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A cultural history of physics / Károly Simonyi ; translated by David Kramer. p. cm. Includes bibliographical references and index. ISBN 978-1-56881-329-5 (alk. paper) 1. Physics--History. I. Title. QC7.S55313 2010 530.09--dc22 2010009407 Visit the Taylor & Francis Web site at <http://www.taylorandfrancis.com> and the CRC Press Web site at

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A Cultural History of Physics Translated by David Kramer. Originally published in Hungarian as A fizika kultúrtörténete, Fourth Edition, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1998, and published in German as

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Kulturgeschichte der Physik, Third Edition, Verlag Harri Deutsch, Frankfurt am Main, 2001. First Hungarian edition 1978.

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Elements of what became physics were drawn primarily from the fields of astronomy, optics, and mechanics, which were methodologically united through the study of geometry. These mathematical disciplines began in antiquity with the Babylonians and with Hellenistic writers such as Archimedes and Ptolemy.

~~History of physics — Wikipedia~~

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Károly Simonyi. Károly Simonyi (October 18, 1916 – October 9, 2001) was a Hungarian physicist and writer. He was professor of electrical engineering at Technical University of Budapest and the author of the popular tabletop book A Cultural History of Physics (A fizika kultúrtörténete, 1978). He is the father of Charles Simonyi, a prominent computer-software executive who oversaw the creation of Microsoft Office.

~~Károly Simonyi — Wikipedia~~

Although we take it for granted today, the concept of "energy" transformed nineteenth-century physics. In The Science of Energy, Crosbie Smith shows how a North British group of scientists and engineers, including James Joule, James Clerk Maxwell, William and James Thomson, Fleeming Jenkin, and P. G. Tait, developed energy physics to solve practical problems encountered by Scottish ...

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The beginning of science with focus on Egypt and Mesopotemia is followed by a very detailed account of the classical Hellenistic period, explaining works of the Pythagoreans and Plato, Socrates, Aristoteles and Archimedes.

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While the physical sciences are a continuously evolving source of technology and of understanding about our world, they have become so specialized and rely on so much prerequisite knowledge that for many people today the divide between the sciences and the humanities seems even greater than it was when C. P. Snow delivered his famous 1959 lecture, "The Two Cultures." In *A Cultural History of Physics*, Hungarian scientist and educator Károly Simonyi succeeds in bridging this chasm by describing the experimental methods and theoretical interpretations that created scientific knowledge, from ancient times to the present day, within the cultural environment in which it was formed. Unlike any other work of its kind, Simonyi's seminal opus explores the interplay of science and the humanities to convey the wonder and excitement of scientific development throughout the ages. These pages contain an abundance of excerpts from original resources, a wide array of clear and straightforward explanations, and an astonishing wealth of insight, revealing the historical progress of science and inviting readers into a dialogue with the great scientific minds that shaped our current understanding of physics. Beautifully illustrated, accurate in its scientific content and broad in its historical and cultural perspective, this book will be a valuable reference for scholars and an inspiration to aspiring scientists and humanists who believe that science is an integral part of our culture.

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Traditional accounts of the energy concept have tended to emphasize its discovery, an inevitable product of the progress of science in the 19th century. This new history places the construction of the concept firmly in its social context.

At the end of the nineteenth century, some physicists believed that the basic principles underlying their subject were already known, and that physics in the future would only consist of filling in the details. They could hardly have been more wrong. The past century has seen the rise of quantum mechanics, relativity, cosmology, particle physics, and solid-state physics, among other fields. These subjects have fundamentally changed our understanding of space, time, and matter. They have also transformed daily life, inspiring a technological revolution that has included the development of radio, television, lasers, nuclear power, and computers. In *Quantum Generations*, Helge Kragh, one of the world's leading historians of physics, presents a sweeping account of these extraordinary achievements of the past one hundred years. The first comprehensive one-volume history of twentieth-century physics, the book takes us from the discovery of X rays in the mid-1890s to superstring theory in the 1990s. Unlike most previous histories of physics, written either from a scientific perspective or from a social and institutional perspective, *Quantum Generations* combines both approaches. Kragh writes about pure science with the expertise of a trained physicist, while keeping the content accessible to nonspecialists and paying careful attention to practical uses of science, ranging from compact disks to bombs. As a historian, Kragh skillfully outlines the social and economic contexts that have shaped the field in the twentieth century. He writes, for example, about the impact of the two world wars, the fate of physics under Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin, the role of military research, the emerging leadership of the United States, and the backlash against science that began in the 1960s. He

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also shows how the revolutionary discoveries of scientists ranging from Einstein, Planck, and Bohr to Stephen Hawking have been built on the great traditions of earlier centuries. Combining a mastery of detail with a sure sense of the broad contours of historical change, Kragh has written a fitting tribute to the scientists who have played such a decisive role in the making of the modern world.

Modernist Physics takes as its focus the ideas associated with three scientific papers published by Albert Einstein in 1905, considering the dissemination of those ideas both within and beyond the scientific field, and exploring the manifestation of similar ideas in the literary works of Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence. Drawing on Gillian Beer's suggestion that literature and science 'share the moment's discourse', Modernist Physics seeks both to combine and to distinguish between the two standard approaches within the field of literature and science: direct influence and the zeitgeist. The book is divided into three parts, each of which focuses on the ideas associated with one of Einstein's papers. Part I considers Woolf in relation to Einstein's paper on light quanta, arguing that questions of duality and complementarity had a wider cultural significance in the early twentieth century than has yet been acknowledged, and suggesting that Woolf can usefully be considered a complementary, rather than a dualistic, writer. Part II looks at Lawrence's reading of at least one book on relativity in 1921, and his subsequent suggestion in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* that 'we are in sad need of a theory of human relativity', a theory which is shown to be relevant to Lawrence's writing of relationships both before and after 1921. Part III considers Woolf and Lawrence together alongside late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century discussions of molecular physics and crowd psychology, suggesting that Einstein's work on Brownian motion provides a useful model for thinking about individual literary characters.

Holograms have been in the public eye for over a half-century, but their influences have deeper cultural roots. No other visual experience is quite like interacting with holograms; no other cultural product melds the technological sublime with magic and optimism in quite the same way. As holograms have evolved, they have left their audiences alternately fascinated, bemused, inspired or indifferent. From expressions of high science to countercultural art to consumer security, holograms have represented modernity, magic and materialism. Their most pervasive impact has been to galvanise hopeful technological dreams. Engineers, artists, hippies and hobbyists have played with, and dreamed about, holograms. This book explores how holograms found a place in distinct cultural settings. It is aimed at readers attracted to pop culture, visual studies and cultural history, scholars concerned with media history, fine art and material studies and, most of all, cross-disciplinary audiences intrigued about how this ubiquitous but still-mysterious visual medium grew up in our midst and became entangled in our

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culture. This book explores the technical attractions and cultural uses of the hologram, how they were shaped by what came before them, and how they have matured to shape our notional futures. Today, holograms are in our pockets (as identity documents) and in our minds (as gaming fantasies and 'faux hologram' performers). Why aren't they more often in front of our eyes?

In *A Cultural History of Modern Science in China*, Elman has retold the story of the Jesuit impact on late imperial China, circa 1600-1800, and the Protestant era in early modern China from the 1840s to 1900 in a concise and accessible form ideal for the classroom.

Leviathan and the Air-Pump examines the conflicts over the value and propriety of experimental methods between two major seventeenth-century thinkers: Thomas Hobbes, author of the political treatise *Leviathan* and vehement critic of systematic experimentation in natural philosophy, and Robert Boyle, mechanical philosopher and owner of the newly invented air-pump. The issues at stake in their disputes ranged from the physical integrity of the air-pump to the intellectual integrity of the knowledge it might yield. Both Boyle and Hobbes were looking for ways of establishing knowledge that did not decay into ad hominem attacks and political division. Boyle proposed the experiment as cure. He argued that facts should be manufactured by machines like the air-pump so that gentlemen could witness the experiments and produce knowledge that everyone agreed on. Hobbes, by contrast, looked for natural law and viewed experiments as the artificial, unreliable products of an exclusive guild. The new approaches taken in *Leviathan and the Air-Pump* have been enormously influential on historical studies of science. Shapin and Schaffer found a moment of scientific revolution and showed how key scientific givens--facts, interpretations, experiment, truth--were fundamental to a new political order. Shapin and Schaffer were also innovative in their ethnographic approach. Attempting to understand the work habits, rituals, and social structures of a remote, unfamiliar group, they argued that politics were tied up in what scientists did, rather than what they said. Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer use the confrontation between Hobbes and Boyle as a way of understanding what was at stake in the early history of scientific experimentation. They describe the protagonists' divergent views of natural knowledge, and situate the Hobbes-Boyle disputes within contemporary debates over the role of intellectuals in public life and the problems of social order and assent in Restoration England. In a new introduction, the authors describe how science and its social context were understood when this book was first published, and how the study of the history of science has changed since then.

This pioneering work is the first to trace how our understanding of the causes of human behavior has changed radically over the course of European and American cultural history since 1830. Focusing on the

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act of murder, as documented vividly by more than a hundred novels including Crime and Punishment, An American Tragedy, The Trial, and Lolita, Stephen Kern devotes each chapter of A Cultural History of Causality to examining a specific causal factor or motive for murder--ancestry, childhood, language, sexuality, emotion, mind, society, and ideology. In addition to drawing on particular novels, each chapter considers the sciences (genetics, endocrinology, physiology, neuroscience) and systems of thought (psychoanalysis, linguistics, sociology, forensic psychiatry, and existential philosophy) most germane to each causal factor or motive. Kern identifies five shifts in thinking about causality, shifts toward increasing specificity, multiplicity, complexity, probability, and uncertainty. He argues that the more researchers learned about the causes of human behavior, the more they realized how much more there was to know and how little they knew about what they thought they knew. The book closes by considering the revolutionary impact of quantum theory, which, though it influenced novelists only marginally, shattered the model of causal understanding that had dominated Western thought since the seventeenth century. Others have addressed changing ideas about causality in specific areas, but no one has tackled a broad cultural history of this concept as does Stephen Kern in this engagingly written and lucidly argued book.

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