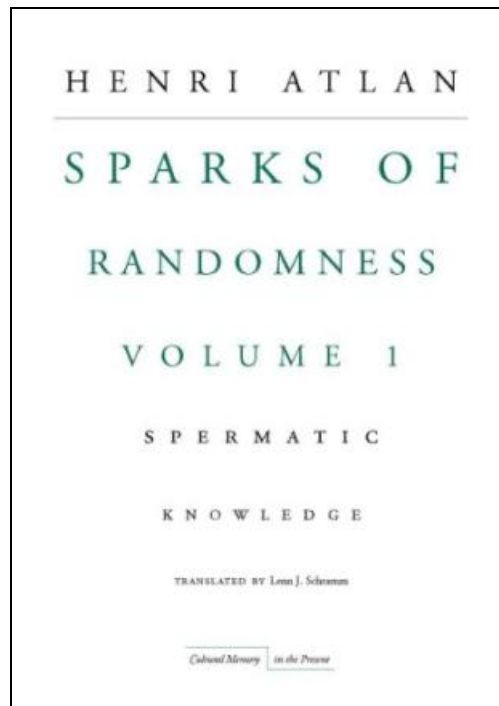


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Stanford University Press. Paperback. Condition: New. 352 pages. Dimensions: 9.9in. x 6.9in. x 1.0in. The Sparks of Randomness, Henri Atlan's magnum opus, develops his whole philosophy with a highly impressive display of knowledge, wisdom, depth, rigor, and intellectual and moral vigor. Atlan finds an ethics adapted to the new power over life that modern scientific knowledge has given us. He holds that the results of science cannot ground any ethical or political truth whatsoever, while human creative activity and the conquest of knowledge are a double-edged sword. This first volume, Spermatic Knowledge, begins with the Talmudic tale about the prophet Jeremiah's creation of a golem, or artificial man. Atlan shows that the Jewish tradition does not demonize man for creating and changing living things; a charge often leveled at promoters of advanced technologies, like biologists, who are accused of playing God. To the contrary, man is depicted as being the co-creator of the world. Although Atlan believes that the fabrication of life from scratch will take place in the near future, he posits that this achievement will not really amount to creating life. Current biology and biotechnologies have demonstrated that there is no absolute distinction between life and non-life, no critical threshold whose crossing would be taboo. He also debunks and demystifies our belief in free will and our conviction, of theological origin, that there would be no possibility for ethics if free will were shown to be an illusion. Throughout, he combines science, religion, and ancient and modern philosophy in unexpected and inspired ways. His radical, uncompromising Spinozism allows him to propose a complete revision of cognitive science and philosophy of mind, while showing that their current impasses stem from remnants of traditional dualism. From his brilliant reflections on time, he also derives exciting considerations for medicine and epidemiology. This item...



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