

NEW BOOKS & MEDIA

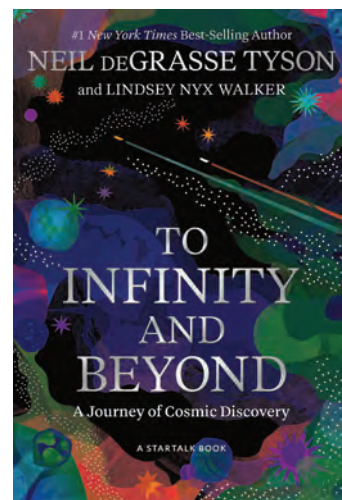
To Infinity and Beyond

A Journey of Cosmic Discovery

Neil deGrasse Tyson and Lindsey Nyx Walker
National Geographic, 2023. \$30.00

The evolution of human thought about Earth, the solar system, and the universe is the subject of this recent book by astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson and *StarTalk* senior producer Lindsey Nyx Walker. As evidenced by 40 000-year-old cave paintings depicting constellations, humans have long been aware of the cosmos. In *To Infinity and Beyond*, the authors begin with the history of humans striving to understand the physical laws governing Earth, before they move on to what we've learned about other planets, stars, and galaxies. Combining science, pop culture, and humor, the book aims to educate and entertain readers.

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Physics Today helps physics teachers stay up to date when designing their curriculums.

I use it to keep informed about new discoveries, results and historical background. It is extremely useful for teaching my physics classes.

I generally use *Physics Today* to get updates about the recent trends and research breakthroughs, which sometimes helps in teaching Master's students.

Figures and quotes obtained from a *Physics Today* reader survey.

PHYSICS TODAY

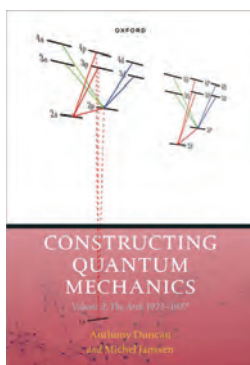
**The Little Book of Aliens**

Adam Frank

Harper, 2023. \$27.99

Do aliens exist? If so, how would we find out? Those are the types of questions that astrophysicist Adam Frank addresses in *The Little Book of Aliens*. A self-avowed nerd and sci-fi fan, Frank dives into the topic with gusto. Although humans have pondered the question of whether we're alone in the universe for millennia, the field of astrobiology—the search for life outside Earth—has only really taken off since the discovery of the first exoplanets around three decades ago. Aimed at the general reader, the book provides an overview of the current science, upcoming missions, and the importance of SETI.

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**Constructing Quantum Mechanics**

Volume 2; The Arch: 1923–1927

Anthony Duncan and Michel Janssen

Oxford U. Press, 2023. \$110.00

The literature on the development of modern quantum mechanics in the 1920s is so vast that probably no work on the topic could ever be encyclopedic. But Anthony Duncan and Michel Janssen's two-volume magnum opus, *Constructing Quantum Mechanics*, comes about as close as humanly possible to comprehensiveness.

The newly released second book covers the development of modern quantum mechanics in 1923–27. Duncan and Janssen carefully walk readers through the major publications by physicists such as Werner Heisenberg and Paul Dirac, explaining the methods used and attempting to reconstruct thought processes. They argue that quantum mechanics was an "arch" built on the "scaffold" of the older quantum theory, which was then cast away once the arch was completed.

—RD PT