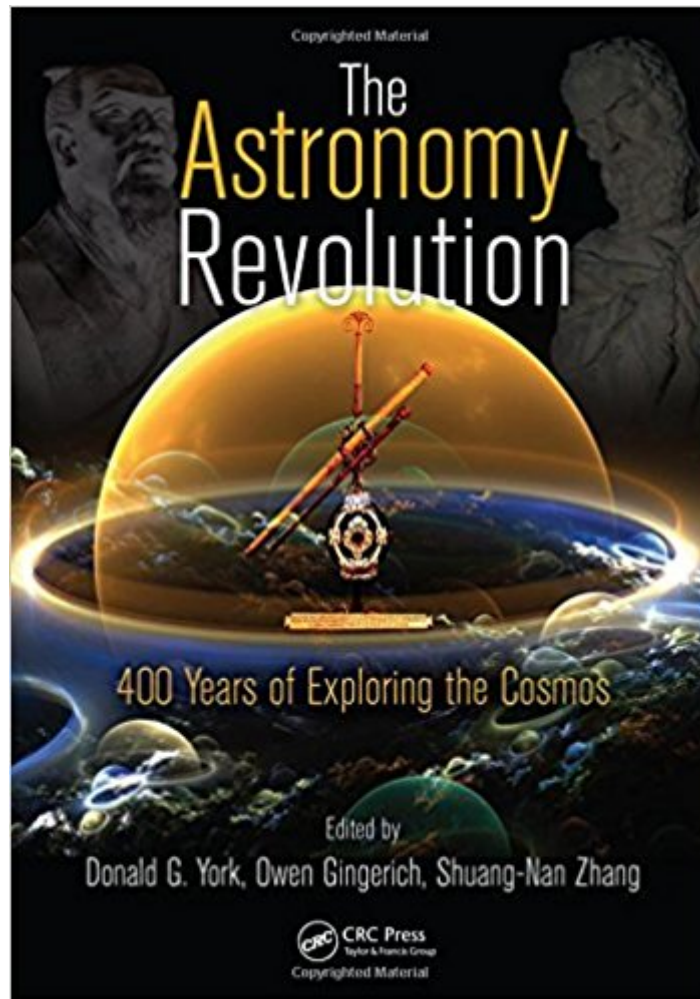


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The Astronomy Revolution: 400 Years Of Exploring The Cosmos



Synopsis

Some 400 years after the first known patent application for a telescope by Hans Lipperhey, *The Astronomy Revolution: 400 Years of Exploring the Cosmos* surveys the effects of this instrument and explores the questions that have arisen out of scientific research in astronomy and cosmology. Inspired by the international New Vision 400 conference held in Beijing in October 2008, this interdisciplinary volume brings together expanded and updated contributions from 26 esteemed conference speakers and invited others. Looking beyond questions of science to the role of moral responsibility in human civilizations, the book offers the unique vantage points of contributions from both Eastern and Western cultures. Extensively illustrated in full color, this book consists of six parts. Aimed at young scientists, the first part presents perspectives on creativity and technology in scientific discovery. In the second part, contributors examine how the telescope has impacted our knowledge of the Universe—from the formation of galaxies to the death of stars. The third part of the book outlines some of the challenges we face in understanding dark matter, dark energy, black holes, and cosmic rays, and the fourth part discusses new technologies that will be useful in attacking new and unresolved questions. The fifth part of the book examines the intellectual impact that the telescope has had on society in China and in the West. The book concludes with an investigation of "big questions": What is the origin of the laws of physics as we know them? Are these laws the same everywhere? How do these scientific laws relate to the moral laws of society? Does what we know depend on cultural ways of asking the questions? Is there life elsewhere? And what about the questions that science cannot answer? Celebrating the historical significance of the telescope, this unique book seeks to inspire all those involved or interested in the enterprise of astronomy as humankind continues the quest to unveil the heavens.

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Customer Reviews

I am a member of a group of retired professors, two physicists and two engineers who have been studying cosmology for the past fifteen years. It reviews the 2008 Beiging meeting and is required reading for anyone who is interested in the methods that astronomers have used to explore the universe. As such, it is a resource for a complete review of past investigations and a starting point for new ones. It covers methods of detecting dark matter and dark energy and the use of lamda, the cosmological constant. It also glosses over the fact that lamda as used in Einstein's field equations is 120 orders of magnitude different from what one would expect from a quantumm analysis. It has one weakness, however, in that the writers have a bias toward the Friedman solution of Einstein's field equations and the consequent Robertson-Walker metric. Therefore, a bias toward the big-bang permeates many of the discussions. That is why much of the modeling has difficulty in self-justification. It covers inflation theory and the requirements for new particles inhabiting a multiverse. The last chapter is the most compelling. Why are the laws of nature as they are and what underlies their existence? What are matter and forces, conciousness, physical and biological possibilities, and abstract reality. Is mathematical reality to be discovered? How do we know what we believe. What is the nature of ultimate reality?

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