The Diversity Bonus

Scott E. Page

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS: 2017. 264 PP. £22.95

The astronomical community has long grappled with the problem of diversity and inclusion. Scott Page, a mathematical social scientist, makes a very pragmatic, even clinical, case for diversity, be it in a research institution, a university, or a Silicon Valley corporation. He presents evidence on how 'cognitive diversity' — people perceiving, analysing and solving problems in different ways — can benefit the bottom line of any organization. The book is complemented by an essay by Katherine W. Phillips that, among other topics, discusses the inherently unequal burden on traditionally underrepresented groups to prove the benefits their inclusion brings.

The Formative Years of Relativity

Hanoch Gutfreund & Jürgen Renn

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS: 2017. 416 PP. £27.95

A hundred years after its publication, Einstein's theory of general relativity continues to be one of the cornerstones of modern physics. In 1921, Einstein delivered a series of lectures in Princeton discussing his theory. Gutfreund and Renn present the historical context, reception and spread of Einstein's then revolutionary ideas and their epistemic evolution, together with the actual content of his lectures and the original books on relativity. The authors paint a detailed but dynamic recounting of how general relativity became what it is today.

Cosmology for the Curious

Delia Perlov & Alex Vilenkin

SPRINGER: 2017. 372 PP. £29.99

It is a challenge to fit all there is to know about the Universe in a few hundred pages, but Perlov and Vilenkin set out to do just that. Starting from the Universe as Newton and Einstein perceived it, the authors then delve into the murkier waters of quantum cosmology, eternal inflation and the multiverse to name but a few of the topics covered. Even the anthropic principle has a chapter devoted to it. Each chapter — most of them are below 20 pages long and pitched at somewhere between high-school and undergraduate level — concludes with a summary and questions that motivate the reader to think through and organize newly acquired knowledge.

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