

David Park

# THE GRAND CONTRAPTION

*The World as Myth, Number, and Chance*



# The Grand Contraption The World As Myth Number And Chance

**Adam Frank**



## **The Grand Contraption The World As Myth Number And Chance:**

**The Grand Contraption** David Park, 2021-07-13 The Grand Contraption tells the story of humanity's attempts through 4000 years of written history to make sense of the world in its cosmic totality to understand its physical nature and to know its real and imagined inhabitants. No other book has provided as coherent, compelling and learned a narrative on this subject of subjects. David Park takes us on an incredible journey that illuminates the multitude of elaborate contraptions by which humans in the Western world have imagined the earth they inhabit and what lies beyond. Intertwining history, religion, philosophy, literature and the physical sciences, this eminently readable book is ultimately about the grand contraption we've constructed through the ages in an effort to understand and identify with the universe. According to Park, people long ago conceived of our world as a great rock slab inhabited by gods, devils and people and crowned by stars. Thinkers imagined ether to fill the empty space and in the comforting certainty of celestial movement they discerned numbers and in numbers, order. Separate sections of the book tell the fascinating stories of measuring and mapping the Earth and Heavens and later the scientific exploration of the universe. The journey reveals many common threads stretching from ancient Mesopotamians and Greeks to peoples of today. For example, humans have tended to imagine Earth and Sky as living creatures. Not true, say science-savvy moderns. But truth isn't always the point. The point, says Park, is that Earth is indeed the fragile bubble we surmise and we must treat it with the reverence it deserves. Spaceship Earth in the Environmental Age, 1960-1990

Sabine Höhler, 2015-10-06 The idea of the earth as a vessel in space came of age in an era shaped by space travel and the Cold War. Höhler's study brings together technology, science and ecology to explore the way this latter-day ark was invoked by politicians, environmentalists, cultural historians, writers of science fiction and many others across three decades.

**Trajectory of the 21st Century** Lawrence J. Terlizese, 2009-01-10 Trajectory of the Twenty-first Century explores what many prophets of the twentieth century such as Oswald Spengler, Paul Tillich, Aldous Huxley, Jacques Ellul and others have predicted would transpire in the current century. Their vision included an out-of-control technological system and a return to religious sentiment that will ultimately undermine the system to which it is reacting. This book aims to accurately present their positions and draw certain logical conclusions from them that pertain to the course of history in our time. The book's theme argues that modernity is a secularized version of millennial Christianity which reaches its fullest development in the twenty-first century and will regress into what Russian philosopher Nicholas Berdyaev called the new Middle Ages or a new religious period. This will mean the twilight of modern technological society as its values of rationalism give way to a post-rationalist society. Ironically, decline will come through further technological advance. Omnicide threatens through religious world war driven by transcendent values and modern weaponry. Jihadist thinking and posthumanist technology both establish the omnicidal mentality. New technologies such as genetic engineering and artificial intelligence created under millennial inspiration to reach for immortality could potentially bring an end to the human species either through a slow

steady obsolescence or through environmental catastrophe The titanic forces of technological progress and regress are on a direct collision course in the twenty first century      Fooled by Randomness Nassim Nicholas Taleb,2016 Nassim Nicholas Taleb s landmark Incerto series is an investigation of luck uncertainty probability opacity human error risk disorder and decision making in a world we don t understand in nonoverlapping and standalone books All four volumes Antifragile The Black Swan Fooled by Randomness and the expanded edition of The Bed of Procrustes updated with more than 50 percent new material are now together in one boxed set ANTIFRAGILE Startling richly crammed with insights stories fine phrases and intriguing asides The Wall Street Journal Just as human bones get stronger when subjected to stress and tension many things in life benefit from disorder volatility and turmoil What Taleb has identified and calls antifragile is that category of things that not only gain from chaos but need it in order to survive and flourish The resilient resists shocks and stays the same the antifragile gets better and better What is crucial is that the antifragile loves errors as it incurs small harm and large benefits from them Spanning politics urban planning war personal finance economic systems and medicine in an interdisciplinary and erudite style Antifragile is a blueprint for living in a Black Swan world THE BLACK SWAN A book that altered modern thinking The Times London A black swan is a highly improbable event with three principal characteristics It is unpredictable it carries a massive impact and after the fact we concoct an explanation that makes it appear less random and more predictable The astonishing success of Google was a black swan so was 9 11 In this groundbreaking and prophetic book Taleb shows that black swan events underlie almost everything about our world from the rise of religions to events in our own personal lives and yet we especially the experts are blind to them FOOLED BY RANDOMNESS Fooled by Randomness is to conventional Wall Street wisdom approximately what Martin Luther s ninety five theses were to the Catholic Church Malcolm Gladwell The New Yorker Are we capable of distinguishing the fortunate charlatan from the genuine visionary Must we always try to uncover nonexistent messages in random events Fooled by Randomness is about luck more precisely about how we perceive luck in our personal and professional experiences Set against the backdrop of the most conspicuous forum in which luck is mistaken for skill the markets Fooled by Randomness is an irreverent eye opening and endlessly entertaining exploration of one of the least understood forces in our lives THE BED OF PROCRUSTES Taleb s crystalline nuggets of thought stand alone like esoteric poems Financial Times This collection of aphorisms and meditations expresses Taleb s major ideas in ways you least expect The Bed of Procrustes takes its title from Greek mythology the story of a man who made his visitors fit his bed to perfection by either stretching them or cutting their limbs With a rare combination of pointed wit and potent wisdom Taleb plows through human illusions contrasting the classical views of courage elegance and erudition against the modern diseases of nerdiness philistinism and phoniness      **About Time** Adam Frank,2012-09-11 The Big Bang is dead and astrophysicist Adam Frank explains how our experience of time will change as a result      POETIC COMPARATIVE TEXTS IN NOBIIN Nubantood Khalil,2024-09-23 This book offers poetic translations into

the Nile Nubian language Nobiin of renowned literary works from diverse poets worldwide It includes introductions to the poets and explanations of key Nobiin vocabulary aiming to bridge the gap between the original texts and readers The book highlights the importance of poetic translation in promoting and preserving the Nobiin language spoken in Sudan and Egypt

The Way Things Aren't: Deconstructing 'Reality' to Facilitate Communication John Backman, Malgorzata Wojczik, 2019-05-15 In a world of continual conflict rethinking the way we communicate with other cultures religions or nations is of paramount importance Standing in the way is the unconscious assumption that our own views reflect the way things are an assumption both inefficient and harmful The Way Things Aren't Deconstructing Reality to Facilitate Communication explores communication as a meeting point between different perceptions of reality presenting how our assumptions and convictions hinder effective communication with those who are different from us Featuring case examples from Somalia Romania and other regions the chapters describe how authorities and the media often create reality to relegate some people cultures languages or religions to the wrong side of the tracks Featuring scholars and practitioners from many disciplines this discussion challenges readers with the idea that in order to remain open for new perspectives we must be aware that things are not always the way things are

*The Black Swan* Nassim Nicholas Taleb, 2009-10-13 In the author's point of view a black swan is an improbable event with three principal characteristics It is unpredictable it carries a massive impact and after the fact we concoct an explanation that makes it appear less random and more predictable than it was Why do we not acknowledge the phenomenon of black swans until after they occur Part of the answer according to Taleb is that humans are hardwired to learn specifics when they should be focused on generalities We concentrate on things we already know and time and time again fail to take into consideration what we don't know We are therefore unable to truly estimate opportunities too vulnerable to the impulse to simplify narrate and categorize and not open enough to rewarding those who can imagine the impossible

Incerto 5-Book Bundle Nassim Nicholas Taleb, 2021-05-04 The landmark five book series all together in one ebook bundle The Incerto is an investigation of opacity luck uncertainty probability human error risk and decision making when we don't understand the world expressed in the form of a personal essay with autobiographical sections stories parables and philosophical historical and scientific discussions in non overlapping volumes that can be accessed in any order The main thread is that while there is inordinate uncertainty about what is going on there is great certainty as to what one should do about it This ebook bundle includes FOOLED BY RANDOMNESS THE BLACK SWAN THE BED OF PROCRUSTES ANTIFRAGILE SKIN IN THE GAME

Incerto 4-Book Bundle Nassim Nicholas Taleb, 2016-01-26 Nassim Nicholas Taleb's landmark Incerto series is an investigation of luck uncertainty probability opacity human error risk disorder and decision making in a world we don't understand in nonoverlapping and standalone books All four volumes Antifragile The Black Swan Fooled by Randomness and the expanded edition of The Bed of Procrustes updated with more than 50 percent new material are now together in one ebook bundle ANTIFRAGILE Startling richly crammed with insights

stories fine phrases and intriguing asides The Wall Street Journal Just as human bones get stronger when subjected to stress and tension many things in life benefit from disorder volatility and turmoil What Taleb has identified and calls antifragile is that category of things that not only gain from chaos but need it in order to survive and flourish The resilient resists shocks and stays the same the antifragile gets better and better What is crucial is that the antifragile loves errors as it incurs small harm and large benefits from them Spanning politics urban planning war personal finance economic systems and medicine in an interdisciplinary and erudite style Antifragile is a blueprint for living in a Black Swan world THE BLACK SWAN A book that altered modern thinking The Times London A black swan is a highly improbable event with three principal characteristics It is unpredictable it carries a massive impact and after the fact we concoct an explanation that makes it appear less random and more predictable The astonishing success of Google was a black swan so was 9 11 In this groundbreaking and prophetic book Taleb shows that black swan events underlie almost everything about our world from the rise of religions to events in our own personal lives and yet we especially the experts are blind to them FOOLED BY RANDOMNESS Fooled by Randomness is to conventional Wall Street wisdom approximately what Martin Luther's ninety five theses were to the Catholic Church Malcolm Gladwell The New Yorker Are we capable of distinguishing the fortunate charlatan from the genuine visionary Must we always try to uncover nonexistent messages in random events Fooled by Randomness is about luck more precisely about how we perceive luck in our personal and professional experiences Set against the backdrop of the most conspicuous forum in which luck is mistaken for skill the markets Fooled by Randomness is an irreverent eye opening and endlessly entertaining exploration of one of the least understood forces in our lives THE BED OF PROCRUSTES Taleb's crystalline nuggets of thought stand alone like esoteric poems Financial Times This collection of aphorisms and meditations expresses Taleb's major ideas in ways you least expect The Bed of Procrustes takes its title from Greek mythology the story of a man who made his visitors fit his bed to perfection by either stretching them or cutting their limbs With a rare combination of pointed wit and potent wisdom Taleb plows through human illusions contrasting the classical views of courage elegance and erudition against the modern diseases of nerdiness philistinism and phoniness

The Black Swan: Second Edition Nassim Nicholas Taleb, 2010-05-11 The most influential book of the past seventy five years a groundbreaking exploration of everything we know about what we don't know now with a new section called On Robustness and Fragility A black swan is a highly improbable event with three principal characteristics It is unpredictable it carries a massive impact and after the fact we concoct an explanation that makes it appear less random and more predictable than it was The astonishing success of Google was a black swan so was 9 11 For Nassim Nicholas Taleb black swans underlie almost everything about our world from the rise of religions to events in our own personal lives Why do we not acknowledge the phenomenon of black swans until after they occur Part of the answer according to Taleb is that humans are hardwired to learn specifics when they should be focused on generalities We concentrate on things we already know and time and time



again fail to take into consideration what we don't know. We are therefore unable to truly estimate opportunities too vulnerable to the impulse to simplify, narrate and categorize and not open enough to rewarding those who can imagine the impossible. For years Taleb has studied how we fool ourselves into thinking we know more than we actually do. We restrict our thinking to the irrelevant and inconsequential while large events continue to surprise us and shape our world. In this revelatory book Taleb will change the way you look at the world and this second edition features a new philosophical and empirical essay On Robustness and Fragility which offers tools to navigate and exploit a Black Swan world. Taleb is a vastly entertaining writer with wit, irreverence and unusual stories to tell. He has a polymathic command of subjects ranging from cognitive science to business to probability theory. Elegant, startling and universal in its applications. The Black Swan is a landmark book itself a black swan.

**Incerto** NASSIM NICHOLAS. TALEB, 2021-05-04. The landmark five book series all together in one boxed set. The Incerto is an investigation of opacity, luck, uncertainty, probability, human error, risk and decision making when we don't understand the world expressed in the form of a personal essay with autobiographical sections, stories, parables and philosophical, historical and scientific discussions in non-overlapping volumes that can be accessed in any order. The main thread is that while there is inordinate uncertainty about what is going on, there is great certainty as to what one should do about it. This boxed set includes: FOOLED BY RANDOMNESS, THE BLACK SWAN, THE BED OF PROCRUSTES, ANTIFRAGILE, SKIN IN THE GAME.

*Always Near* Robert J. Morgan, 2019-04-02. In this fast-paced culture it's easy to feel lonely and overwhelmed by life. In *Always Near* Robert J. Morgan reminds us that God is closer than you can imagine. We need to train our souls to awaken to the simple pleasure of being present with our Savior so we can be relieved from what all too often overwhelms us. Morgan shares 10 ways you can cultivate the blessings of God's presence including: Discovering special places, Focusing on things unseen, Abiding in Scripture, Highlighting special times, Trusting God in difficulty, Serving God in ways large and small. This beautiful book contains a presentation page and is perfect to give as a gift for a friend. It will remind you that no matter how you feel, God is in the room. You can relax in His presence and let the stress drain from you. It is time to nurture a sense of the abiding nearness of Him who is closer than a brother so that you'll know more of His joy, strength and comfort. Experience a relationship with the God who made you, who loves you and desires for you to enjoy His presence. Seek the Lord and soon discover He was, is and will be. *Always Near*.

**Cosmic Jackpot** Paul Davies, 2007-04-11. Cosmic Jackpot is Paul Davies's eagerly awaited return to cosmology, the successor to his critically acclaimed bestseller *The Mind of God*. Here he tackles all the big questions including the biggest of them all: Why does the universe seem so well adapted for life? In his characteristically clear and elegant style, Davies shows how recent scientific discoveries point to a perplexing fact: many different aspects of the cosmos, from the properties of the humble carbon atom to the speed of light, seem tailor-made to produce life. A radical new theory says it's because our universe is just one of an infinite number of universes, each one slightly different. Our universe is bio-friendly by accident; we just happened to win the

cosmic jackpot While this multiverse theory is compelling it has bizarre implications such as the existence of infinite copies of each of us and Matrix like simulated universes And it still leaves a lot unexplained Davies believes there s a more satisfying solution to the problem of existence the observations we make today could help shape the nature of reality in the remote past If this is true then life and ultimately consciousness aren t just incidental byproducts of nature but central players in the evolution of the universe Whether he s elucidating dark matter or dark energy M theory or the multiverse Davies brings the leading edge of science into sharp focus provoking us to think about the cosmos and our place within it in new and thrilling ways

**Lost Knowledge** Benjamin B. Olshin,2019-02-19 Lost Knowledge The Concept of Vanished Technologies and Other Human Histories examines the idea of lost knowledge reaching back to a period between myth and history It investigates a peculiar idea found in a number of early texts that there were civilizations with knowledge of sophisticated technologies and that this knowledge was obscured or destroyed over time along with the civilization that had created it This book presents critical studies of a series of early Chinese South Asian and other texts that look at the idea of specific lost technologies such as mechanical flight and the transmission of images There is also an examination of why concepts of a vanished golden age were prevalent in so many cultures Offering an engaging and investigative look at the propagation of history and myth in technology and culture this book is sure to interest historians and readers from many backgrounds

*The Readers' Advisory Guide to Nonfiction* Neal Wyatt,2007-05-14 Navigating what at she calls the extravagantly rich world of nonfiction renowned readers advisor RA Wyatt builds readers advisory bridges from fiction to compelling and increasingly popular nonfiction to encompass the library s entire collection She focuses on eight popular categories history true crime true adventure science memoir food cooking travel and sports Within each she explains the scope popularity style major authors and works and the subject s position in readers advisory interviews Wyatt addresses who is reading nonfiction and why while providing RAs with the tools and language to incorporate nonfiction into discussions that point readers to what to read next In easy to follow steps Wyatt Explains the hows and whys of offering fiction and nonfiction suggestions together Illustrates ways to get up to speed fast in nonfiction Shows how to lead readers to a variety of books using her read around and reading map strategies Provides tools to build nonfiction subject guides for the collection This hands on guide includes nonfiction bibliography key authors benchmark books with annotations and core collections It is destined to become the nonfiction bible for readers advisory and collection development helping librarians library workers and patrons select great reading from the entire library collection

*Believing* Michael McGuire,2013-09-10 A new book about brain chemistry neural systems and the formation of beliefs from the scientist who brought to light serotonin s many crucial roles in human behavior Beliefs What are they How have evolution and culture led to a brain that is seemingly committed to near endless belief creation And once established why are most beliefs so difficult to change Believing offers answers to these questions from the perspective of a leading neuroscientist and expert in brain behavior research Combining personal anecdotes and the latest research Dr



McGuire takes the novel approach of focusing on the central and critical role of brain systems and the ways in which they interact with the environment to create and maintain beliefs This approach yields some surprising and counterintuitive conclusions The brain is designed for belief creation and acceptance It is biased in favor of its own beliefs and is highly insensitive to disconfirming evidence It prefers beliefs that are pleasurable and rewarding to those that are unfavorable Beliefs are afterthoughts of unperceived brain activities they don't cause behavior Our consciousness has minimal influence on the neural systems that create beliefs Based on these observations McGuire concludes that for the foreseeable future people will continue to hold a multitude of beliefs many of them intransigent      *Mathematics & Common Sense* Philip J. Davis, 2006-11-30 From the Preface This book is addressed to all who are curious about the nature of mathematics and its role in society It is neither a text book nor a specialists book It consists of a number of loosely linked essays that may be read independently and for which I have tried to provide a leitmotif by throwing light on the relationship between mathematics and common sense In these essays I hope to foster a critical attitude towards both the existence of common sense in mathematics and the ambiguous role that it can play      *The Wonder of the Universe* Karl W. Giberson, 2012-04-07 Like detectives sleuthing out the greatest mystery of all scientists over the centuries have uncovered clues about the structure and origins of the universe The work of Galileo Newton Einstein and a host of other tenacious researchers and thinkers reveals a cosmos of almost unimaginable wonder and beauty If we then honestly follow the evidence of science wherever it leads where do we end up Karl Giberson takes us on a fascinating guided tour of planets and protons galaxies and gamma rays We discover that if gravity were slightly stronger neutrons a tiny bit lighter the size of our sun somewhat larger or a dozen other factors altered by fractions there would be no life The author shows that for many observers even those who do not embrace religious faith all of this looks suspiciously like the expression of a grand plan a cosmic architecture capable of both supporting life such as ours and inspiring observers like us to seek out hints of a creator Join this cosmic expedition and discover the wonder of it all      **Nature** Sir Norman Lockyer, 2007

The Top Books of the Year The Grand Contraption The World As Myth Number And Chance The year 2023 has witnessed a remarkable surge in literary brilliance, with numerous captivating novels captivating the hearts of readers worldwide. Lets delve into the realm of bestselling books, exploring the fascinating narratives that have enthralled audiences this year. The Grand Contraption The World As Myth Number And Chance : Colleen Hoover's "It Ends with Us" This heartfelt tale of love, loss, and resilience has gripped readers with its raw and emotional exploration of domestic abuse. Hoover skillfully weaves a story of hope and healing, reminding us that even in the darkest of times, the human spirit can prevail. Uncover the Best : Taylor Jenkins Reid's "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" This intriguing historical fiction novel unravels the life of Evelyn Hugo, a Hollywood icon who defies expectations and societal norms to pursue her dreams. Reid's compelling storytelling and compelling characters transport readers to a bygone era, immersing them in a world of glamour, ambition, and self-discovery. Discover the Magic : Delia Owens' "Where the Crawdads Sing" This captivating coming-of-age story follows Kya Clark, a young woman who grows up alone in the marshes of North Carolina. Owens crafts a tale of resilience, survival, and the transformative power of nature, entrancing readers with its evocative prose and mesmerizing setting. These top-selling novels represent just a fraction of the literary treasures that have emerged in 2023. Whether you seek tales of romance, adventure, or personal growth, the world of literature offers an abundance of captivating stories waiting to be discovered. The novel begins with Richard Papen, a bright but troubled young man, arriving at Hampden College. Richard is immediately drawn to the group of students who call themselves the Classics Club. The club is led by Henry Winter, a brilliant and charismatic young man. Henry is obsessed with Greek mythology and philosophy, and he quickly draws Richard into his world. The other members of the Classics Club are equally as fascinating. Bunny Corcoran is a wealthy and spoiled young man who is always looking for a good time. Charles Tavis is a quiet and reserved young man who is deeply in love with Henry. Camilla Macaulay is a beautiful and intelligent young woman who is drawn to the power and danger of the Classics Club. The students are all deeply in love with Morrow, and they are willing to do anything to please him. Morrow is a complex and mysterious figure, and he seems to be manipulating the students for his own purposes. As the students become more involved with Morrow, they begin to commit increasingly dangerous acts. The Secret History is a brilliant and thrilling novel that will keep you guessing until the very end. The novel is a cautionary tale about the dangers of obsession and the power of evil.

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