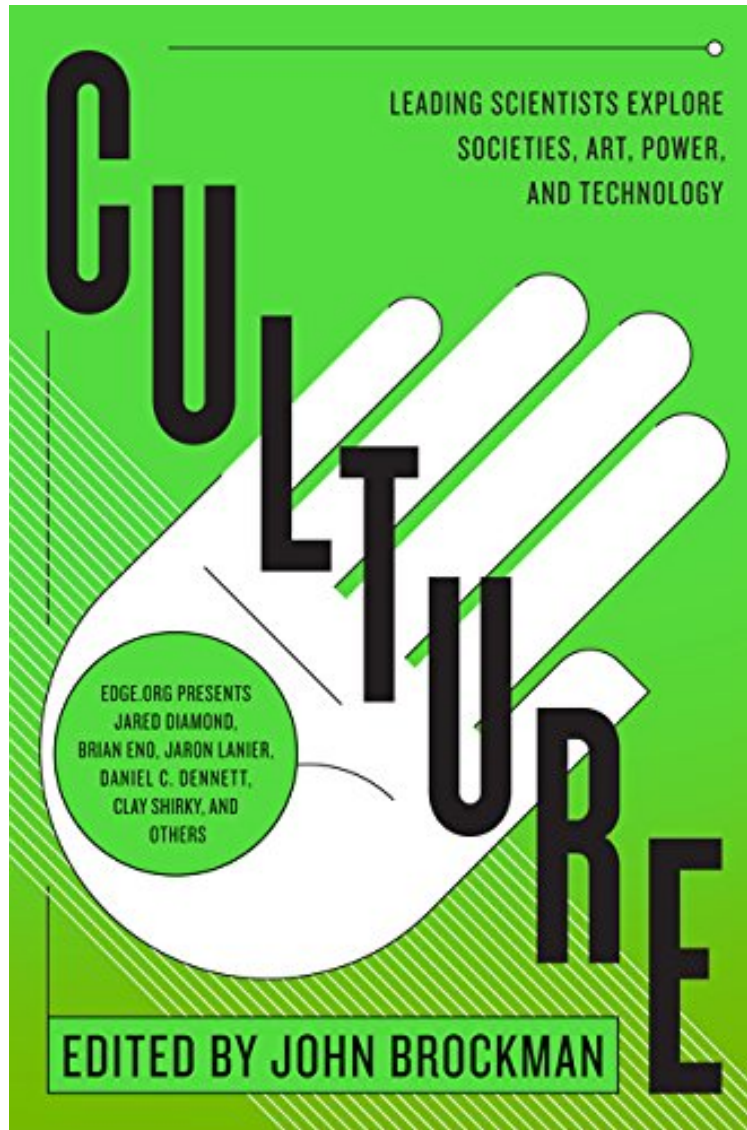


[Mobile book] Culture: Leading Scientists Explore Societies, Art, Power, and Technology (Best of Edge Series)

## Culture: Leading Scientists Explore Societies, Art, Power, and Technology (Best of Edge Series)

*John Brockman*

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**John Brockman : Culture: Leading Scientists Explore Societies, Art, Power, and Technology (Best of Edge Series)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Culture: Leading Scientists Explore Societies, Art, Power, and Technology (Best of Edge Series):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Few Standouts and DullBy Book SharkCulture: Leading Scientists Explore Civilizations, Art, Networks, Reputation, and the Online Revolution Edited by John BrockmanCulture is a thought-provoking book of scientific essays brought to you by The Edge. The Edge is an organization that presents original ideas by today's leading thinkers from a wide spectrum of scientific fields. For this second volume, scholars from various fields explore new ways of thinking about culture. This interesting 307-page book includes the following seventeen chapters/essays: 1. The Evolution of Culture, 2. Why Do Some Societies Make Disastrous Decisions?, 3. Art and Human Reality, 4. A Big Theory of Culture, 5. We Are As Gods and Have to Get Good at It, 6. Turings Cathedral, 7. Time to Start Taking the Internet Seriously, 8. Indirect Reciprocity, Assessment Hardwiring, and Reputation, 9. Digital Maoism, 10. On Jaron Laniers Digital Maoism An Edge Conversation, 11. Social Networks Are Like the Eye, 12. The Next Renaissance, 13. Digital Power and Its Discontents, 14. Does Technology Evolve?, 15. Aristotle, 16. The Pancake People vs. the Godel-To-Google Net, and 17. The Age of the Informavore.

Positives: 1. High-quality essays. 2. The fascinating topic of culture from various intellectual perspectives. 3. The four parallel levels of memetic selection in human culture. 4. Jared Diamond provides one of the best essays in the book. Causes for societal collapse. First of all, a group may fail to anticipate a problem before the problem actually arrives. Second, when the problem arrives, the group may fail to perceive the problem. Then, after they perceive the problem, they may fail even to try to solve the problem. Finally, they may try to solve it but may fail in their attempts to do so. 5. A Darwinian explanation explained in three factors: pleasure, universality, and spontaneity of the arts. 6. Provides a big theory about culture. 7. An interesting look at climate change and why China has the potential of taking the lead in this effort. 8. A fascinating narrative on Alan Turings vision of a digital world and John von Neumanns proposal for it. 9. Some interesting observations of the internet. The Internet today is, after all, a machine for reinforcing our prejudices. The wider the selection of information, the more finicky we can be about choosing just what we like and ignoring the rest. 10. The impact of fairness and reciprocity. There are many experiments that show that spontaneous impulses like the tendency for fairness or acts of sympathy or generosity play a huge role in human life. 11. Jaron Laniers impactful essay, Digital Maoism: The Hazards of the New Online Collectivism serves as a centerpiece of discussions revolving around Wikipedia. Interesting exchanges including inputs from the cofounders of Wiki. Wikipedia isnt great because its like Britannica. Britannica is great at being authoritative, edited, expensive, and monolithic. Wikipedia is great at being free, brawling, universal, and instantaneous. 12. Provocative statements. Were bad futurists, we humans. Were bad at predicting what will be important and useful tomorrow. We think the telephone will be best used to bring opera to Americas living rooms. We set out nobly to make TV into an educational medium. We create functional hypertext to facilitate the sharing of draft physics papers. 13. A look at social networks. 14. Practical examples provided. This is the difference between ideology and norms. People see these images of supermodels, but they might be less influenced by them than by the actions and appearance of the people immediately around them. 15. So what is the next renaissance? Find out. A good essay on the topic. 16. Internet freedom and global politics. Quite revealing as it applies today. 17. An interesting look at the knowledge web. Different ways of learning.

Negatives: 1. Not quite as polished as the more recent Edge books but always worth reading. 2. It doesnt flow quite as well as I would like. Not as focused as it should be. 3. A little dated, some ideas presented here have been updated. 4. Spends too much time going over Wikipedia. 5. Limited coverage of culture in terms of variety and scope. 6. Not as enjoyable as I had hoped for. 7. I like Dr. Dennett as a philosopher but his writing style is dull.

In summary, the Edge series of provocative books are always worth reading. This book however wasnt quite as enjoyable as subsequent books in the series. The essays didnt flow together as well and leaves a lot of culture out. Good to average essays, read if you are interested in culture.

Further recommendations: This Explains Everything, This Will Make You Smarter and This Will Change Everything edited by the same author, John Brockman.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy Ronald F. Varied and interesting from start to finish. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Keep going Big John!By YukiOI have many of Brockman's books. They stretch the mind and keep us on the cutting "edge."

"The way Brockman interlaces essays about research on the frontiers of science with ones on artistic vision, education, psychology and economics is sure to buzz any brain." Chicago Sun-Times, on This Will Change Everything

Launching a hard-hitting new series from Edge.org and Harper Perennial, editor John Brockman delivers this cutting-edge master class covering everything you need to know about Culture. With original contributions by the worlds leading thinkers and scientists, including Jared Diamond, Daniel C. Dennett, Brian Eno, Jaron Lanier, Nicholas Christakis, and others, Culture offers a mind-expanding primer on a fundamental topic. Unparalleled in scope, depth, insight and quality, Edge.orgs Culture is not to be missed.

From the Back Cover Why do civilizations rise and fall? What are the origins and purpose of art? How does technology shape society? Did culture direct human evolution? Is the Internet an agent of democracy or dictatorships? An immensely powerful but little-understood force that impacts society, art, politics, and even human biological development, culture is the very stage on which human experience plays out. But what is it, exactly? What are its rules and origins? In this fascinating volume, John Brockman, editor and publisher of Edge, presents short, accessible

explorations of cultures essential aspects, by today's most influential scientists and thinkers. Contributors and topics include Jared Diamond on why societies collapse and how we can make better decisions to protect our own future Denis Dutton on the origins of art Daniel C. Dennett on the evolution of cultures Jaron Lanier on the ominous impact of the Internet Nicholas Christakis on the structure and rules of social networks, both real and online Clay Shirky and Evgeny Morozov on the new political reality of the digital era Brian Eno on what cultures value Stewart Brand on the responsibilities of human power Douglas Rushkoff on the next Renaissance W. Daniel Hillis on the Net as a global knowledge web About the Author The publisher of the online science salon Edge.org, John Brockman is the editor of Know This, This Idea Must Die, This Explains Everything, This Will Make You Smarter, and other volumes.