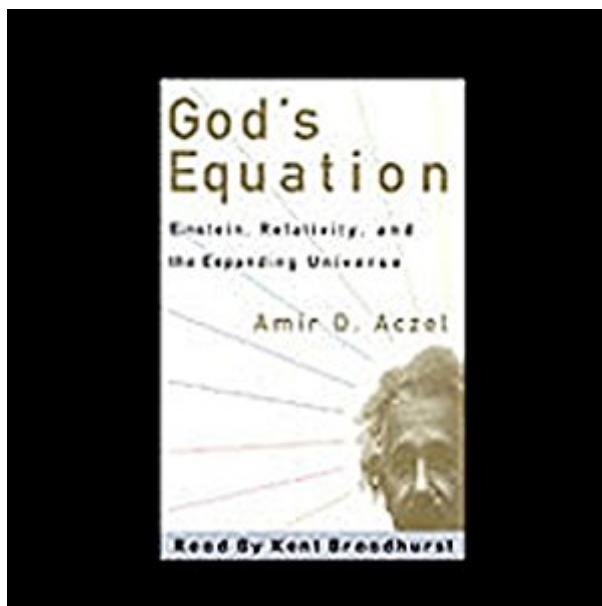


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God's Equation: Einstein, Relativity, And The Expanding Universe



Synopsis

Dealing with cosmology, this book reveals astronomical observations that indicate the presence of a previously unknown force in the universe. It explains, in accessible terms, Einstein's theories and his development of the "cosmological constant". --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I recommend this book, but not strongly, for a number of reasons. I'll do the pros before moving on to the cons. First, I really don't know of a book that covers exactly what this book does, and does it in a way that is accessible to the broadest possible audience. In fact, I don't know any historical treatments of the development of Einstein's equation geared toward intellectuals. This book, then, fills an important literature gap in popular science. It is difficult to say that Aczel does a "good" job in this book, because he does some things so exceptionally well that it strikes the senses that he does other things so poorly. He writes well, and is very much to the point, in some chapters, and others just seem like a potpourri of information qua space filler, as one other reviewer noted. For example, chapters 11-16 are, individually, either poorly done and scant, or lacking cohesion with the whole project. (Chapter 1 isn't great either.) Yet chapters 2-10 are either well done or very, very good. An example of this is Aczel's leaning on historian of physics, John Stachel, and brings additional insight into Stachel's intellectual products. The chapters pertaining to the pure mathematics are particularly well done. Some points of clarification are so lucid that I think the moderately intelligent, decent reader would completely understand otherwise inaccessible mathematical formalism. This aspect of

Aczel's work, even beyond his nice writing style, is a major achievement of the book. Additionally, I thought Aczel did a good job of researching some areas of the history, upon which little prior writing exists. Being fairly knowledgeable about the content of the book, I took away a number of valuable points, details, and grist for my mill. As far as the cons, I tend to ride Aczel's works a bit harder than most, because I feel he is capable of more than he sometimes produces. Re: My point about the disparity in quality in various chapters within a single work; this book would be closer to a five-star book if Aczel could establish greater consistency. As it is, reading pages 13-148 of 220 could be read, dismissing the rest, to maximize the value of the text, though the reader might feel a little disoriented with the lack intro and conclusion. When other reviews express agitation over Aczel's lack of depth, it is because he notes that so-and-so did such-and-such, but does not say what entailed the such-and-such: you really don't have any more information than you began with, apart from a superficial factoid. Another issue with this book is the lack of historical and philosophically informed writing, probably, because Aczel consults scientists rather than historians and philosophers trained in the science. A good example is the fact that Poincare, historians believe, played no role in Einstein's theory development. As far as letters have shown, Einstein did read one work of Poincare's (on time) by 1902, and there is no evidence that it influenced his thought, as Aczel (and trained physicists, without an historical background, might think). For a philosophical example of lacking insight, Aczel says nothing about the idea that physicists (many physicists at around the turn of the century were the philosophers, as well, e.g., Duhem, Reichenbach, Poincare, etc.) were very interested in the fact that there seemed to be a philosophical difference between geometric space and physical space, such that physical space did not uniquely determine the applied geometric space. In Einstein's compiled volume of "Ideas and Opinions," it can be seen that Einstein had been similarly fascinated by this; and it wasn't as Aczel seems to suggest, that Einstein just came up with the idea of applying non-Euclidean geometrical coordinates/metric to physical space, but it was part of an on-going and historically significant discussion between philosophical minded physicists, mathematicians with philosophical interests in physics, and physics-interested philosophers. Overall, only part of the book (chapters suggested above) will likely interest the intellectual without much exposure to this subject, but the book holds extended merit for the lay audience, being so accessible and on a unique subject matter. For the latter, I do suggest giving it a look to see if it suits potential interests.

I enjoyed the reading of the book and it is what I was expecting. Somebody recommended it to me and I would recommend it to you.

A first rate book by a first rate mind. Versatile in many subject matters, he is adept at bringing to life prose in a manner of concurrent, stimulating fact based character development rarely seen in a non fiction book. His Jewish background and his father's life experience is also a big factor. A must read on Albert Einstein and his contemporaries in the incredible development of the nature of our reality.

Recounts the history of the derivation and proof of Einstein's theories of general relativity and special relativity. Amir Aczel does a nice job of making very complex mathematic and scientific theory approachable for the layman, as well as provides enough background and human interest to the story to give a genuine feel for the man and the challenges faced in achieving the scientific breakthrough. There are sufficient illustrations of the proposed geometry to give the reader a good feel of the visual of the theories as well. If you have interest in science, math, physics or cosmology, this book is well worth the read.

Amir Aczel describes Einstein's equation of general relativity that governs the behavior of the universe from its birth to a possible role in the near future. The story is beautifully woven together with the latest finding in cosmology and the riddle of creation. While a few lines of equations are shown, their meaning is explained by simple terms that can be understood by lay readers. On the basis of Einstein's letters that became accessible recently, Aczel tells for the first time the great physicist's efforts to get a prediction of his theory experimentally proved. Thus the author well succeeds in revealing a human side of the person who discovered God's Equation. This is quite a readable and absorbing book.

Great book - great author!

An excellent book, containing personalities and explanations presented as clearly as possible.

Cool things you'd never known about Einstein and his contemporaries. If you don't know physics, challenge yourself with this book. It's actually fun to read!

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