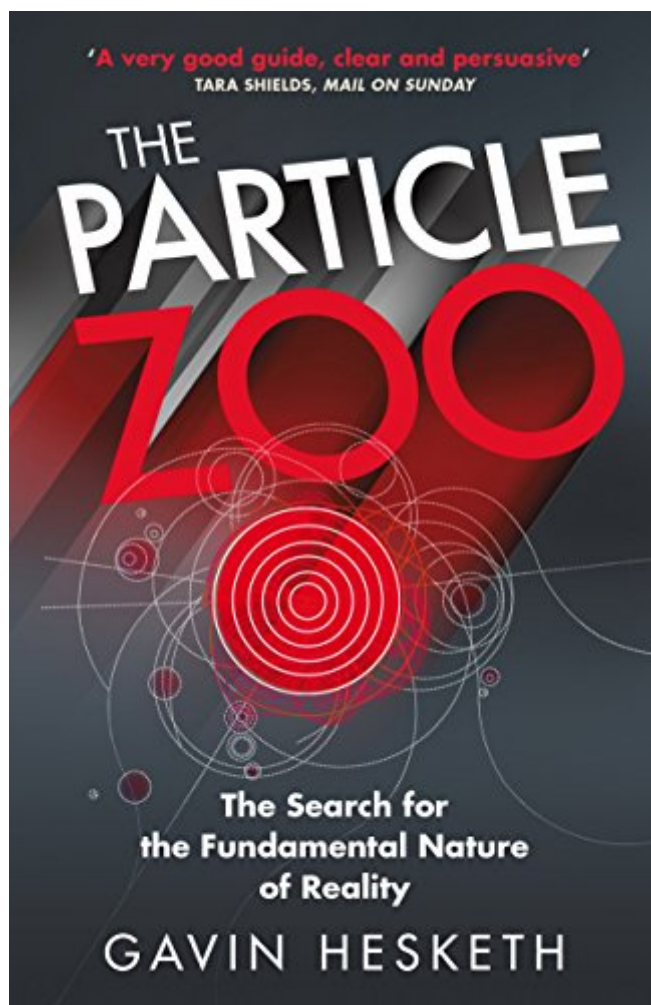


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The Particle Zoo: The Search For The Fundamental Nature Of Reality



Synopsis

What is everything really made of? If we split matter down into smaller and infinitesimally smaller pieces, where do we arrive? At the Particle Zoo - the extraordinary subatomic world of antimatter, ghostly neutrinos, strange-flavoured quarks and time-travelling electrons, gravitons and glueballs, mindboggling eleven-dimensional strings and the elusive Higgs boson itself. Be guided around this strangest of zoos by Gavin Hesketh, experimental particle physicist at humanity's greatest experiment, the Large Hadron Collider. Concisely and with a rare clarity, he demystifies how we are uncovering the inner workings of the universe and heading towards the next scientific revolution. Why are atoms so small? How did the Higgs boson save the universe? And is there a Theory of Everything? The Particle Zoo answers these and many other profound questions, and explains the big ideas of Quantum Physics, String Theory, The Big Bang and Dark Matter... and, ultimately, what we know about the true, fundamental nature of reality.

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Customer Reviews

My understanding of particle physics is pretty limited -- whatever I retained from high school and a few random books and articles since then. The ones I've read (that were written for lay readers) were interesting but I always reached a point of no return in the book, where I lost what was going

on and never found it again. The Particle Zoo is very different. I can't say I understood absolutely everything, but I feel like I got a lot of it and learned a ton. Most of that I attribute to Hesketh's writing style. He works on the ATLAS project at CERN, and if you've ever wanted to just pick the brain of a super smart person who does fascinating work, that's what his book feels like. It's very conversational but never feels dumbed-down or glossed-over. And in addition to learning about the Standard Model, I enjoyed the other areas of focus -- how the LHC works, what other theories are out there, and what's on the horizon. It's obvious that Hesketh loves his work and the topic, and that energy is fully conserved in his writing (haha). Highly recommended.

Hawking said in "Brief History.." that Man no longer needs philosophy as physics has moved much further and much faster to answering the important questions of understanding the nature of existence. Probably true, but he lost me in the latter chapters. Hesketh presents the best model we have for how our universe is configured, in terms that all readers will understand to some extent. His use of real world analogies and metaphors reduces the most complex of current physics thinking to understandable basic concepts that we can all appreciate, without getting lost in the more technical jargon. Having said that, keep the classification of the zoo particles (that is presented at the beginning of the book) readily accessible, as you probably have to remind yourself what is what from time to time. This is a brilliant book, that empowers all of us to appreciate the benefits of multi-national investment in Centres of Learning Excellence, like CERN. Miss the chance to read it and you are the loser!

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