



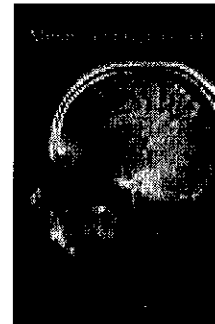
Curious Obsessions in the History of Science and Spirituality

Rachel Kohn, ABC Books, \$32.95

Radio National presenter Rachel Kohn looks at extraordinary and disastrous episodes that continue to exert impacts today. Many of these relate to religious incidents, such as a monk who kept banned books under the nose of the Pope.

However, there is also plenty of science stemming from strange manias. Just as new lands were discovered by explorers seeking the lost 10 tribes of Israel in unlikely places, science has sometimes progressed as a result of spectacularly wrong beliefs.

On the other hand, Kohn also considers a doctor and a monk who intuited the truth long before science could prove them right.



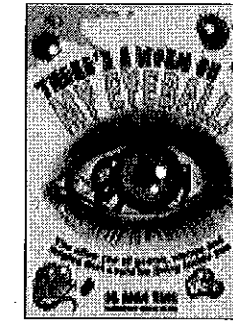
Minds and Computers: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence

Matt Carter, Edinburgh University Press, \$55.95

Monash University philosopher Matt Carter asks whether it is possible for a computer to have a mind. The idea that a computer might be

programmed to have a mind like ours has motivated a dedicated research tradition. However, for Carter it raises the fundamental philosophical issue of just what minds are and whether they are the kind of thing a computational device could have.

Minds and Computers also provides an introduction to computational theory, linguistics, psychology and neuroscience, giving readers the chance to reach an informed conclusion as to whether artificial intelligence as portrayed in science fiction films and books is really possible.



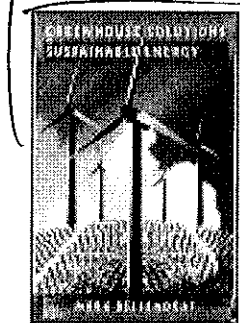
There's a Worm on My Eyeball

Adam Taor, Random House Australia, \$14.95

For children wanting an excuse to take a sickie from school, this book provides a guide to some of the contagious bacteria, viruses and worms that can take up residence inside the human body.

The title comes from the African eye worm, which reveals itself by squirming across the host's eyeball, but there are plenty of other tales, including light-emitting bacteria that infect cuts and 10-metre long beef tapeworms.

Taor has a column on health science in *The Weekend Australian*, from which this book has sprung.



Greenhouse Solutions with Sustainable Energy

Mark Diesendorf, UNSW Press, \$49.95

Slashing Australia's greenhouse emissions does not require the development of new technologies or the adoption of nuclear power, Diesendorf argues. Renewable energy technologies already in existence can,

with only small improvements, meet our energy needs.

According to Diesendorf, the claim made by Federal Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull that "you cannot run a modern economy on wind farms and solar panels" is simply wrong, at least if other renewable technologies are added to the mix.

Diesendorf, a senior lecturer in ecologically sustainable development at the University of NSW, claims that government relationships with carbon dioxide-producing industries have blinded it to the potential of alternative technologies, while subsidies for the same polluters are the major obstacle preventing clean technologies from competing.

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