

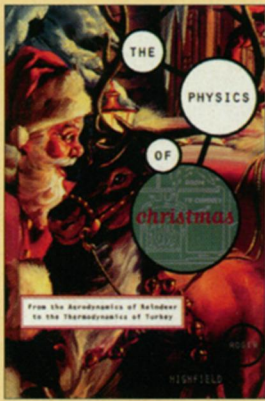
The Weekly Newsmagazine of Science

SCIENCE NEWS

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Living Quarters





Little Brown, 1998
293 pages, 5" x 7 1/2"
paperback, \$20.00



Why is Rudolph's nose so red? What are the celestial candidates for the Star of Bethlehem? How does Santa manage to deliver presents to an estimated 842 million households in a single night?

In *THE PHYSICS OF CHRISTMAS*, award-winning science journalist Roger Highfield acts as the guiding spirit to his favorite holiday. He illuminates Christmas by viewing its many cherished rituals and icons from a new and fascinating perspective: science.

Calling upon the latest research in chemistry, mathematics, genetics, anthropology, physics, psychology, and astronomy, Highfield explores such questions as these: Could reindeer really fly? How do snowflakes form? What could scientists do to guarantee an annual white Christmas? Why are people so frequently depressed after the holiday season?

From the glittering Christmas tree (natural and cloned) to the gaudy Christmas card (even those that play music), from the turkey roasting in the oven to our holiday shopping habits, *THE PHYSICS OF CHRISTMAS* is an irresistible guided tour, a witty investigation that is as delightful as it is informative.

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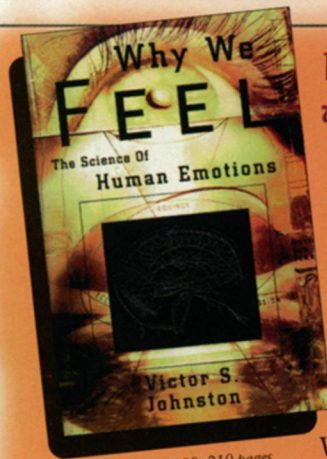
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Perseus Books, 1999, 210 pages
6 1/4" x 9 1/2", hardcover, \$26.00

Why do we get angry? Anxious? Why do we think some people are beautiful?

In this intriguing book, biopsychologist Victor Johnston explores the origin of human feelings and provides new insights into the nature and design of the human mind.

We know that our physical form bears the thumbprint of evolution, but rarely do we stop to consider the effect of natural selection on our conscious feelings—the essence of our humanity. Drawing on a full range of disciplines, from computer science and neurobiology to complexity and evolutionary psychology, Johnston makes the case that feelings evolved—much like any other biological phenomenon—to ensure the survival of our genes.

In the process, he offers a radical new view of human experience. We live in a kind of virtual reality, shaped by millions of years of evolution and often starkly at odds with the actual environment. Johnston's

highly original research reveals that what men find attractive in a female face is not rooted in some objective notion of beauty, but in the qualities—a smaller-than-average jaw and full lips—that signify fertility and are therefore most likely to ensure offspring. Our more complex feelings, such as guilt and pride, help to monitor the vast web of social relationships unique to *Homo sapiens*. In short, our feelings impose a structure on an otherwise silent, tasteless, colorless, and meaningless world. Without them, we would die.

—from Perseus Books

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