that men have an evolved preference for mating with young women. But what he actually argues is that some men find young women attractive all the time, and that all men find young women attractive some of the time, but that not all men find young women attractive all of the time. This is perfectly consistent with the standard view from evolutionary psychology, in which a preference for youth is only one among many aspects of evolved male sexual psychology.

Adapting Minds is destined to become required reading among evolutionary psychology's detractors. But, despite its flaws, it will be read with interest by evolutionary psychologists too. Buller provides a useful overview

of the field and of the current debates. He challenges evolutionary psychologists to re-examine which of their theoretical commitments are important and why. He advances alternative evolutionary hypotheses, which, far from replacing evolutionary psychology, could contribute to its ongoing refinement. And, above all, by eschewing the personal and political mudslinging that characterized earlier debates over sociobiology, Buller enables evolutionary psychologists to get back to arguing about the science. ■

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EXHIBITION

Engineering space-time

Albert Einstein: Ingenieur des Universums/Chief Engineer of the Universe

At Kronprinzenpalais, Berlin until 30 September 2005
www.einsteinausstellung.de

Alison Abbott

"Dr Albert Einstein, Chief Engineer of the Universe, School of Advanced Study, Princeton..." An envelope so addressed is one of more than a thousand items now on display at the Kronprinzenpalais in Berlin.

Did Einstein consider himself American? Or Swiss? Or German? What should we make of this Jew who first renounced German citizenship in 1896, when he was studying in Zurich, who fled from Berlin and the Nazis in

1933, and whose reputation in his homeland was smeared by many in his own scientific community? Is it not perplexing that Germany has put on the world's most ambitious — and arguably the most impressive, thoughtful and imaginative — exhibition commemorating Einstein's life and scientific achievements, implicitly claiming him as their own?

The exhibition is challenging, and in a world used to dumbing down, it may be seen as an élite indulgence. Only visitors with some background in physics who are comfortable with abstract concepts will be rewarded, but they will find it extremely enriching. It presents Einstein and his science in many different contexts: his life and loves in politically turbulent times, for example, but most pertinently, the state of science when he began his working life.

The first of three exhibition floors in the old palace, converted at a cost of €4 million (US\$5 million), is dedicated to setting the scientific scene. A core concept is the history of the development of scientific ideas, elegantly demonstrated in two ground-floor rooms, one dedicated to invisible forces such as magnetism and electricity, the other to the Universe. The rooms display historic instruments, from Galileo's telescope to Otto Hahn's nuclear fission equipment, set among interactive computer terminals that access deeper levels of digital information, including films and sound recordings of some of the scientists. These rooms show how physics concepts developed, one discovery at a time, bringing the visitor to the point at which Einstein entered the fray.

The room near the entrance is empty, its space filled only with one of those impossible debates about which scientists like to fantasize. On three of its walls the projected figures of Aristotle, Newton and Einstein discuss gravity. The actors convey the scientists' personalities, as well as their understanding of the physical world. Introducing themselves, Einstein respectfully hails Aristotle as a true researcher, while Newton arrogantly sneers at Aristotle's "belief in fairy tales".

The second floor is dedicated to Einstein's life, childhood, family, politics, and the social and scientific realities of his world. A second impossible debate takes place, this time between Ludwig Boltzmann, Hendrik Lorentz and Max Planck, frustrated by the apparent dead-end that their physics had reached. The stroke of genius that shifted physics into higher gear — Einstein's special theory of relativity — is celebrated in the central room of the exhibition space. This is lit dazzlingly white and contains only a single central column, an elaborate interactive digital display that illustrates and explains the theory.

The third floor is dedicated to Einstein's legacy, the influence of his work on science and culture today. It is a jamboree of modern experimentation with direct connections to experiments at laboratories such as CERN and the European Southern Observatory.

Nearly halfway through this centenary of Einstein's *annus mirabilis*, and with Einstein-fatigue already setting in, it is still worth spending hours, or even days, at this exhibition. It has an intellectual depth rarely attempted in exhibitions today, and is well served by its elegant presentation. But visitors will have to sweat for their pleasure. They will need the students ('explainers'), present in each room for the exhibition's five-month run, to help them find their way through the maze of information.

Poignantly, the exhibition opened a week after Berlin's Holocaust memorial opened to the public nearby. And many of the artefacts on display were provided by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which has a remarkable Einstein collection. Time provides perspective and equilibrium.

Those who pay the exhibition the attention

The ghost of Albert Einstein haunts the room of invisible forces at a Berlin exhibition in his honour.

Bright idea: a white room celebrates Einstein's special theory of relativity.

BERNO BUFF > FOTOGRAFIE

it deserves will note Einstein's opening, gently teasing, gambit to Newton: "I had the honour of standing on your shoulders and thus being able to see a little further". Einstein also stood on the more modern German shoulders of Boltzmann, Planck and Ernst Mach. But Einstein, so the exhibition tells us, belongs to international science — and this shaper of space-time was shaped by his own space and time. ■

Alison Abbott is *Nature's* senior European correspondent.

A braver, newer world

Never Let Me Go

Kazuo Ishiguro

Faber and Faber/Alfred Knopf: 2005.

263 pp. £16.99/\$24

Justine Burley

Never Let Me Go is a literary tour de force and the finest expression of moral disquietude over advances in the biomedical science since Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* more than 70 years ago. Whereas Huxley's dystopia is central to his story, in Kazuo Ishiguro's tale the dystopic social order provides menace from the background. There are, however, notable likenesses between the two books. In both, the characters are bred and educated to fulfil predestined roles. In both, the changes that have been wrought by science on our moral landscape are traceable to bald utilitarian reasoning. And in both, a misguided notion of progress is laid bare by juxtaposing an existing world against an alternative future one.

Whereas the title of *Brave New World* dangles the lure of progress, with sardonic wit, the title of *Never Let Me Go* beseeches us to cling tightly to our current values. It is no accident that Ishiguro's book is set in the 1990s when the birth of Dolly the cloned sheep was announced and the human genome project was well under way. Both developments prompted debate over what limits

should be placed on applications of related technologies. The prospect of having detailed control over the sort of people who come to exist made many uneasy. For the first time since Darwin's theory of evolution took the world by storm, people sensed that our ethical parameters might be starting to shift. In *Never Let Me Go*, such a shift has occurred: the maxim that individuals should never be treated solely as a means to the ends of others is outmoded.

The few facts we pick up about how this transition occurred, and about the complexion of the resulting society, are revealed gradually, in the telling of a life. The narrator is Kathy, a carer who is soon to be "retired". Her two friends, Tommy and Ruth, have already "completed" following their "donations". Kathy's reminiscences of their intertwined lives return time and again to their cloistered upbringing at a boarding school called Hailsham, unveiling in the process the appalling fate for which it prepared them. The most powerful aspect of the story is the author's intensely controlled psychological portrait of these three individuals, rather than the raw facts about the system that oppressed them.

Much attention is paid to banalities minutely observed: a sports pavilion, an incident involving a lost pencil case, and isolated acts of tomfoolery. These preoccupations of memory strike the reader as being at once utterly normal and utterly incomprehensible. It is as necessary to this book as it was to Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* that we have a detailed insight into how his characters see the world and yet never manage to grasp quite how they can see it thus. This imposed distance between reader and subject serves to force a confrontation with big questions about human identity and all that shapes our values, the temptations of science and technology included.

The only coercive force ever named in the book is 'society'. Misuse of technology in the name of the common good is by no means a novel theme. Unique to Ishiguro's treatment of it is his carefully layered picture of the way in which the principal characters forge and retain their individuality in circumstances designed to deny them any importance as individuals. What most chills the reader is not the cold reality they face, it is that they have internalized it and made it a part of who they are.

Never Let Me Go ought to win every major literary award this year. It captures so very beautifully the importance of what we care about. ■

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MORE ON EINSTEIN

Here is a selection of the new and reissued books about Einstein published this year to celebrate the World Year of Physics.

For those who wish to read the five papers that Einstein produced in 1905, **Einstein's Miraculous Year** edited by John Stachel (Princeton University Press, \$16.95, £10.95) is a good place to start. This new version contains a foreword by Roger Penrose and a new introduction by John Stachel examining Einstein's early life, leading up to the writing of these famous papers.

Alice Calaprice, author of **The Quotable Einstein**, has now produced **The Einstein Almanac** (Johns Hopkins University Press, \$24.95, £17), a chronological listing of 300 of Einstein's publications spanning the years from 1901 to 1955. These are interspersed with biographic details and other notable news from the world of physics. This is a useful book for Einstein enthusiasts to dip into. Examples of Einstein's more popular writings can be found in the reissued **Ideas and Opinions** (Souvenir Press, £9.99).

For those seeking to understand the significance of Einstein's papers, Nigel Calder's **Einstein's Universe** (Penguin, £7.99, \$14) has been reissued. **Einstein's Cosmos** by Michio Kaku (W. W. Norton, \$13.95) examines how Einstein's vision transformed our understanding of space and time. A second edition of David C. Cassidy's **Einstein and Our World** (Humanity Books, \$21) places Einstein's work in its scientific and wider cultural context.

Einstein: A Life in Science by Michael White and John Gribbin (Free Press, £7.99), a short biography, makes a reappearance, along with another offering by John Gribbin, this time with Mary Gribbin, **Annus Mirabilis** (Penguin/Chamberlain Bros, \$25.95). This brief biography also includes a reproduction of Einstein's own book **Relativity: The Special and General Theory**, first published in 1916, and a DVD of the A&E biography of Einstein.

Reviews of other Einstein books appeared in the 20 January issue of *Nature* (433, 195–197; 2005).