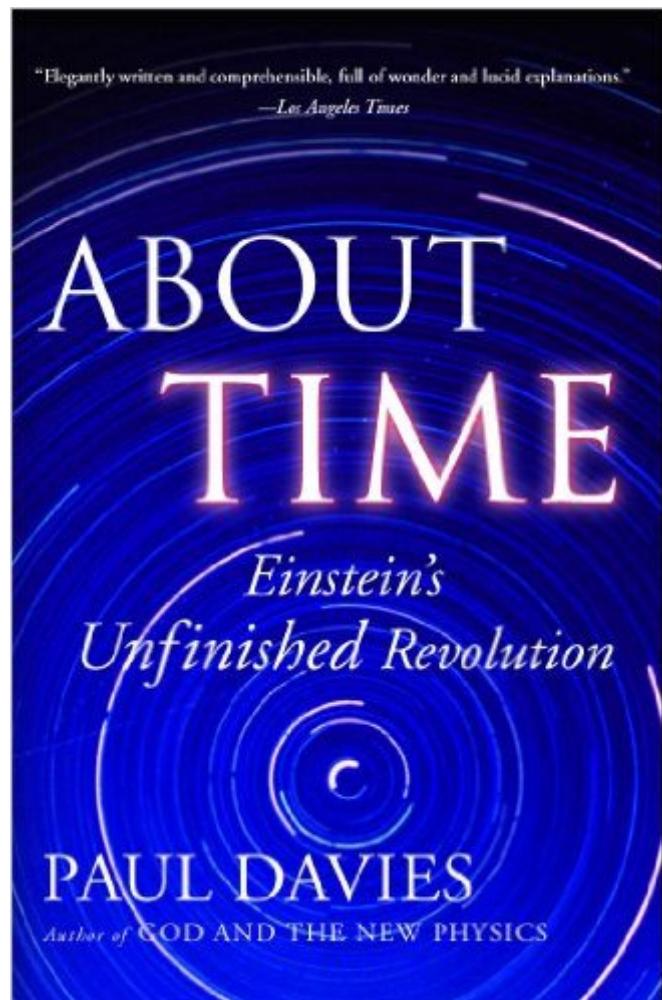


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About Time: Einstein's Unfinished Revolution



Synopsis

An elegant, witty, and engaging exploration of the riddle of time, which examines the consequences of Einstein's theory of relativity and offers startling suggestions about what recent research may reveal. The eternal questions of science and religion were profoundly recast by Einstein's theory of relativity and its implications that time can be warped by motion and gravitation, and that it cannot be meaningfully divided into past, present, and future. In *About Time*, Paul Davies discusses the big bang theory, chaos theory, and the recent discovery that the universe appears to be younger than some of the objects in it, concluding that Einstein's theory provides only an incomplete understanding of the nature of time. Davies explores unanswered questions such as: * Does the universe have a beginning and an end? * Is the passage of time merely an illusion? * Is it possible to travel backward -- or forward -- in time? *About Time* weaves physics and metaphysics in a provocative contemplation of time and the universe.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a book about the meaning of time, what it is, when it has started, how it flows and where to. If you ever wondered about the puzzles and paradoxes of time, if you ever wanted to learn more about what Einstein's relativity implies about time itself, this is a book you will not want to miss. Davies covers most of the questions about time; I found interesting how he explains the rather weird relationship between real time and our mental notion of it. The weirdness of bizarre possibilities should be enough to confuse anyone thinking about it for the first time; the way time relates to quantum physics, being sometimes even stranger to understand. Black holes, the warping

of space-time, theories about time travel, and the notion of "now": the division of past, present and future. From the inevitable "what existed before the Big Bang" to the Hartle Hawking theory, Wormholes, time dilation, etc, much is covered about time. Here are some of the subjects you will be able to read about:1.Tachyons: Davies wonders if Tachyons can be ruled out. The special theory of relativity has been tested to unprecedeted accuracy, yet tachyons are a problem. Allowed by the theory, they bring with them all sorts of unpalatable properties.2.Black holes: Could there be really an end to time-a singularity- and the centre of all black holes? Can they form tunnels to other universes, or can we use them like wormholes that thread back into our universe? What happens to matter falling in them?3.Time Travel: Just a fantasy? The investigation of exotic space-times that seem to permit travel into the past will, according to Davies, remains an active field of research, but there are no realistic time-travel scenarios known.

About Time discusses twentieth century developments in theoretical physics and their impact on our notion of time. Davies is a well known and prolific Australian science writer. I offer the following thoughts for potential readers.Aimed at the general reader the book does not require a detailed knowledge of physics or mathematics. In light of the counter intuitive nature of modern theoretical physics, however, the uninitiated reader may require a little effort to get the gist of this intriguing but esoteric topic. Given the broad scope of material addressed in the text the time spent on each issue is relatively limited.I concur with previous reviewers that the book is generally quite readable - Davies' technique of using a hypothetical skeptic as a means to highlight certain issues may strike some as awkward (that was my impression). From an overall stylistic perspective, however, Davies has improved significantly from his earlier efforts and become a solid writer.The author does a nice job of discussing relativity and some of its implications. For instance, his handling of the twins paradox is among the best I have come across. I agree with Davies that there is solid empirical evidence to support time dilation - his transition from this to a tenseless view of time, however, seems premature - or at least insufficiently argued. Indeed, many of Davies assumptions regarding the nature of time, though interesting, will likely not be convincing to those who do not hold his narrow verificationist view of knowledge.I found the latter part of the book that discusses highly speculative issues such as time travel to be of limited value.

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