

Twitter Thread by Vittorio



Vittorio

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1/18 Looking back at some of the most notable books I've read in 2020. It's a pretty eclectic mix!

I don't keep track so I am sure I forgetting something, especially if it was in deadtree form. Also, omitting the ones I started and abandoned.

2/18 The Supernova Era

I am a big, big fan of Cixin Liu- love his fiercely imaginative prose in the 3-body series and short stories... but I was bummed by this book.

The plot unfolds so preposterously that the large scale backdrops are grotesque. Pity. <https://t.co/m8ZWRNJhx4>

3/18 How the Internet Happened

Beautifully written chronicle describing key actors & events that led to the internet as we know it today (almost).

I was a freshman in computer science in '92, saw a lot of that 1sthand, yet there was so much I didn't know!

<https://t.co/H0QyB4KPkx>

4/18 Agency

A [@GreatDismal](#) in great shape. Getting back to that universe was fascinating, tho remembering all the characters frm th 1st book was hard.

His view of the Jackpot is disturbingly plausible, I am sure every reader wondered whether we are in it.

<https://t.co/AgmYFrChq5>

5/18 The Case Against Reality

Fantastic book. Evolution optimizes for fitness, not truth (whatever that is), and this book does a much better job explaining it than I ever could, to myself and others.

Skip the last chapter, tho...

<https://t.co/yvBkEfc4v7>

6/18 Fifty Inventions That Shaped the Modern Economy

I loved this book. The sheer joy of discovering the story of many mundane objects/concepts and above all to connect the dots that show their true significance. Easy to read in bites, too! Recommended

<https://t.co/XsIlcEeJ08>

7/18 Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art

Really interesting. Lots of stereotype-defying info, beautifully interwoven in the author's personal journey. Hoped it would be more directly actionable, it inspired me to learn & do more about breathing anyway.

<https://t.co/FvSuX2tqxz>

8/18 Atmosphæra Incognita

This was a nice, ultrashort pill of [@nealstephenson](#) - daring and plausible the way the Expanse world feels. No large number of exotic names to remember is a +, but 50+ pages aren't enough to weave his usual complex tapestry.

<https://t.co/wH6GFXEcaG>

9/18 AI Superpowers

I thought I knew something abt China tech after presenting there many times.. nope. Loved how this book describes the ruthless selectivity of their market n competitive threat. Less fond of his personal epiphany, didn't blend in IMO.

<https://t.co/DdWRnOCeRa>

10/18 The Intelligence Trap

Wonderful book on how sheer IQ isn't th inherently positive factor ppl think. Chock-full of concrete examples of failings n techniques 2 prevent them. The smarter u think u t, th more u need ths book.

Evidence based wisdom FTW

<https://t.co/ayMB2l8kgI>

11/18 The Saints of Salvation

A space opera triumph, pure [@PeterFHamilton1](#) except for less sex scenes. Maybe easier resolution than I would have expected.

Grandiose finale of a saga whose universe deserves more exploration, a la "second chance at Eden"■

<https://t.co/UyGRsnmp6p>

12/18 Into the Woods: A Five-Act Journey Into Story

Unusual book for me. Really made me reflect on storytelling, taught me many fundamental concepts I was only vaguely aware of. The author's obsession on 5-acts theory doesn't get in the way.. too much■

<https://t.co/maO2YwdEOf>

13/18 The Gene: An Intimate History

Why did I wait so long to read this book? Absolutely fantastic retelling of the epic that lead humankind to discover its own source code (some of it anyway).

The author's personal history adds color. Great storyteller.

<https://t.co/xk7MN0Lc2E>

14/18 Concepts in the Brain: The View From Cross-linguistic Diversity

Incredible. An in-depth view of the conceptual differences between how languages describe th world.

Will change what you view as natural or fundamental.

Skip the physiology sections.

<https://t.co/jKrvmbDFXD>

15/18 Final Jeopardy!

Had this book sitting on my shelf for years- sad recent events brought it back in focus.

It's the fascinating story of a difficult technical challenge and th people behind it. The tech being a bit stale doesn't detract from the plot

<https://t.co/YTKHowBbqK>

16/18 Crossing the Chasm

Read it decades ago, picked it back up x a book club.

The revised edition features FB and Tesla, feels as relevant as it was back in the day- with more proof points backing its theories. If you didn't read it yet, now's the time

<https://t.co/F4l0w3QmLx>

17/18 Exhalation: Stories

Smart, engaging, thought-provoking narrative. Delightful.

It's like a mix of Greg Egan and Stanislaw Lem, taking the absolute best from both.

No analogy is perfect, but it's to Black Mirror what Umberto Eco is to Dan Brown ■

<https://t.co/8nKMtaY55H>

18/18 Post Corona: From Crisis to Opportunity

Still in progress. Obviously super relevant for the times, I love the "system thinking", no-nonsense approach [@profgalloway](#) brings to the discussion. The little charts interspersed between sections do help.

<https://t.co/nhJZffGTOK>

19/18 Bonus comment

When in-person events & associated flights disappeared, I worried I would not read at all in 2020 - butt in seat & droning engines is my main reading hall. I am grateful I did manage to read after all.

Best wishes for a 2021 full of books.. and more flights!