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Beyond Engineering: How Society Shapes Technology—Robert Pool. A typical exposition of this subject would transpose the subtitle, but Pool contends that that approach is too simplistic. He cites numerous instances in which the best engineering methods were abandoned for decidedly nontechnical reasons, ranging from poor business sense to an outbreak of hoof-and-mouth disease. While he spans inventions of the 20th century to illustrate his thesis, nuclear energy centers the story. Pool weaves together its tumultuous history in the U.S. in the face of antinuclear activism, while countries like France have come to rely primarily on nuclear power. OUP, 1997, 358 p., hardcover, \$30.00.

Born to Rebel: Birth Order, Family Dynamics, and Creative Lives—Frank J. Sulloway. What does birth order have to do with personality? Everything, according to Sulloway, who argues that birth order transcends sex and social class in molding intellect and political thought. Using historical figures as examples and drawing on Darwinism and psychological data collected during his MacArthur Fellowship, Sulloway explores genetic influences and key differences among siblings: sex, age, and degree of parent-offspring conflict. These factors typically mold the youngest children into rebels and the oldest into followers of the status quo, Sulloway argues. Originally published in hardcover in 1996. Vin, 1997, 653 p., b&w photos/illus., paperback, \$16.00.

The Handicap Principle: A Missing Piece of Darwin's Puzzle—Amotz Zahavi and Avishag Zahavi. Peacocks drag huge unwieldy tails that hinder flight but are extremely desirable to prospective mates. Gazelles jump and shout at nearby wolves to indicate that they are healthy and that they should both save the energy of a chase. Many species, from amoebas to humans, exhibit behaviors that seem risky and costly. The Handicap Principle espoused by the Zahavis argues that the cost of such behaviors is nevertheless outweighed by their benefit in establishing reliable forms of communication. The authors' extensive study of group-living songbirds called babblers helped them discern advantages of risky signaling and also understand many unexplained evolutionary phenomena, including altruism. OUP, 1997, 286 p., b&w illus., hardcover, \$30.00.

The Secret Family: Twenty-Four Hours Inside the Mysterious World of Our Minds and Bodies—David Bodanis. Bodanis has startled us before with his vivid explanations of what lurks in the microscopic world of our gardens and homes. Now, he follows a family of five through their Saturday routine, beginning with the embalming solution they drink in their morning orange juice and the endorphin rush produced by sunlight and continuing through the physiology of a girl's first kiss and the multitude of mites lurking in pillows and mattresses. At once clever, gross, and engrossing, this in-depth tour offers plenty of insight into the things around us and their effect on our bodies and behavior. Stunning microscopic photos complement Bodanis' explanations of the unseen. S&S, 1997, 222 p., color/b&w photos, hardcover, \$27.50.

The Symbolic Species: The Co-evolution of Language and the Brain—Terrence W. Deacon. Arguing that most of the widely accepted human language theories do not take into account all aspects of the question, Deacon combines his knowledge about anthropology and neuroscience to formulate a new theory based on symbolic thinking. Stumped by a youngster inquiring why no simple languages exist, Deacon sought the answer. The changing reproductive habits of early humans necessitated a symbolic communication, the evolutionary history of which Deacon explores. He shows how we assign symbolic import to almost every aspect of the physical world. He also illustrates how the grammars of the world are actually quite similar and are easily learned by young children, not because language is innate but because of the evolution of structural adaptations to human cognitive constraints. Norton, 1997, 527 p., b&w illus., hardcover, \$29.95.

UFO Crash at Roswell: The Genesis of a Modern Myth—Benson Saler, Charles A. Ziegler, and Charles B. Moore. Written in a scholarly style that sharply contrasts with the subject matter, the authors examine how it is that some are "celebrating" the 50th anniversary of the arrival of aliens in New Mexico and why our society is inclined to perpetuate the idea. Anthropologists Saler, Ziegler, and Moore dissect this myth and its various incarnations over the years, illustrating its resemblance to folk narratives and describing how it has been immortalized in the media and movies. A final chapter explores the religious connection and the need some humans have to bond with otherworldly beings. Smithsonian, 1997, 198 p., hardcover, \$25.95.

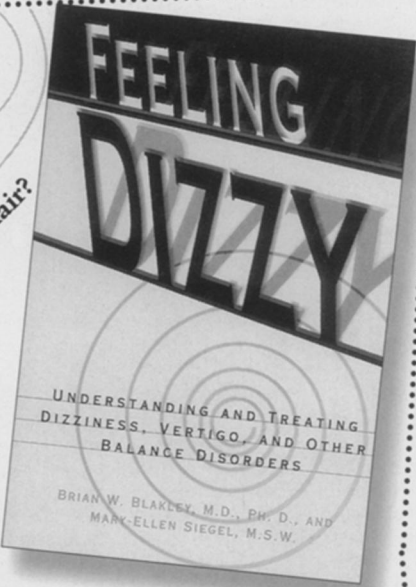
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