

about acquisition dates raise the question of whether museums should risk displaying such remains, or use replicas instead. We have repatriated human remains to communities in Australia and New Zealand and are in the process of transferring all unprovenanced remains to a licensed teaching collection.

The display of specimens of endangered species also raises problems. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species restricts the commercial use of such material, and this includes their use in museums or one-off events for which admission is charged, or the featuring of listed animals in filming. We must carefully consider which specimens are used for such events.

We hope that the Grant Museum will become a space where the public, students and academics alike can use objects to tackle big questions in the life sciences and engage with the way museums work. Interactive labels, accessed on iPads located next to the exhibits, pose provocative questions, such as whether animal and human remains should be treated any differently. Visitors can respond using the iPads or smartphones, Twitter or home computers. Questions may be crowd-sourced in future, opening up the potential for the public to curate museum displays.

Like our much larger cousins, London's Natural History Museum or the American Museum of Natural History in New York, the Grant Museum is a working institution, where the collections are accessed constantly and real science is done. University research will be showcased by encouraging artists and scientists to co-curate designated cases or art installations using the collections. And discussions, teaching and debates will take place in a space in the centre of the displays. The museum staff will also be accessible so that visitors can ask questions.

The redisplay of the Grant Museum had to be done quickly and cheaply in comparison to typical museum redispays: UCL footed the £326,000 (US\$530,000) bill. This imposed constraints but also brought benefits: no need to satisfy external funders, no problem with last-minute changes. This museum-cum-lab is a work in progress and we will no doubt struggle with stretched budgets. But if we can continue to find new ways to engage researchers, students and visitors with the collections, the Grant Museum should continue to evolve and thrive, at 184 years old and counting. ■

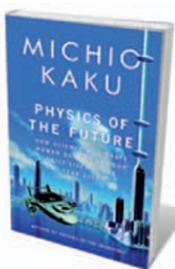
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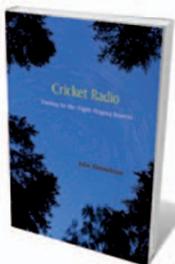
Books in brief



Physics of the Future: How Science Will Shape Human Destiny and Our Daily Lives by the Year 2100

Michio Kaku DOUBLEDAY 416 pp. \$28.95 (2011)

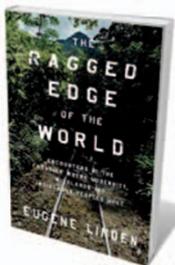
What will the world be like in the year 2100? Full of new life forms, emotional robots and antimatter rockets, according to string theorist and author Michio Kaku. Limiting himself to extensions of current technology, he synthesizes the ideas of 300 experts in diverse fields from neuroscience to nanotechnology. Whereas researchers expect predictions such as limitless computing and synthetic organisms to be fulfilled, others, such as prolific space travel, will be harder to pull off.



Cricket Radio: Tuning In the Night-Singing Insects

John Himmelman BELKNAP PRESS 272 pp. \$22.95 (2011)

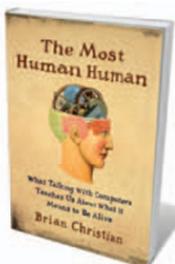
Warm summer nights resonate with the chirruping of crickets and other night-singing insects. Amateur naturalist and writer John Himmelman seeks to reconnect us to these often-unseen musical creatures by mingling tales of his own searches for grasshoppers, cicadas and katydids with the latest professional research investigating why and how they sing, to attract mates and ward off predators. Himmelman collects the sounds of cricket calls on a website that accompanies the book (see go.nature.com/czodcg).



The Ragged Edge of the World: Encounters at the Frontier Where Modernity, Wildlands, and Indigenous Peoples Meet

Eugene Linden VIKING 272 pp. \$26.95 (2011)

In 40 years of reporting, environmental journalist Eugene Linden has witnessed great changes to swathes of the globe. Dense forests in New Guinea and Borneo have been opened up for timber and minerals; tourism has invaded remote areas such as Machu Picchu in Peru and the Antarctic. Linden calls for the expansion of ecological corridors and 'peace parks' to help species adapt to globalization and combat exploitation of the environment by the increasing human population.



The Most Human Human: What Talking with Computers Teaches Us About What It Means to Be Alive

Brian Christian DOUBLEDAY 320 pp. \$27.95 (2011)

When it comes to good conversation, humans are usually better than a machine. Why artificial intelligence so often fails to live up to our emotional expectations, and what that tells us about being human, is the focus of science writer and poet Brian Christian's book. He relates what it was like to take part in a Turing test, which pitted him against a computer in an anonymous chat with a third-party judge in 2009, and the lengths to which he went to make sure that a human won.



Technological Nature: Adaptation and the Future of Human Life

Peter H. Kahn MIT PRESS 240 pp. \$24.95 (2011)

From watching wildlife documentaries to stalking animals with video cameras, we increasingly interact with nature through technology. After studying people's responses to real-time broadcasts of natural scenes and their play with robotic pets, psychologist Peter Kahn concludes that exposure to digital nature is better than having no natural experience at all. But, he finds, you cannot beat the real thing, arguing that we should view this 'technological nature' as a bonus rather than as a substitute for tangible natural wonders.