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21W.777 The Science Essay
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Homework #7

Due next class, T 3/4

READ the following pieces and be prepared to discuss them, along with “Devolution.”

- 1) “American Electric” by essayist Adam Gopnik in *The New Yorker* 30 June 2003. 96-100.
- 2) “The Copernican Myths” By Mano Singham in *Physics Today* December 2007. 48-52.

Both are available through MIT Libraries→Vera.

As you will see, these essays both set out to correct longstanding myths about scientific discoveries—Ben Franklin and his kite, and the Catholic Church’s treatment of Copernicus’s theory about the earth’s place in the solar system.

BEFORE YOU READ: Think about what you know about each of these pieces of scientific lore—not just the facts, but what they signify—i.e., what values are in play? In what ways do the traditional versions of the stories matter? We’ll start our discussion with these points.

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