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# SCIENCE NEWS

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**Earth As  
Bull's-Eye**

The nature-nurture controversy has never been more hotly debated. Scientists send shock waves through the culture whenever their new theories of what is biologically inherited—as opposed to socially learned—confront our old ideas about the self. Nowhere are these ideas more arduously tested than in the labs of world-renowned molecular geneticist Dean Hamer, whose cutting-edge discoveries of specific genes linked to behavioral traits such as anxiety, thrill seeking, and homosexuality prove without a doubt that we are in large part hardwired to behave the way we do. Hamer is one of a small group of researchers mapping the human personality. His findings help to explain why one brother becomes a Wall Street trader while the other remains content as a librarian why some people like to hungee-jump while others play Scrabble and why some are born Don Juans and others wallflowers.

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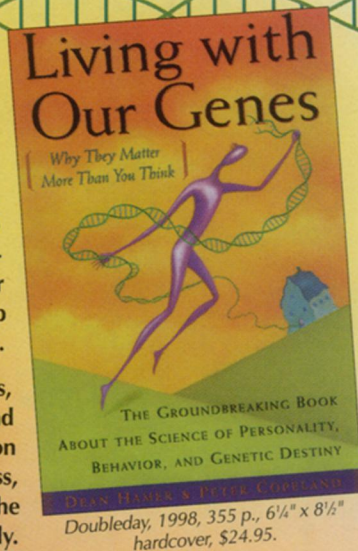
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Hamer shows how much of our behavior is heavily influenced by genes, including how much we eat and how much we weigh, how we think, and how much we drink, use drugs, and have sex. He also sheds light on some compelling and vexing aspects of personality, such as shyness, aggression, depression, and intelligence. Each chapter provides the reader with a blueprint for understanding himself and his family.

The emerging science of molecular biology shows that genes are the single most important factor that distinguishes one person from another. We come in large part ready-made from the factory. Yet genes are not fixed instructions. Indeed, as Hamer is quick to point out, it is our nature to respond to nurture. This is a user's manual for understanding why we do the things we do.

—from Doubleday



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The Big Bang theory is great at describing what happened after the bang. Yet until recently, particle physicists and cosmologists were stuck on many questions that the Big Bang theory couldn't answer, including: What made the Big Bang BANG in the first place? If matter can be neither created nor destroyed, how could so much matter arise from nothing at all? Why can we see only a minute part of the mega-universe?

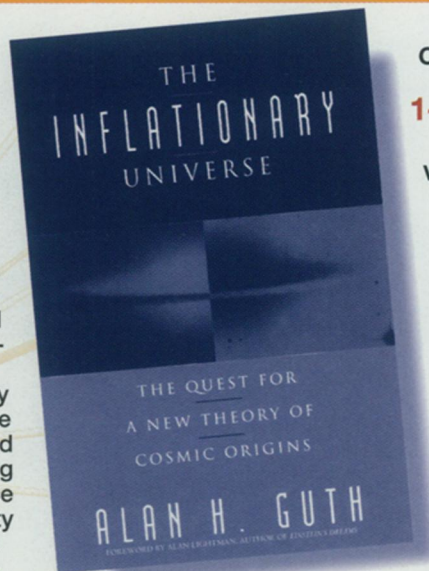
In 1979, a young particle physicist named Alan Guth answered these questions and made front-page news with one of the greatest discoveries in modern cosmology: cosmic inflation. This is the compelling, first-hand account of Guth's paradigm-breaking discovery of the origins of the universe.

Although many of his scientific peers immediately sought to disprove the inflation theory, Guth captured the attention of such noted figures as Stephen Hawking and Andrei D. Linde and spent his time researching and refining his ideas. It wasn't until 1992, however, when the space probe COBE brought stunning confirmation of the validity of inflation, that Guth's theory was widely regarded as one of the most important contributions to science during the 20th century.

Guth's startling theory states that in the billion-trillion-trillionth of a second before the Big Bang, there was a period of hyper-rapid inflation that got the bang started. Inflation modifies our picture of only the first small fraction of a second in the history of the universe, and then it joins the standard Big Bang theory, preserving all of the successes of the older theory. But because inflation explains the bang itself, it is a much richer theory than the older version.

*The Inflationary Universe* is the passionate account of one leading scientist's effort to look behind the cosmic veil and explain how the universe began.

—from Addison Wesley



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