

[The best books to understand the frontier risks facing humanity in the 21st Century](#)



By Nayef R.F. Al-Rodhan

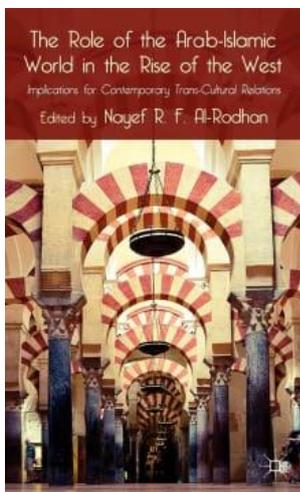
Who am I?

I am a philosopher, neuroscientist, geostrategist, and futurologist. My work at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, St. Antony's College, and the World Economic Forum (as a member of the Global Future Council on the Future of Complex Risks) focuses on transdisciplinarity, with an emphasis on the interplay between philosophy, neuroscience, strategic culture, applied history, technology, and global security. I am particularly interested in the exponential growth of disruptive technologies, and how they have the potential to both foster and hinder the progress of human civilization. My mission is rooted in finding transdisciplinary solutions to identify, predict and manage frontier risks, both here on earth and in Outer Space.

I wrote...

The Role of the Arab-Islamic World in the Rise of the West: Implications for Contemporary Trans-Cultural Relations

By Nayef R.F. Al-Rodhan



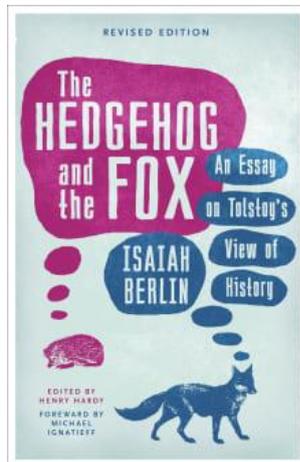
What is my book about?

My book seeks to improve understanding of the West and the Arab-Islamic world, their exchanges and shared heritage, as well as the role of the Arab-Islamic world in the rise of the West. The book examines the cultural transmission of ideas and institutions in a number of key areas, including science, medicine, astronomy, philosophy, humanism, law, finance, commerce, as well as the Arab-Islamic world's overall impact on the Reformation and the Renaissance. In doing so, it showcases how encounters between East and West served to advance our collective knowledge. More broadly, the book offers a timely discussion of this shared history for contemporary trans-cultural relations, with the aim of fostering positive relations, today and in the future.

The books I picked & why

[The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History](#)

By Isaiah Berlin, Henry Hardy (editor)



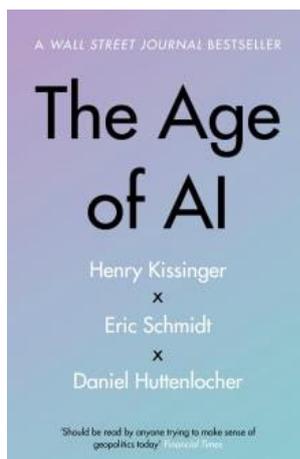
Why this book?

Despite having been published 70 years ago, this eloquent book still has enduring appeal as it provides an intellectually stimulating way of approaching big ideas.

It teaches us how to think both deeply and pragmatically about the monumental challenges facing humanity. In his unique way, Berlin, a Fellow of All Souls College in Oxford and one of the most important thinkers of the twentieth century, gives us prescient philosophical insights into human behaviour.

[The Age of AI: And Our Human Future](#)

By Henry A. Kissinger, Eric Schmidt + 1 more ∨



Why this book?

This book is a timely primer on the promise and peril of artificial intelligence (AI) authored by an unlikely coalition of insightful thinkers: a 100-year-old diplomat, a former Google chief executive, and an M.I.T. professor.

They present an interesting overview of the range of AI technologies and their likely impact on many spheres of life, from medicine and the military to health care and urban development.

The result is an accessible, thought-provoking book that asks important questions about the role of machine learning in changing human society, for good and ill.

Has Man a Future?

By Bertrand Russell



Why this book?

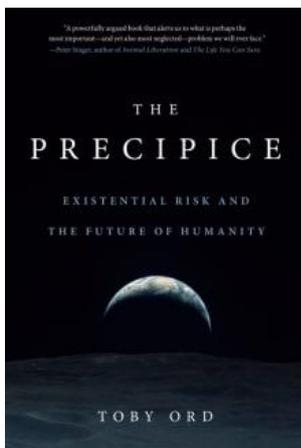
On a basic level, this is a book about nuclear weapons and why humanity ought to eschew them. But it is also much more than that.

Published on the eve of the Cuban Missile Crisis, this masterpiece examines three foreseeable scenarios for the human race: the end of human life, a decline to barbarism after a disastrous decrease of the world's population, and a unification of the world under a single government.

Russell describes how “pride, arrogance and fear of loss of face have obscured the power of judgment.” This is sadly no less true today, as the emotionality of human beings continues to strongly influence international relations.

The Precipice: Existential Risk and the Future of Humanity

By Toby Ord



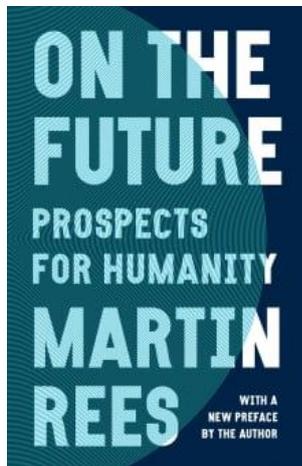
Why this book?

This is a fascinating book that explores the risks to humanity's future, from well-documented threats such as climate change and weapons of mass destruction to less understood dangers emanating from disruptive technologies and man-made pandemics.

Ord, an Oxford philosopher, does an impressive job at explaining complex scientific issues in terms easily digestible for a broader audience. The book also develops important moral frameworks for tackling a wide range of existential risks.

[On the Future: Prospects for Humanity](#)

By Martin Rees



Why this book?

The highly respected Cambridge scientist and Astronomer Royal Martin Rees provides a fascinating and highly accessible read on how we can harness science and technology for the betterment – and ultimately preservation – of humanity.

The book is a refreshingly optimistic take on how advances in, for example, robotics and biotechnology, can protect us against the greatest threats facing humanity. This is a must-read book which pushes the boundaries of scientific knowledge while building bridges to many other academic disciplines.