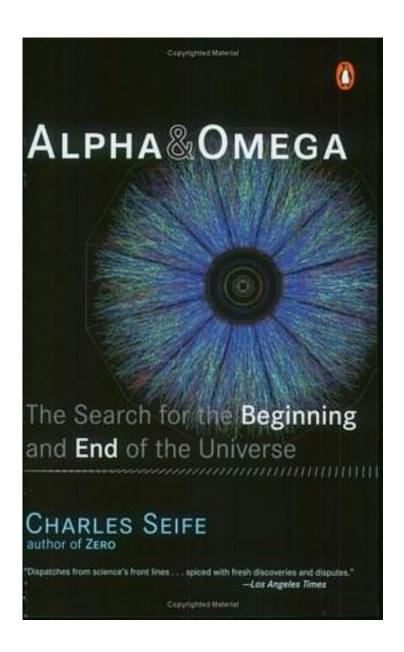
## Alpha and Omega



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The writing of this book has been but part of an ongoing process of formulating, propounding, and revising my ideas on important issues. Typicall~ the process would begin as I prepared myself to hold forth in the classroom or the lecture hall; sometimes it would start as I thought about an article I had undertaken to produce. The process would continue as others responded critically to what I had said or written. Invariably, the criticisms offered were helpful, compelling me to refine or reformulate the positions I had outlined. You, the reader, are now invited to become involved in this process. It is to be hoped that you, in reading this book, and I, in receiving your response to it, will mutually benefit.

My acknowledgments, therefore, begin with my students and with those who have either listened to what I have said, or read what I have written, and reacted to it. You have been my teachers, and I am grateful. Miriam Miller, my editor, has been part of this process. Her critical comments have been astute and incisive. I have come to respect her judgment and competence. With affection, I express my thanks to her; she has made this a better book than it would have been without her wise suggestions. Gayle Hemenwa~ the talented production coordinator of Portable Stanford, and Jeffrey Whitten, the remarkably creative book designer, have brought this book to the form in which it appears before you; to both of them I am indebted. And I owe a debt of gratitude to you, the reader. In this age of electronic communication, readers of serious books are a vanishing breed. Thank you for taking the time to struggle with weighty matters