



The Cosmic Landscape: String Theory and the Illusion of Intelligent Design

By Leonard Susskind

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In his first book ever, the father of string theory reinvents the world's concept of the known universe and man's unique place within it. Line drawings.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. As modern physics has developed a better understanding of how the universe operates at its most fundamental levels, one thing has become increasingly clear: we're damned lucky to be here at all. The laws of physics are precariously balanced, and were the value of one constant slightly different, life as we know it wouldn't exist. To explain the ridiculous improbability of it all, some physicists have turned to the "Anthropic Principle": the universe seems perfectly tailored to us because if it weren't, we wouldn't be here to observe it. The underlying rationale for this argument involves the "landscape" of potential laws of physics (which, it turns out, aren't so immutable after all), a whole bunch of extra dimensions and lots of particle physics. Luckily, Susskind—the father of string theory—does the job right, guiding readers through the current controversy over the Anthropic Principle. Make no mistake: this is the cutting edge of physics as described by one of the sharpest scientific minds around. While the subtitle is a bit misleading (this isn't about intelligent design in the Kansas Board of Education sense, but actually a controversy at once bigger and less prominent), persistent readers will finish this book understanding and caring about contemporary physics in ways both unexpected and gratifying. (Dec. 12)

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From [Booklist](#)

Physicist Susskind is a founder of string theory, and his first popular work will be of utmost significance to science readers. They will be challenged throughout by Susskind's ideas, of which strings are but a part; his driving curiosity is to discover why the laws of physics are what they are and so finely poised to permit life. Susskind discusses how slight alterations of physical values would destroy atoms and, hence, life. Deeming unscientific any proposition of a supernatural agency in setting the physical dials so exactly, Susskind advances a radical concept he calls the "landscape." Valiantly explaining it to his lay audience, Susskind, after introducing the moving parts of his theory (general relativity, quantum mechanics, vacuum energy), compares our universe to a rolling ball on an undulating landscape. Its place of rest equates to our laws of physics. In this extraordinary work, Susskind ushers us to the mind-bending edge of a possible paradigm shift. *Gilbert Taylor*

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About the Author

Leonard Susskind has been the Felix Bloch Professor in theoretical physics at Stanford University since 1978. The author of *The Cosmic Landscape*, he is a member of the National Academy of Science and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and recipient of numerous prizes including the science writing prize of the American Institute of Physics for his *Scientific American* article on black holes.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Joseph Wilson:

Why? Because this *The Cosmic Landscape: String Theory and the Illusion of Intelligent Design* is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap the item but latter it will surprise you with the secret that inside. Reading this book alongside it was fantastic author who also write the book in

such amazing way makes the content inside easier to understand, entertaining means but still convey the meaning totally. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this any longer or you going to regret it. This excellent book will give you a lot of benefits than the other book have such as help improving your expertise and your critical thinking technique. So , still want to delay having that book? If I have been you I will go to the guide store hurriedly.

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