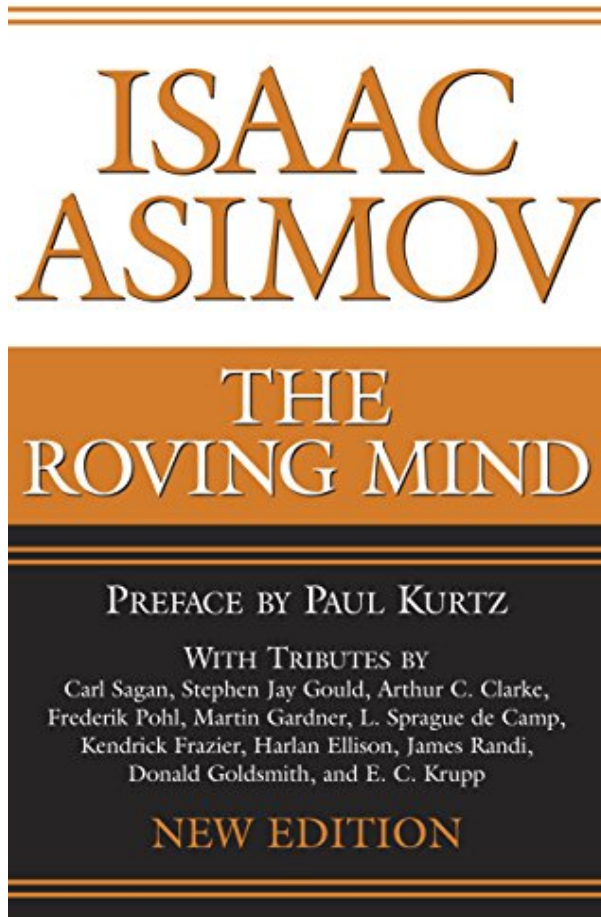


THE ROVING MIND BY ISAAC ASIMOV



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ISAAC ASIMOV

THE ROVING MIND

PREFACE BY PAUL KURTZ

WITH TRIBUTES BY

Carl Sagan, Stephen Jay Gould, Arthur C. Clarke,
Frederik Pohl, Martin Gardner, L. Sprague de Camp,
Kendrick Frazier, Harlan Ellison, James Randi,
Donald Goldsmith, and E. C. Krupp

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Review

"Want to encourage your offspring to pursue a career in science? Buy them this book." -- Midwest Book Review

The book remains as edifying as ever, and as deserving of a place in every school library in the nation. -- Analog, Tom Easton

From the Back Cover

Isaac Asimov's death on April 6, 1992, was a great loss to literature, science, and free thought. The vision of one of America's most prolific authors is unmatched today, and his pointed honesty shines through in this fascinating collection of essays, now reissued in this special tribute edition.

Asimov demonstrates his extraordinary skill at disseminating knowledge from across the scientific disciplines as his "roving mind" ranges from the polemical to the persuasive, from the speculative to the realistic. The sixty-two essays in this volume include such subjects as creationism, the distinction between real science and pseudoscience, censorship, the population explosion, technophobia, the social consequences of technological progress, cloning, the possibility of contacting extraterrestrial life, and the wonders of the cosmos. There are also thoughts on his style of writing, stories about his personal life, and recollections of family history--all written in the clear and elegant prose for which Asimov was noted.

About the Author

Isaac Asimov, author of the Foundation trilogy and many other novels, was one of the great SF writers of the 20th century, and his hundreds of books introduced many thousands of readers to science fiction. Born in Brooklyn, he lived in Boston and in New York City for most of his life.

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Isaac Asimov, author of the Foundation trilogy and many other novels, was one of the great SF writers of the 20th century, and his hundreds of books introduced many thousands of readers to science fiction. Born in Brooklyn, he lived in Boston and in New York City for most of his life.

Most helpful customer reviews

45 of 46 people found the following review helpful.

Worth the purchase

By Georgiaboy

I highly recommend this book, and I'm a cop. Which basically means I'm not that bright, and even I could comprehend this book.

Asimov is easy to read and understand. He takes complicated issues, and simplifies them. He possess a brilliant mind, and views the world from a different perspective than most other humans. As I read this collection of essays, I found myself time and time again saying, "that's so true, why didn't I think of that". It's an enlightening book, a good read, and it's cheap.

I highly recommend it.

42 of 43 people found the following review helpful.

The definitive antidote for pseudoscience

By Dr. William R. Harwood

No intelligent person needs to be told (surely?) that Isaac Asimov's name on a book is a guarantee of excellence. And most are aware that Asimov's science essays (62 in this collection) cover the multitude and variety of subjects that Robert Heinlein had in mind when he coined the word "synthesist." So instead of trying to gild fine gold or paint the lily, I will simply reproduce Asimov's words on three of the issues he discusses.

On religious doublethink: "If there is an earthquake and a thousand people die, and one person is uncovered in a ruined house, unhurt, the Moral Majority types cry, 'A miracle!' and fall to their knees in gratitude. And the thousand who died, whose deaths, indeed, were necessary to convert the one survivor into a miracle, what of them?"

On overpopulation: "Motherhood is a privilege that we must literally ration, for children, if produced indiscriminately, will be the death of the human race; and any woman who deliberately has more than two children is committing a crime against humanity."

On skepticism: "I believe evidence. I believe observation, measurement and reasoning, confirmed by independent observers. I'll believe anything, no matter how wild or ridiculous, if there is evidence for it. The wilder and more ridiculous something is, however, the firmer and more solid the evidence will have to be."

Other topics to which Asimov devotes essays include resurrected gods, creationism's demand to be taught in public schools, argument from consensus, scientific illiteracy in politics, sexual equality, pollution, and hyperspace ("There is no evidence for its existence").

Want to encourage your offspring to pursue a career in science? Buy them this book.

(see my unabridged review in A Humanist in the Bible Belt.)

64 of 68 people found the following review helpful.

Slightly outdated, but insightful thoughts and crisp prose

By A Customer

The late Dr. Asimov's clear wit and wisdom is taken to bear here on fools and the future. He begins by excoriating "Religious Radicals," in harsh liberal prose that seems rather outdated today. (For instance, there is a chapter called "The Reagan Doctrine" that pokes fun at tactics Ronald Reagan used in battling the Soviet empire.) Other chapters are also dated, including several chapters on environmental predictions that are informed by distinctly Malthusian notions of supply shortages. (To wit, "And in the mad scramble for food on your part and on the part of billions of others, the people of eath will further damage the world they live in and will begin to fight each other over scraps.") Still, Asimov writes lucidly on science in a number of historical and opinion pieces, which are carefully reasoned. Five essays at the book's end give perspective to

the late thinker's personal life, and a number of inserted memorials (new to this edition) from other prominent scientists and science fiction authors really round out a book that shows Asimov's incomparable breadth of interest. The "Roving Mind" of the title is Asimov's own intellect; any thoughtful reader will find his own mind broadened for having read it.

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