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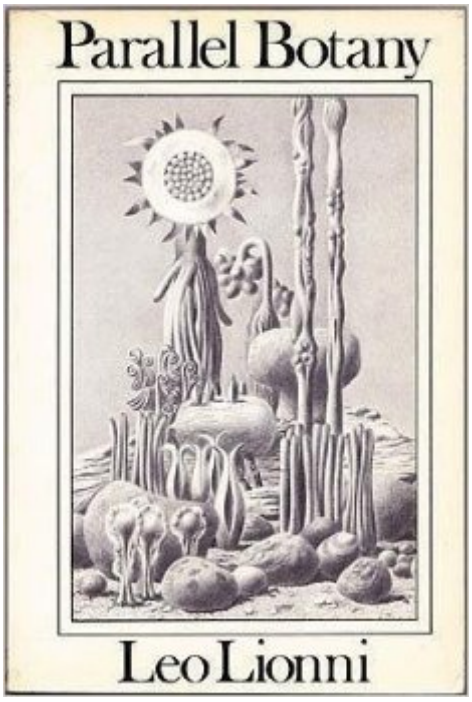
Parallel Botany



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Synopsis

The first full-scale guide to the world of parallel plants - a vast, extremely peculiar and completely imaginary plant kingdom. Leoni presents all the fabulous lore and scholarship surrounding parallel plants, tells tales of the great parallel plant hunters, furnishes transcriptions of legends and folk tales relating to parallel plants, and provides elegant and scientifically-accurate drawings of each nonexistent plant species (remarkable because some of the species are invisible!) A unique, definitive and hilarious book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Leo Lionni created a baffling, even maddening, encyclopedic compendium that describes, illustrates, arrays, and summarizes a host of imaginary plants---his parallel botany. Besides the detailed descriptions of these odd plants, Mr. Lionni, who is best known for his various children's books, rendered numerous illustrations of the various parallel plants. But he doesn't stop here: 23 figures and photographs of various scientists, researchers, explorers and parallel plants together paired with another 32 plates or charcoal or pencil drawings fortify the seeming reality of the world of parallel botany. (Keep in mind that a number of these plants are not visible.) The end notes to the chapters add more authenticity, and I assume, that many of the publications cited are real. The only component lacking is an index.There are layers and layers of complexity to this spoof, for Mr. Lionni draws the reader into more than the facts and lore of his creations by also intertwining issues about philosophy, language, and the scientific method. He presents multiple points of view bantered by experts in this subject matter, and this debate enlivens the discussion. He firmly roots the research by drawing upon imaginary but real-sounding folk tales and legends, made more real by invoking

actual historical figures. Hence, imaginary notes from Magellan's historian or the Greek philosopher Heraclitus are dissected and scrutinized for clues and encounters with various specimens from the realm of parallel plants. Such luminaries as the Swiss biologist Max Spinder or the Greek botanist Professor Spyros Rodokanankis, and many more, espouse their various theories and findings, often disagreeing about their findings and the implications of their research.

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