Are Apple, Amazon, Facebook, and Google some of the most innovative and laudable companies ever invented, or are they the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse? NYU’s Scott Galloway leans toward the latter. He provides some unsettling statistics: More people have Amazon Prime than own a gun; Apple’s cash pile is greater than the GDP of Denmark, the Russian stock market, and the market cap of some big companies combined. And these four are going to remake the world as we know it—for good or bad. Amazon, for instance, has acquired a warehouse robotics firm that could easily result in the destruction of 76,000 jobs in one year, according to Galloway’s calculations. More beneficially, he suggests, Apple could take its pile of cash and launch the world’s largest tuition-free university. Galloway’s book is frightening, entertaining, salty, iconoclastic—and timely. For, as he points out, “To grasp the choices that ushered in the Four is to understand business and value creation in a digital age.” (Portfolio, US$37)

THE INNOVATION BLIND SPOT
Most of us believe entrepreneurship can change the world—but it usually doesn’t. “Instead of solving the biggest problems of the day, we’re putting billions of dollars into how to make mobile advertising and clickbait news more effective,” writes Ross Baird of Village Capital, a firm that invests in startups. “Only 15 percent of our billion-dollar innovations are going to solving the biggest problems people face in the real world”—that is, issues related to food, health, energy, agriculture, financial services, and housing. Why? Because people tend to donate to entrepreneurs who look like them, who live in a few highly entrepreneurial cities, and who have ideas that investors can easily understand. Thus, women, minorities, immigrants, and rural inventors are much less likely to get funding, especially if their ideas require investor empathy. Additionally, investors are looking for a quick payback, Baird notes. “We too often invest in the ideas we think we can flip quickly, rather than the most important ones.” He explores how investors can rip the blinders off and warns, “If we don’t build systems that are accessible to the best ideas, we’ll miss most of them.” (BenBella Books, US$26.95)

ECONOMICS FOR THE COMMON GOOD
In this book, Jean Tirole of the Toulouse School of Economics sets out to explain the subject for which he won a Nobel Prize. “Economics works toward the common good: its goal is to make the world a better place,” he writes. He explores the role of the economist in society; the type of research an economist might undertake; the great macroeconomic challenges that the world currently confronts; and the microchallenges posed by
forces such as the digital revolution. In his discussion of climate change, for instance, he looks at the economic factors that make it so difficult for nations to scale back on carbon emissions. As one example, high carbon taxes in one country merely lead some companies to move to more lenient locations, which results in “a simple redistribution of production and wealth without any significant environmental benefits.” Therefore, “only a global accord can resolve the climate question.” In his introduction, he describes the economics profession as “simultaneously demanding but accessible,” and it’s a phrase that could very well be applied to this comprehensive and engaging book. (Princeton University Press, US$29.95)

**PREPARED U**

Bentley University’s Gloria Cordes Larson asks: How should today’s colleges and universities adapt themselves so they are best preparing students for work and life in the coming decades? She believes the answer lies in a hybrid education, one that fuses business and liberal arts study, delivers real-world experience, offers career planning and management skills, and provides ongoing technology training. A big part of this model involves focusing on the integration of hard and soft skills, so that students gain technical knowledge as well as proficiency in areas such as leadership and innovation. Only such an education will prepare students for the hybrid positions that await them upon graduation, she notes, where they might become accountants who are focused on sustainability or computer coders who maintain empathy for human users. “To prepare for today’s workforce, students must practice crossing traditional boundaries before they arrive in the workplace,” she writes. Her book explores how. (Jossey-Bass, US$29.95)

**STRAIGHT TALK ON TRADE**

Is it really desirable for all of us to become global citizens? Harvard’s Dani Rodrik doesn’t think so. He lays out a compelling argument against the notion of “hyperglobalization,” which he believes can lead to social inequities and troubled national economies. He also believes that economic liberals who advocated for unfettered free trade without acknowledging its risks have contributed to the rise of today’s far-right protectionists in countries around the world. But he argues that there’s a balance to be had—that governments can craft trade rules that bring prosperity to all countries without sacrificing national interests or reducing emerging economies to poverty. “We need a pluralist world economy where nation-states retain sufficient autonomy to fashion their own social contracts and develop their own economic strategies,” he writes. “The best way in which nations can serve the global good in the economic sphere is by putting their own economic houses in order.” (Princeton University Press, US$29.95)

**OPEN SOURCE LEADERSHIP**

In today’s rapidly changing, hyperconnected world, everything you thought you knew about leadership is wrong. For instance, writes Rajeev Peshawaria of the Icli Leadership & Governance Center, an inclusive approach to leadership won’t work today; what’s needed to drive breakthrough innovation is an autocratic, top-down style. He admits that such a style is tricky in a world where smartphones allow employees to record every mistake a leader makes, and where millennials want to work at companies whose values match their own. Leaders must earn the right to their autocratic behavior, he says, by being humble and respectful and by remaining true to an operational framework built from a set of nonnegotiable values. It’s only one of the many complex dances today’s leaders must perform, Peshawaria notes. Just like many new technologies, he says, leaders must become “open source.” He writes, “Only those who adopt a mindset of changing faster than change itself will survive.” (McGraw-Hill, US$30)

**LESSONS FOR NONPROFIT AND START-UP LEADERS**

Many not-for-profits are launched out of the desire to make the world a better place, but they often fail because their founders know very little about business. This book aims to change that by telling the story of Community Connections, a behavioral health organization based in Washington, D.C. Co-founder Maxine Harris and Georgetown University’s Michael B. O’Leary explore topics such as creating culture, turning vision into reality, distributing power, and hiring staff. For instance, they explain that culture is manifested at three levels: employees’ underlying assumptions about how things work, the organization’s commitment to particular values, and the physical artifacts the company embraces, such as closed or open floor plans. “The key is creating a culture that aligns with and mutually reinforces other aspects of an organization (e.g., structure, incentives, work processes, etc.),” write Harris and O’Leary. “Strong cultures can bind people for good, bad, or evil.” (Rowman & Littlefield, US$34)