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Paul J. Nahin, Ben Bova (Editor)

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Time Travel explains science to help you make your fiction plausible. You'll leave for the future from a solid theoretical launching pad - and you'll see why the idea of traveling to the past violates no known laws of physics. Time Travel explores the theories of relativity, shows you the equations, probes the marvelous possibilities. It's filled with facts you can use in your fiction to cross the filmy borders and take readers along the corridors of time.

Time Travel Details

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From Reader Review Time Travel for online ebook

Andreas Economou says

Not very good

There is too much science and not many ideas given in this book. I'd say, big on promises, light on delivery.

Miche11e says

Though I'm not considering writing about time travel, I find the concept to be an interesting thought experiment. I won't pretend I understood about 25% of this book due to lack of advanced understanding of math and physics. Still, it was enjoyable and imagination-sparking.

Rebecca Schwarz says

I read this for research as I'm tackling a time travel story. It is a good general overview of the basic concepts of physics (the theory of relativity -theories I should say-, classic physics and quantum physics, paradoxes, etc.). I definitely feel more prepared to write a story that will be closer to science fiction than to fantasy. I did like that the author made a point of noting that there is nothing wrong with using time travel as a fantasy trope and disregarding the science, but if you want to get a handle on the science behind theories of time travel this is a good book to start with.

My gripes are minor. Nahin made a few forays into explaining some physics concepts in terms of math with both formulas and graphs, but the explanations so cursory, and the graphs so minimal that I felt like I just didn't have enough information to make sense of what he was describing. As someone who does not remember my high school/college math (and who never learned it very well in the first place), I felt these brief sections presumed some specific math knowledge that I didn't have. I would rather he had either left those bits out entirely or perhaps written complete chapters for the math concepts he wanted to include.

He includes many examples of how time travel has been treated in science fiction stories. The references were helpful and sometimes amusing - man, does he have an encyclopedic knowledge of Golden age science fiction. After a while, I tired of almost every example being drawn from the way back pulps of the 30s 40s and 50s. He did mention a couple more contemporary novels, but I think I'll have to go read The VanDerMeers Time Traveler's Almanac to counter this with a wider range of stories...

Ellie says

This one was so far over my head, I skimmed the second half of it. I wanted to spend more time thinking through paradoxes and plot points, but so much of it was physics and particles and the speed of light- this stuff is so far over my head, yikes. And it's not really what I wanted. I should have considered the synopsis more carefully. :/ Would live a synopsis of various time travel plots.

Erik Dreiling says

I started reading this book when I began to write my planned time travel trilogy. It provides plenty of material to pick and choose from; it definitely helped me shape one of my main characters accordingly.

Brent says

Very cool and scientific.

K.C. Shaw says

This is an excellent resource for writers, and a lot of fun to read too. I've already gotten one idea for a short story just while reading it. You can skim the math-y parts if you like and still get a lot out of the book.

L.C. Fiore says

If you're curious where "Interstellar" got all its science...it's like page for page... great book though.

Scott says

Third of four volumes in Writers Digest's Science Fiction Writing Series. Author Nahin approaches the science behind theoretical methods of time travel from a literary perspective by highlighting popular time travel methods used in classic novels and stories to date. He then explores a wide variety of scientific theories about time travel, with concrete examples of how to incorporate these into your own speculative fiction. Interesting chapters include "Time as the Fourth Dimension", "When General Relativity Made Time Travel Honest", "Time Machines That Physicists Have Already 'Invented'", "Quantum Gravity, Splitting Universes, and Time Machines" and "Reading the Physics Literature for Story Ideas." As with earlier volumes in this series, there is a helpful glossary of terms and concepts, and an extensive bibliography of additional reading on the topic. Of the four volumes in this series, I found this one to be the most technical, dealing as it is with theoretical physics. Still, a useful tool for writers of science fiction. Originally reviewed for my local library's website: <http://www.lincolnlibraries.org/depts...>

Michelle Bellman says

I am finally giving up on this one. I picked it up and put it down for two years. I was hoping it would be a fun, informative read, but it was very technical and way over my head.

K. S. says

I read this more as a comprehensive review of existing time travel books. If you are looking for a time travel book to read this may give you some ideas. It's been probably 20 years since I read this book. Nahin was my college professor for electrical engineering. I respect him as a knowledgeable professor. I think he's a little dry though. He used to write full paragraphs on the board with proper punctuation during lecture. Hard to pay attention and take notes when you are copying a text book off the board. Not really relevant to the review, but fun to reminisce.

S says

Superb glossary.
