

Ms Victoria Gilder
 Perseus Books Running Press
 Ltd
 60-90 Temple Chambers
 3-7 Temple Avenue
 London
 EC4Y 0HP

Media
BBC Focus

Date: May 2009
Type: General Consumer
Frequency: 13/Per year
Circulation: 70326 (ABC)
MediaDisk Ref: U73-140
Page: 84-85

Order
 529810001
 Basic/TL/WI/26/28

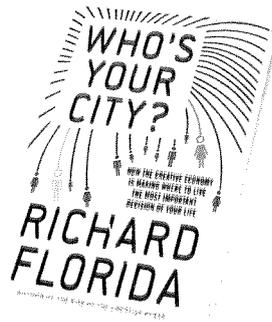
ROB2 9 4041
 Page 1(4)
257 21-1



Books & DVDs

Who's Your City

Tim Harford finds out why deciding where you live could be the most important decision of your life



Richard Florida
 Basic, £10.99
 (292pp, pbk)

The three most important decisions in life are where to live, what to do, and with whom to do it. Richard Florida, a Toronto-based academic and a best-selling urbanophile, believes that most of us pay far too little attention to that first decision. Where we live, he argues, is not a destiny to be accepted passively, carved in stone by family history or the whims of your employer. Instead, it is a choice that helps to shape everything about us.

Who's Your City? is an engagingly written book devoted to proving that proposition and helping us act upon it. Florida uses a range of research to make his case, but more persuasive is his sharply argued demonstration that since place matters hugely to the world economy, why would it not matter hugely to the reader?

The fact is that we do not live in the 'flat' world of Thomas Friedman, but in a spiky one, where population, prosperity and especially innovation are concentrated in a few vast city regions. You might expect mobile phones, email and cheap flights to reduce the importance of geography, but that hasn't happened. Instead, technology has heightened the influence of the great city regions. Silicon Valley, Milan or London can now supply technology, fashion or dodgy hedge funds to the world.

If this compelling book has a weakness, it is that Anglophone Europeans lack the breadth of choice Florida describes for North

Americans. New York or Toronto, Chicago or San Francisco? From Florida's global viewpoint, London, Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds are all part of one big mega-city. Paris and Barcelona lie behind formidable language barriers. As for those who love the countryside, Florida's perspective is exuberantly and unapologetically urban.

Nevertheless, this book will change the way you see the world, and help you find the perfect niche for yourself. Recommended. ★★★★★

Tim Harford is the author of The Logic of Life and presents More or Less on BBC Radio 4



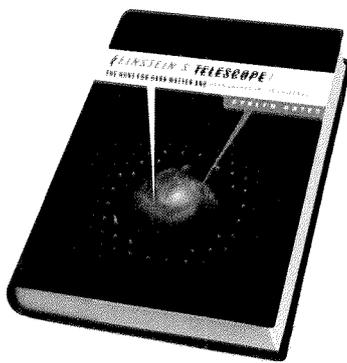
Ms Victoria Gilder
 Perseus Books Running Press
 Ltd
 60-90 Temple Chambers
 3-7 Temple Avenue
 London
 EC4Y 0HP

Media
BBC Focus

Date: May 2009
Type: General Consumer
Frequency: 13/Per year
Circulation: 70326 (ABC)
MediaDisk Ref: U73-140
Page: 84-85

Order
 529810001
Basic/TL/WI/26/28

ROB2 9 4041
 Page 2(4)
257 21-1



**Einstein's Telescope:
 The Hunt for Dark Matter and
 Dark Energy in the Universe**
 Evalyn Gates
 Norton, £18.99
 (320pp, hbk)

Who would have thought astronomers would end up preoccupied not with light, but with darkness? That is how it has turned out. A mere four per cent of the mass of the Universe is in stars and galaxies (only half of which is visible) and the rest in totally mysterious dark energy and dark matter. It is in an attempt to uncloak the cosmic dark stuff that astronomers are exploiting 'Einstein's telescope', the distortion of light from distant galaxies by the gravity of intervening dark material.

I have read many popular science books by scientists and they are invariably dull. Perhaps because the scientists are too close to their subject, they fail to communicate what is exciting in an engaging way. This book, however, is the exception to that rule. Evalyn Gates, an astrophysicist,

infuses her text with energy, enthusiasm and joy.

Gates also gets many things right, which other scientists get wrong. For instance, she correctly states that it was during a BBC radio programme in 1949 that Fred Hoyle coined the term 'Big Bang'. Peculiarly, however, when discussing the modified gravity alternative to dark matter in galaxies, Gates says that it is not compatible with Einstein's theory of gravity, then contradicts herself by describing Jacob Bekenstein's relativistic version of the theory. But this is just minor nit-picking. Gates has written an excellent book. ●●●●●

**Marcus Chown is the author of
 Quantum Theory Cannot Hurt You
 Dread: How Fear and Fantasy
 Have Fuelled Epidemics from
 the Black Death to Avian Flu**
 Philip Alcabes
 PublicAffairs, £15.99
 (336pp, hbk)

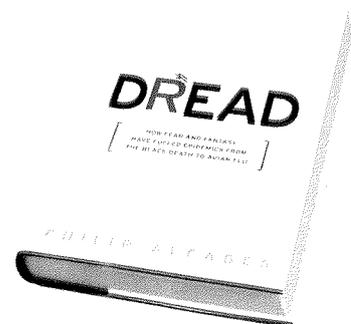
This is a book about epidemics, but rather than telling a biological or medical story, it charts their sociological effect. The title cuts to the heart of it: Alcabes is interested in why we find epidemics so frightening.

The anthrax outbreak of 2001, in which spores were sent through the US mail, made 22 people sick and killed five. But it provoked nationwide panic, whereas tuberculosis, which infects nine million people a year and kills two million of them, we shrug off complacently. The tuberculosis death

toll does not count as an epidemic because the disease affects broadly the same number of people each year.

An epidemic is the term used when "there are more cases of a disease... than would be expected based on experience". By definition, this makes epidemics surprising and newsworthy, but why should they fill us with such dread? Alcabes offers no single answer beyond the notion that we are much more afraid of the risks that we can't control. But his central theme is that this dread is unrelated and disproportionate to the actual risk posed by epidemics. Nor is this by any means a modern phenomenon. In the 14th century, Jews were killed and burned by Christians in France and Switzerland because they were thought to carry the Black Death. In fact, the horrifying notion of epidemic disease is so ingrained that you will be halfway through this intriguing book before you realise just how hysterical we all are. ●●●●

Luis Villazon is a Focus Q&A expert



Ms Victoria Gilder
Perseus Books Running Press
Ltd
60-90 Temple Chambers
3-7 Temple Avenue
London
EC4Y 0HP

Media
BBC Focus

Date: May 2009
Type: General Consumer
Frequency: 13/Per year
Circulation: 70326 (ABC)
MediaDisk Ref: U73-140
Page: 84-85

Order
529810001
Basic/TL/WI/26/28

ROB2 9 4041
Page 3(4)
257 21-1

Expert Bookshelf

Nuclear Physics



Chosen by
Jim Al-Khalili



**Brighter Than a
Thousand Suns: A
Personal History of
the Atomic Scientists**
Robert Jungk (1958)

Penguin, available online

The story of the Manhattan Project, or how the atom bomb was built. It's about Robert Oppenheimer, Richard Feynman and co – and the anguish they went through after realising what they had unleashed. This was one of the first popular science books I read and the first time I'd thought about the ethics of what we do.



**The Magic Furnace:
The Search for the
Origins of Atoms**
Marcus Chown
(1999) Vintage, £8.99

When school kids ask me why someone would want to be interested in nuclear physics, I tell them I want to find out where all the atoms in my body came from. How they were cooked in stars and came to be on Earth. This is a story of the synthesis of the elements in stars, and the reason why I find nuclear physics so exciting.



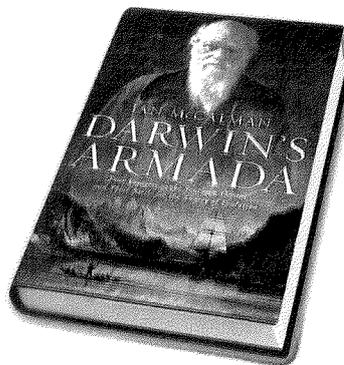
**Fly in the Cathedral:
How a Small Group of
Cambridge Scientists
Won the Race to
Split the Atom**

Brian Cathcart (2004)
Penguin, available online

The early history of

Cambridge's Cavendish Laboratory, which by the 1930s was the place for nuclear physics. It was where the atomic nucleus was first split. They were talking about a world you can't see with the naked eye and designing equipment to try and probe it. The title comes from the analogy that a nucleus in an atom is like a fly in the middle of St Paul's Cathedral.

Professor Jim Al-Khalili is a nuclear physicist and BBC broadcaster



**Darwin's Armada: Four
Voyagers to the Southern
Oceans and their Battle for the
Theory of Evolution**

Iain McCalman
Simon & Schuster, £20
(432pp, hbk)

If you were a budding naturalist in the 19th century, the best way to make a name for yourself was to hop on a ship and see the world. So off went Charles Darwin in 1831 on a round-the-world trip on board HMS Beagle. After five years studying and sending fossils home, he returned to Britain a renowned geologist.

While Darwin's ocean saga is

probably the most famous, many other young naturalists followed in his wake. Among them were three men who later became captains in the war to promote Darwin's theory of evolution. The botanist Joseph Hooker, zoologist Thomas Huxley and Alfred Wallace, co-discoverer of natural selection. As a seasoned explorer with 12 years' experience in the Amazon and South-East Asia, Wallace was the world's first bio-geographer.

There was more to these voyages than sailing around islands and collecting specimens. Whether at sea or on land, the trips were perilous: Darwin survived an 8.5-magnitude earthquake; Hooker's ship collided with another, almost sending it crashing into an iceberg; Huxley had to run from Papuan savages; and Wallace battled against recurrent bouts of malaria.

Their experiences helped forge friendships that went beyond shared academic interests: the four naturalists weren't just fellow scientists, but sailors too. Darwin and Hooker were particularly close – it was in Hooker that Darwin confided his belief that species could evolve, notoriously joking that it was "like confessing a murder".

McCalman recounts each voyager's adventures on the high seas with as much enthusiasm as he describes the scientific battles that followed their return. And apart from the occasional lapse into academic critique, *Darwin's Armada* is a refreshing change from the wave of Darwin-centric biographies being released in the great man's bicentennial year. ●●●●●

Dr JV Chamary is staff writer for Focus

Ms Victoria Gilder
Perseus Books Running Press
Ltd
60-90 Temple Chambers
3-7 Temple Avenue
London
EC4Y 0HP

Media
BBC Focus

Date: May 2009
Type: General Consumer
Frequency: 13/Per year
Circulation: 70326 (ABC)
MediaDisk Ref: U73-140
Page: 84-85

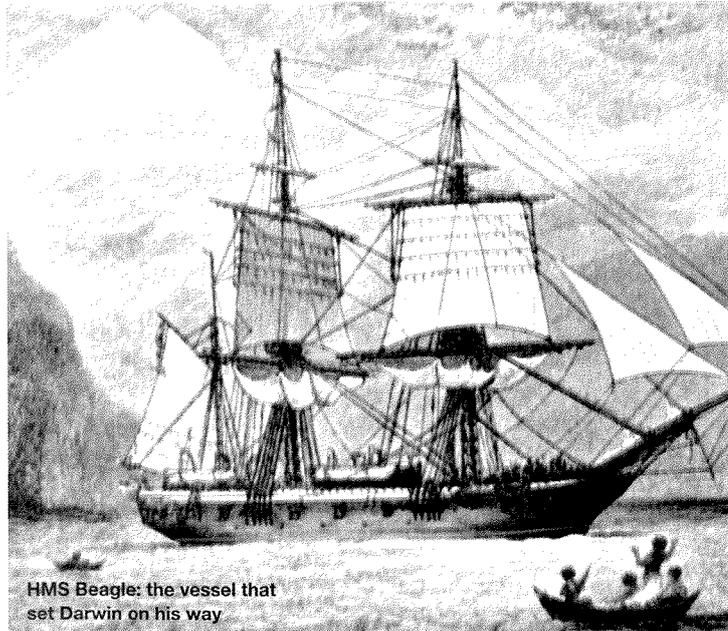
Order

529810001
Basic/TL/WI/26/28

ROB2 9 4041

Page 4(4)

257 21-1



HMS Beagle: the vessel that set Darwin on his way