O.J. Simpson trial be somehow linked to the voyeuristic behavior of our primate relatives? A behavioral biologist presents this wry, enlightening, and often controversial collection of essays in a valiant effort to answer questions regarding the intrinsic needs of humans and other animals alike. Scribner, 1997, 288 p., b&w illus., hardcover, \$23.00.

The Universe Below: Discovering the Secrets of the Deep Sea—William J. Broad. The end of the Cold War allowed the release of top-secret technologies for deep-sea exploration. Broad swims through the history and current events of oceanography in the wake of this. He explains the technology required and shares the newest findings from this little-known environment, including life forms in "uninhabitable" places, extraordinary geologic wonders, and human-made debris such as the Titanic and abandoned nuclear submarines, for example. S&S, 1997, 432 p., b&w illus., hardcover, \$30.00.

The Yale Guide to Children's Nutrition—William V. Tamborlane, ed. More than 100 dietitians, pediatricians, and social workers combine their expertise to provide background about growth and digestion and the benefits of certain foods for virtually every child at any age. The authors then address the numerous problems parents may encounter with food allergies, eating disorders, picky eaters, and eating out with children. Yale U Pr, 1997, 415 p., b&w illus., paperback, \$18.00.

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Here is an exhilarating intellectual performance in the tradition of Roger Penrose's *The Emperor's New Mind*. On his way to showing how the world of our ancient ancestors shaped our modern, modular mind, Steven Mithen shares one provocative insight after another and answers a series of fascinating questions:

- *Were our brains hard-wired in the Pleistocene era by the needs of hunter-gatherers?*
- *When did religious beliefs first emerge?*
- *Why were the first paintings made by humankind so technically accomplished and expressive?*
- *What can the sexual habits of chimpanzees tell us about the prehistory of the modern mind?*

This is the first archaeological account to support the modular concept of the mind. The concept, promulgated by cognitive and evolutionary psychologists, views the mind as a collection of specialized intelligences, or cognitive domains, somewhat like a Swiss army knife with its specialized blades and tools. Arguing that only archaeology can answer many of the key questions raised by this new concept, Steven Mithen delineates a three-phase sequence for the mind's evolution over 6 million years—from early *Homo* in Africa to the ice age Neanderthals to our modern, modular minds.

Here is an intriguing and challenging explanation of what it means to be human, a bold new theory about the origins and nature of the mind.

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