

*Science & Technology***SCIENTIFIC
TEMPERAMENTS: Three
Lives in Contemporary
Science**

by Philip J. Hilts
Simon & Schuster, 1982
302 pp. \$15.95

Staking out three of the more exciting frontiers of 20th-century scientific investigation—particle physics, genetics, and artificial intelligence—*Washington Post* reporter Hilts profiles three Americans who have labored at the furthest reaches of their fields. Physicist Robert Wilson considers himself a modern-day cathedral builder. During the late '60s and early '70s, he designed the world's most powerful particle accelerator, the multi-colored, earth-covered, four-mile doughnut called Fermilab, located near Weston, Illinois. There Wilson reenacts the beginning of the universe, transforming energy into matter. Mark Ptashne, a Harvard molecular biologist and founder of the commercial Genetics Institute, solved, in the 1970s, perhaps the single most important question after the discovery of the role of DNA: how differentiation occurs when all cells in the body have the same genes. Argumentative and ambitious, Ptashne has been in the thick of the public debate over the hazards of genetic experimentation. John McCarthy heads the Stanford Artificial Intelligence Laboratory. A mathematician by training and a philosopher by inclination, he asks: "What is intelligence and how can it be made mechanical?" Hilts's prose can be overwrought (he describes "a vegetable soup of postadrenaline confusion"), but his explanations of genetic engineering and particle physics will earn the gratitude of science-shy readers.

**MARGARET MEAD AND
SAMOA: The Making and
Unmaking of An
Anthropological Myth**

by Derek Freeman
Harvard, 1983
379 pp. \$20

In 1925, the 23-year-old anthropologist Margaret Mead voyaged to Samoa to study adolescence, urged on by her mentor at Columbia University, Franz Boas. After nine months' field work, Mead concluded that, for Samoans, adolescence was the easiest, most pleasurable stage of life. The reason: Samoan society was free of social conflict, unhealthy competition, aggression, individualism, or familial strife. Moreover, premarital sexual