

remarkable dissociations that can exist between an individual's understanding of the world and his or her ability to produce complex language. *Laura* provides the kind of detailed evidence in both linguistic and cognitive domains that will help to build those better theories.

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Social Impressions

Interpersonal Perception. EDWARD E. JONES. Freeman, New York, 1990. xvi, 313 pp., illus. \$29.95; paper, \$18.95. A Series of Books in Psychology.

"There is more to seeing," the aphorism goes, "than meets the eyeball." Edward E. Jones's *Interpersonal Perception* seeks to show us how much more there is, particularly when what we are seeing is other people. It is a fascinating volume, one that seems simultaneously aimed at three audiences. For each, it should prove a different book; for each, it should prove a valuable book.

A first audience for Jones is the intelligent layperson. For this reader, *Interpersonal Perception* is designed as an introduction to a field of research that has become one of the half-dozen major topics defining the field of social psychology in recent years. The central question that Jones's book addresses is how we come to know, or think we know, what another person is *really* like. When we perceive another person, we typically come away not just with an idea of that person's size, shape, color, and the like; we also, almost inevitably, have beliefs about what that person is like inside—beliefs about that person's underlying intentions, dispositions, preferences, and attributes.

For this first audience, the very fact that we automatically reach such conclusions and the processes by which we do so are the subjects of Jones's selective survey of this field. Although Jones does describe the actual research from which his conclusions derive in some detail, this work is presented in the form of a narrative designed to be accessible to readers without strong backgrounds in psychology. Jones tells the story of his field with charm and grace.

A second audience for this volume is Jones's professional colleagues. For this group, the book serves as an intellectual autobiography, presenting the history of Jones's own central involvement in this field of research (indeed, in making this a significant "field of research") for more than 40 years. Although, as Jones himself notes, he

was not actually "there at the beginning," he was there close to it. Both Jones's own career and the current book begin with the 1957 Harvard symposium that first led to the recognition of a coherent and substantial field of social psychology concerned with "person perception."

For this second audience, the heart of Jones's account is the progression of his own seminal work and its links to other important landmarks in the field. The result is a portrait of the artist that makes clear the coherence underlying Jones's many distinctive research endeavors in a way individual research accounts typically do not. Three characteristics of this portrait, three recurrent themes, stand out.

First, Jones chose from the start to define the central question of person perception as one of understanding intentional action and the inferences people draw about underlying dispositions, attitudes, and capabilities from those actions—a question that serves to focus attention on the uniquely social aspects of interpersonal perception. Hence, the correspondence between overt actions and covert characteristics necessarily becomes a central theoretical issue. Second, Jones also focused quite early on the manner in which social perception processes are deeply dependent on individuals' goals in particular settings. Thus, Jones was one of the first to highlight the sometimes powerful conflict between people's desire to perceive their social world accurately and their desire to perceive their social world as they would like it to be or in ways that make them feel good about themselves—the tension between effective reality-testing and successful wish-fulfillment. Third, Jones also chose from the outset to stress the interpersonal character of social perception. Interpersonal perception is necessarily a process that takes place primarily in contexts in which individuals are simultaneously perceivers of others and ob-

jects of others' perceptions. In such an account, potentially competing motives and the manner in which we cope with such conflicts ourselves and analyze them in others assume importance.

From these three central choices comes the rich array of problems that Jones has addressed over the years and discusses in this volume. These include the study of ingratiation and its surprisingly powerful effects even on forewarned targets, research on the proverbial "rocky [inferential] road" from actions to dispositions, analyses of the different goals and perspectives of "actors" versus "observers," and work on the psychological impact of stigma. Jones is a master of the technique of moving back and forth between the study of phenomena of interest that imply new processes and the study of processes of interest that imply new phenomena.

Finally, a third potential audience for this volume is the beginning student in psychology. For this last group, Jones's book can be seen as a loving exposition by example of the art of classical experimental social psychology. The book is filled with excellent illustrations of experiments that "tell a story" about people's reactions to experimental situations carefully crafted to involve participants in meaningful social interactions, albeit within a laboratory context. In an era in which social psychologists all too frequently ply their trade "hypothetically," assessing participants' reactions to verbal descriptions of persons and situations, Jones's insistence on the study of real people in real social interactions and his focus on the uniquely social and interactive nature of interpersonal perception provide a refreshing reminder of the power of the classic experimental approach to social psychology.

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Books Reviewed in Science 18 May 1990 Through 10 May 1991

ADP-Ribosylating Toxins and G Proteins, J. Moss and M. Vaughan, Eds., 9 Nov. 1990, 841
The Age of Reptiles, V. Scully et al., 15 Feb. 1991, 814
American Science Policy Since World War II, B. L. R. Smith, 11 Jan. 1991, 210
The American Synthetic Rubber Research Program, P. J. T. Morris, 18 May 1990, 892

American Warblers, D. H. Morse, 18 May 1990, 901
Analogies Between Analogies, A. R. Bednarek and F. Ulam, Eds., 29 June 1990, 1670
The Ants, B. Hölldobler and E. O. Wilson, 18 May 1990, 897
Apprenticeship in Thinking, B. Rogoff, 10 Aug. 1990, 684

- Arms and the Enlisted Woman*, J. H. Stiehm, 7 Dec. 1990, 1455
- The Art of Measurement*, B. Kramer, Ed., 3 Aug. 1990, 572
- Arthropod Bioacoustics*, A. W. Ewing, 13 July 1990, 190
- Asteroids II*, R. P. Binzel *et al.*, Eds., 31 Aug. 1990, 1053
- Astronomy by Chance*, B. Lovell, 6 July 1990, 79
- The Astronomer's Universe*, H. Friedman, 21 Dec. 1990, 1758
- At the Heart of the Bomb*, D. Rosenthal, 26 Oct. 1990, 574
- Atomic Rivals*, B. Goldschmidt, 8 March 1991, 1257
- Auditory Scene Analysis*, A. S. Bregman, 22 March 1991, 1508
- Australian Ecosystems*, D. A. Saunders *et al.*, Eds., 18 Jan. 1991, 325
- Australian Tropical Rainforests*, L. J. Webb and J. Kikkawa, Eds., 26 April 1991, 588
- Authors of Their Own Lives*, B. M. Berger, Ed., 18 Jan. 1991, 324
- Bad Year Economics*, P. Halstead and J. O'Shea, Eds., 31 Aug. 1990, 1052
- Before Newton*, M. Feingold, Ed., 5 Oct. 1990, 143
- Behind the Factory Walls*, P. R. Lawrence *et al.*, 15 June 1990, 1428
- Biological Oceanography*, E. L. Mills, 18 May 1990, 902
- The Biology of Scorpions*, G. A. Polis, Ed., 7 Sept. 1990, 1176
- Bird Flight Performance*, C. J. Pennycuik, 22 June 1990, 1562
- Brain Circuits and Functions of the Mind*, C. Trevarthen, Ed., 7 Sept. 1990, 1175
- Brainstem Control of Wakefulness and Sleep*, M. Steriade and R. W. McCarley, 18 Jan. 1991, 326
- The Bureaucratic Labor Market*, T. A. DiPrete, 18 May 1990, 891
- The Burt Affair*, R. B. Joynson, 18 May 1990, 884
- The Cerebral Cortex of the Rat*, B. Kolb and R. C. Tees, Eds., 7 Dec. 1990, 1457
- Chandra*, K. C. Wali, 25 Jan. 1991, 455
- Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman*, A. Jayaraman, 3 Aug. 1990, 571
- The Charm of Physics*, S. L. Glashow, 19 April 1991, 454
- The Chemical Industry in the USSR*, M. J. Sagers and T. Shabad, 2 Nov. 1990, 700
- The Chinese of Early Tucson*, F. C. Lister and R. H. Lister, 18 May 1990, 908
- Citizen Scientist*, F. von Hippel, 19 April 1991, 454
- Cloth and Human Experience*, A. B. Weiner and J. Schneider, Eds., 28 Sept. 1990, 1588
- Cognitive Ethology*, C. A. Ristau, Ed., 15 Feb. 1991, 813
- The Collected Papers of Albert Einstein*, vol. 2, J. Stachel, Ed., 18 May 1990, 878
- Community Food Webs*, J. E. Cohen *et al.*, 8 Feb. 1991, 686
- Computing Before Computers*, W. Aspray, Ed., 29 June 1990, 1670
- Contrasts in Scientific Style*, J. S. Fruton, 8 Feb. 1991, 684
- Cooperative Breeding in Birds*, P. B. Stacey and W. D. Koenig, Eds., 30 Nov. 1990, 1282
- Culture, Control, and Commitment*, J. R. Lincoln and A. L. Kalleberg, 3 May 1991, 728
- The Decline and Fall of Hemispheric Specialization*, R. Efron, 1 Feb. 1991, 575
- The Deep Sea Bed*, N. Charnock *et al.*, Eds., 1 Feb. 1991, 576
- The Development of Newtonian Calculus in Britain, 1700–1800*, N. Guicciardini, 5 Oct. 1990, 144
- Developmental Biology of Fern Gametophytes*, V. Raghavan, 12 April 1991, 321
- Dirac*, H. Kragh, 24 Aug. 1990, 937
- The Diverted Dream*, S. Brint and J. Karabel, 21 Dec. 1990, 1755
- Dynamics of Dense Stellar Systems*, D. Merritt, Ed., 21 Sept. 1990, 1448
- The Early Universe*, E. W. Kolb and M. S. Turner, 17 Aug. 1990, 808
- The Earth's Climate and Variability of the Sun Over Recent Millennia*, J.-C. Pecker and S. K. Run-corn, Eds., 9 Nov. 1990, 841
- Ecological Concepts*, J. M. Cherret *et al.*, Eds., 12 Oct. 1990, 305
- Ecological Experiments*, N. G. Hairston, Sr., 14 Sept. 1990, 1313
- Ecology and Natural History of Tropical Bees*, D. W. Roubik, 25 May 1990, 1026
- The Ecology of Bird Communities*, J. A. Wiens, 21 Sept. 1990, 1449
- Edison and the Business of Innovation*, A. Millard, 25 Jan. 1991, 457
- Effective Care in Pregnancy and Childbirth*, I. Chalmers *et al.*, Eds., 15 Feb. 1991, 815
- Einstein and the History of General Relativity*, D. Howard and J. Stachel, Eds., 18 May 1990, 879
- Electric Fields in Vertebrate Repair*, R. B. Borgens *et al.*, 25 May 1990, 1027
- The Elements Beyond Uranium*, G. T. Seaborg and W. D. Loveland, 15 March 1991, 1374
- The Emergence of Bacterial Genetics*, T. D. Brock, 8 March 1991, 1258
- The Emperor's New Mind*, R. Penrose, 18 May 1990, 880
- Energy and Empire*, C. Smith and M. N. Wise, 18 May 1990, 875
- The Environmental Protection Agency*, M. K. Landy *et al.*, 18 May 1990, 895
- Evolution of Laurussia*, P. A. Ziegler, 5 Oct. 1990, 145
- The Evolution of Perissodactyls*, D. R. Prothero and R. B. Schoch, Eds., 18 May 1990, 899
- Evolution of the First Nervous System*, P. A. V. Anderson, Ed., 26 April 1991, 588
- Evolutionary Dynamics of a Natural Population*, B. R. Grant and P. R. Grant, 20 July 1990, 306
- Evolutionary Phenomena in Galaxies*, J. E. Beckman and B. E. J. Pagel, Eds., 80
- Evolutionary Trends*, K. J. McNamara, Ed., 15 March 1991, 1374
- Fields, Strings and Quantum Gravity*, H. Guo *et al.*, Eds., 30 Nov. 1990, 1285
- The Fifth Branch*, S. Jasanoff, 11 Jan. 1991, 210
- Flight Strategies of Migrating Hawks*, P. Kerlinger, 15 June 1990, 1429
- Food Hoarding in Animals*, S. B. Vander Wall, 12 Dec. 1990, 1602
- Fractional Statistics and Anyon Superconductivity*, F. Wilczek, 5 April 1991, 143
- A Fragile Power*, C. Mukerji, 18 May 1990, 872
- Freedom in Machinery*, vol. 2, J. Phillips, 21 Dec. 1990, 1757
- From Cologne to Chapel Hill*, E. L. Eliel, 12 Dec. 1990, 1601
- From Design to Discovery*, D. J. Cram, 12 Dec. 1990, 1601
- Frozen Fauna of the Mammoth Steppe*, R. D. Guthrie, 18 May 1990, 900
- A Functional Biology of Clonal Animals*, R. N. Hughes, 7 Dec. 1990, 1456
- Fundamentals of Molecular Evolution*, W.-H. Li and D. Crou, 10 May 1991, 864
- Genetic Data Analysis*, B. S. Weir, 26 Oct. 1990, 575
- Genome*, J. E. Bishop and M. Waldholz, 5 April 1991, 142
- German National Socialism and the Quest for Nuclear Power, 1939–1949*, M. Walker, 3 Aug. 1990, 570
- Gorda Ridge*, G. R. McMurray, Ed., 18 May 1990, 905
- A Guide to Effective Care in Pregnancy and Childbirth*, M. Enkin *et al.*, 15 Feb. 1991, 815
- Gunnar Myrdal and America's Conscience*, W. A. Jackson, 29 March 1991, 1621
- Headline News, Science Views*, D. Jarmul, Ed., 19 April 1991, 455
- The Higgs Hunter's Guide*, J. F. Gunion *et al.*, 1 March 1991, 1115
- The High-Status Track*, P. W. Kingston and L. S. Lewis, Eds., 21 Dec. 1990, 1754
- The Highlands Controversy*, D. R. Oldroyd, 30 Nov. 1990, 1284
- History of AIDS*, M. D. Grmek, 19 April 1991, 453
- A History of Archaeological Thought*, B. G. Trigger, 1 March 1991, 1116
- History of CERN*, vol. 2, A. Hermann *et al.*, 29 March 1991, 1622
- The History of Modern Mathematics*, D. E. Rowe and J. McCleary, Eds., 22 June 1990, 1561
- Horns, Pronghorns, and Antlers*, G. A. Bubenik and A. B. Bubenik, Eds., 7 Dec. 1990, 1458
- The Household Economy*, R. R. Wilk, Ed., 28 Sept. 1990, 1589
- How Monkeys See the World*, D. L. Cheney and R. M. Seyfarth, 1 Feb. 1991, 574
- The Impossible Science*, S. P. Turner and J. H. Turner, 16 Nov. 1990, 1020
- Innovating for Failure*, J. Hendry, 13 July 1990, 190
- Insect Defenses*, D. L. Evans and J. O. Schmidt, Eds., 3 May 1991, 730
- Intramolecular Motion and Chemical Reaction*, I. M. Mills *et al.*, Eds., 26 April 1991, 589
- Inventing for Fun and Profit*, J. Rabinow, 18 May 1990, 892
- The Invisible Work Force*, B. Lozano, 15 June 1990, 1428
- Job Queues, Gender Queues*, B. F. Reskin and P. A. Roos, 12 April 1991, 320
- The Kaiser's Chemists*, J. A. Johnson, 22 Feb. 1991, 957
- Knowledge, Culture, and Science in the Metropolis*, S. Baatz, 9 Nov. 1990, 840
- Land Filled with Flies*, E. N. Wilmsen, 18 May 1990, 905
- Landau*, I. M. Khalatnikov, Ed., 3 Aug. 1990, 571
- Langmuir-Blodgett Films*, G. Roberts, Ed., 20 July 1990, 305
- Large Marine Ecosystems*, L. M. Alexander and B. D. Gold, Eds., 15 March 1991, 1375
- Launching the Antibiotic Era*, C. L. Moberg and Z. A. Cohn, Eds., 29 March 1991, 1624
- Lawrence and His Laboratory*, J. L. Heilbron and R. W. Seidel, 18 May 1990, 874
- The Legacy of Chernobyl*, Zh. A. Medvedev, 14 Sept. 1990, 1312
- Leukocyte Adhesion Molecules*, T. A. Springer *et al.*, Eds., 1 June 1990, 1141
- Life History and Ecology of the Slider Turtle*, J. W. Gibbons, 23 Nov. 1990, 1164
- Making Connections*, C. Gilligan *et al.*, Eds., 4 Jan. 1991, 96
- Managing Industrial Enterprise*, W. D. Wray, Ed., 18 May 1990, 889
- Mapping Our Genes*, L. Wingerson, 5 April 1991, 142
- Mapping the Code*, J. Davis, 5 April 1991, 142
- Marmots*, D. P. Barash, 25 May 1990, 1025
- The Mathematics of Projectiles in Sport*, N. de Mestre, 21 Sept. 1990, 1447
- The Mechanics of Earthquakes and Faulting*, C. H. Scholz, 21 Dec. 1990, 1758
- Meiosis*, B. John, 25 Jan. 1991, 458

- Mental Imagery*, M. Rollins, 10 Aug. 1990, 685
- Mesoamerica After the Decline of Teotihuacan*, A. D. 700–900, R. A. Diehl and J. C. Berlo, Eds., 6 July 1990, 78
- Meterology in America, 1800–1870*, J. R. Fleming, 10 May 1991, 864
- The Milky Way as a Galaxy*, G. Gilmore et al., Eds., 1 Feb. 1991, 577
- Molecular Astrophysics*, T. W. Hartquist, Ed., 26 Oct. 1990, 576
- Molecular Biology of Aging*, C. E. Finch and T. E. Johnson, Eds., 22 March 1991, 1509
- Molecular Systematics*, D. M. Hillis and C. Moritz, Eds., 16 Nov. 1990, 1022
- Moments in the Life of a Scientist*, B. Rossi, 21 Dec. 1990, 1756
- Monte Verde*, T. D. Dillehay, 24 Aug. 1990, 937
- The Moon Illusion*, M. Hershenov, Ed., 28 Sept. 1990, 1590
- Morphogenesis*, J. Bard, 26 Oct. 1990, 574
- The Nature and Origin of Cordilleran Magmatism*, J. L. Anderson, Ed., 26 April 1991, 589
- Nature as the Laboratory*, E. Cittadino, 30 Nov. 1990, 1283
- Neotropical Rainforest Mammals*, L. H. Emmons, 12 April 1991, 322
- The Never-Ceasing Search*, F. O. Schmitt, 3 Aug. 1990, 571
- El Niño, La Niña, and the Southern Oscillation*, S. G. Philander, 18 May 1990, 904
- Oncogenes and the Molecular Origins of Cancer*, R. A. Weinberg, Ed., 7 Sept. 1990, 1177
- 100 Years of Gypsy Studies*, M. T. Salo, Ed., 17 Aug. 1990, 809
- Optics, Physiology and Vision*, S. P. McKee and K. Nakayama, Eds., 3 May 1991, 729
- Organic Superconductors*, T. Ishiguro and K. Yamaji, 31 Aug. 1990, 1053
- Origin of the Earth*, H. E. Newsom, 3 May 1991, 729
- Origins*, A. Lightman and R. Brawer, 25 Jan. 1991, 456
- Packrat Middens*, J. L. Betancourt et al., Eds., 16 Nov. 1990, 1021
- Parasite Communities*, G. W. Esch et al., Eds., 13 July 1990, 191
- Particle Physics and Inflationary Cosmology*, A. Linde, 16 Nov. 1990, 1021
- Patenting the Sun*, J. S. Smith, 9 Nov. 1990, 840
- Pattern Formation*, J. Frankel, 22 June 1990, 1562
- Peerless Science*, D. E. Chubin and E. J. Hackett, 11 Jan. 1991, 211
- The Pencil*, H. Petroski, 18 May 1990, 894
- Perspectives on Plant Competition*, J. B. Grace and D. Tilman, 31 Aug. 1990, 1054
- The Physical Basis of the Direction of Time*, H.-D. Zeh, 13 July 1990, 192
- Physical Chemistry from Ostwald to Pauling*, J. Servos, 10 May 1991, 863
- Physics and Chemistry of Crystalline Lithium Niobate*, A. M. Prokhorov and Y. S. Kuz'minov, 22 March 1991, 1510
- Pitldown*, F. Spencer, 23 Nov. 1990, 1162
- The Pitldown Papers 1908–1955*, F. Spencer, 23 Nov. 1990, 1162
- Pions to Quarks*, L. M. Brown et al., Eds., 27 July 1990, 426
- Polar Oceanography*, W. O. Smith, Jr., Ed., 8 Feb. 1991, 685
- The Politics of Evolution*, A. Desmond, 18 May 1990, 883
- Population Biology of Genes and Molecules*, N. Takahata and J. F. Crow, Eds., 5 Oct. 1990, 144
- Primate Visions*, D. Haraway, 18 May 1990, 886
- Principles of Mental Imagery*, R. A. Finke, 10 Aug. 1990, 685
- Productivity and American Leadership*, W. J. Baumol et al., 18 May 1990, 887
- Pure Food*, J. H. Young, 18 May 1990, 896
- The Quantum Physics of Atomic Frequency Standards*, J. Vanier and C. Audoin, 10 Aug. 1990, 685
- Radiation Biophysics*, E. L. Alpen, 25 Jan. 1991, 459
- Rainforests*, J. L. Castner, 12 April 1991, 322
- Ratio Scaling of Psychological Magnitude*, S. J. Bolanowski, Jr., and G. A. Gescheider, Eds., 8 March 1991, 1258
- Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution*, D. C. Lindberg and R. S. Westman, Eds., 12 Dec. 1990, 1600
- Recollections of My Life*, S. Ramón y Cajal, 3 Aug. 1990, 571
- Redirecting Science*, F. Aaserud, 8 Feb. 1991, 684
- Reflections on Liquid Helium*, E. L. Andronikashvili, 21 Sept. 1990, 1447
- Regional Perspectives on the Olmec*, R. J. Sharer and D. C. Grove, Eds., 1 June 1990, 1139
- The Restructuring of Physical Science in Europe and the United States, 1945–1960*, M. De Maria et al., Eds., 18 May 1990, 872
- Rheology of Solids and of the Earth*, S. Karato and M. Toriumi, Eds., 15 June 1990, 1430
- Rheostasis*, N. Mrosovsky, 19 April 1991, 453
- The Right Place at the Right Time*, J. D. Roberts, 12 Dec. 1990, 1601
- The Road from Los Alamos*, H. A. Bethe, 19 April 1991, 454
- Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever*, V. A. Harden, 22 March 1991, 1507
- Russian Psychology*, D. Joravsky, 18 May 1990, 881
- The Sanitarians*, J. Duffy, 20 July 1990, 305
- Scale and Scope*, A. D. Chandler, Jr., 29 June 1990, 1667
- Science and Cultural Crisis*, M. L. Walter, 15 Feb. 1991, 815
- Science and Russian Culture in an Age of Revolution*, K. E. Bailes, 14 Sept. 1990, 1312
- Science and the Navy*, H. M. Sapolsky, 17 Aug. 1990, 808
- Science and the Soviet Social Order*, L. R. Graham, Ed., 2 Nov. 1990, 699
- Science, Churchill, and Me*, H. Bondi, 3 Aug. 1990, 571
- Science, Technology, and Reparations*, J. Gimbel, 8 June 1990, 1241
- Science—The Endless Frontier* (reprint), V. Bush, 11 Jan. 1991, 210
- Seismic Tomography and Mantle Circulation*, R. K. O'Nions and B. Parsons, Eds., 1 June 1990, 1141
- Semelai Culture and Resin Technology*, R. Gianno, 17 Aug. 1990, 809
- SETI Pioneers*, D. W. Swift, 12 Oct. 1990, 303
- Setting Safety Standards*, R. E. Cheit, 1 March 1991, 1114
- Sex and Death in Protozoa*, G. Bell, 18 May 1990, 901
- Shaping Written Knowledge*, C. Bazerman, 18 May 1990, 877
- Sickness, Recovery, and Death*, J. C. Riley, 8 June 1990, 1241
- The Social Impact of the Chernobyl Disaster*, D. R. Marples, 14 Sept. 1990, 1312
- Social Insects*, W. Engels, Ed., 30 Nov. 1990, 1283
- Some Mathematical Questions in Biology*, 7 Dec. 1990, 1457
- Song Among the Ruins*, W. J. Schull, 3 Aug. 1990, 571
- Space Technology and Planetary Astronomy*, J. N. Tatarewicz, 22 Feb. 1991, 957
- Squid as Experimental Animals*, D. L. Gilbert et al., Eds., 4 Jan. 1991, 98
- Statistical Inference and Analysis*, R. A. Fisher, 5 April 1991, 143
- A Statistical Model*, S. E. Fienberg et al., Eds., 29 March 1991, 1623
- Storm and Cloud Dynamics*, W. R. Cotton and R. A. Anthes, 20 July 1990, 307
- The Story of Peking Man*, J. Lanpo and H. Weiwien, 7 Dec. 1990, 1456
- Stress Proteins in Biology and Medicine*, R. I. Morimoto et al., Eds., 3 Aug. 1990, 572
- The Superfluid Phases of Helium 3*, D. Vollhardt and P. Wölfle, 4 Jan. 1991, 97
- Supernovae*, A. G. Petschek, Ed., 2 Nov. 1990, 702
- The Taming of Chance*, I. Hacking, 15 March 1991, 1373
- Teaching the History of Science*, M. Shortland and A. Warwick, Eds., 8 June 1990, 1242
- Technical Workers in an Advanced Society*, S. Crawford, 25 May 1990, 1025
- Thalamic Oscillations and Signaling*, M. Steriade et al., 18 Jan. 1991, 326
- The Theory of Coherent Atomic Excitation*, B. W. Shore, 12 Dec. 1990, 1603
- Thirst and Sodium Appetite*, S. P. Grossman, 2 Nov. 1990, 701
- This Side Up*, R. Wall, 1 March 1991, 1115
- Time, Energy, and Stone Tools*, R. Torrence, Ed., 1 June 1990, 1140
- Toward a More Exact Ecology*, P. J. Grubb and J. B. Whittaker, Eds., 12 Oct. 1990, 305
- Traité de Zoologie*, tome 5, fasc. 4, K. Mangold, Ed., 18 May 1990, 898
- The Transformation of Corporate Control*, N. Fligstein, 9 Nov. 1990, 839
- Trends in Theoretical Physics*, vol. 1, P. J. Ellis and Y. C. Tang, Eds., 30 Nov. 1990, 1284
- The Triune Brain in Evolution*, P. D. MacLean, 12 Oct. 1990, 303
- Tula of the Toltecs*, D. M. Healan, Ed., 6 July 1990, 78
- Unified Theories of Cognition*, A. Newell, 1 Feb. 1991, 575
- Universities and the Military*, D. A. Wilson, Ed., 18 May 1990, 870
- Use of X-Ray Crystallography in the Design of Antiviral Agents*, W. G. Laver and G. M. Air, Eds., 7 Sept. 1990, 1176
- The Vertebrate Olfactory System*, N. Halász, 12 April 1991, 321
- A Very Decided Preference*, J. Medawar, 3 Aug. 1990, 571
- A Victorian Earl in the Arctic*, S. Krech III, 18 May 1990, 907
- Vision and the Emergence of Meaning*, A. Dunlea, 29 June 1990, 1669
- Where the Truth Lies*, J. Sapp, 23 Nov. 1990, 1163
- Women of Science*, G. Kass-Simon and P. Farnes, Eds., 27 July 1990, 427

Omissions from 1990 Index

- Continental Flood Basalts*, J. D. Macdougall, Ed., 12 May 1989, 721
- Evaporite Sedimentology*, J. K. Warren, 12 May 1989, 721
- Evaporites and Hydrocarbons*, B. C. Schreiber, Ed., 12 May 1989, 721
- Nuts and Bolts of the Past*, D. F. Hawke, 12 May 1989, 720
- Otto Folin*, S. Meites, 12 May 1989, 719