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Weatherall's "Void: the strange physics of nothing" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Weatherall, J. O. (2016). *Void: the strange physics of nothing*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 196 pp. \$ 15.98. ISBN 9780300209983

This inexpensive book is a history of physics in respect to how physicists perceive nothingness. This book is part of a series of books which asks prominent scientists to write on particular area of science (in this case nothingness) in such a way that can be understood by lay readers and at the same time convey the wonder of science to the reader. This author has done that. He explains complex concepts by using analogies that a lay person can understand. The author then mixes in anecdotes about the physicist who created those ideas which allows the reader time to digest the complex concept before going on to the next concept. It is impossible not to finish this book and not have a different perspective of nothingness. The book itself is short, 136 pages. The notes and references take up about 50 pages of the book. I would recommend this book to any lay person who has fascination with physics. It is simple enough to get the gist of the concepts, as for understanding the concept at the level someone who taken several physics classes would be close to impossible due to the complexities of the concepts. Which libraries should have this book in their collections? Since physics is a difficult subject which few want to confront, the appeal of this book is very limited. This book is simple enough and a wonderful read that it could spark a life-long love of physics. For research libraries this is too simple. For academic libraries, I would recommend this book but do not expect it to be checked out much. I see this best for a large public library system that can order one or two copies of this and just send it from library to library when requested.

Reviewer

Gary R. Averill