

Analysis of the book “A Brief History of Time” by Steven Hawking.

Introduction

The author of the book “A Brief History of Time” is Stephen Hawking. In Cambridge, he held the position of a Lucasian Professor of both Mathematics as well as Theoretical Physics. Currently, Professor Hawking is the Director of Research for the Centre of Theoretical Cosmology in the University of Cambridge. Besides having dozens of honorary degrees, in the year 1989, he received the Companion of Honor award. Additionally, Professor Hawking is a fellow of the Royal society as well as being a member of the US National Academy of Science. He has authored numerous bestselling books. Steven Hawking is usually regarded as the most brilliant theoretical physicist after Einstein. The book “A Brief History of Time” was a landmark volume in science writing. Steven Hawking focused on the origins and nature of the universe. In this book, Hawking describes vividly the extraordinary technological advancements in observing the universe both in micro and macrocosmic scales. Hawking begins the book “A Brief History of Time” by reviewing various great cosmos theories from the times of Newton to Einstein. Slowly, he delved into more complex theories of space and time such as the Big Bang to black holes, through spiral galaxies as well as string theory. In the book “A Brief History of Time”, Stephen Hawking expresses his thoughts concerning the No Boundary proposal as well as offering advanced information regarding dark energy, the paradox of information, eternal inflation, the discovery of gravitational waves and the microwave background radiation observations.

On one hand, the facts presented in the "A Brief History of Time" challenges qualitatively the examination of contemporary and historical views about the universe and the nature of time. Hawking fills the book with autobiographical asides as well as commentaries from the great scientists with enormous contributions to the field. On the other hand, the book is philosophical and tries to explore the nature and place of God in the creation of the universe. Stephen Hawking through "A Brief History of Time" tries to reunite both the realms of a philosopher and a scientist. However, he fails to provide final answers about the existence of universe, the creation and if there the creator of the universe. Hawking's principle concern was in cosmology even though he provided a brief excursion in other disciplines such as modern physics. Hawking traces the ever changing concepts of size, nature and structure of the universe to the ancient Greeks including Galileo, Newton and Einstein which he associates with his work. Such an account is reflective and idiosyncratic of Hawking's personal sense pertaining the importance of specific scientific experiments and theories. From a reader's perspective, the book "A Brief History of Time" is the closest one would get concerning the greatest scientific minds of the 20th Century.

The book "A Brief History of Time" received phenomenal success resulting into a series of publications as corrected, expanded and updated editions. Also inclusive is an illustrative edition enhanced with photographs, computer generated images and diagrams. In 2005, Hawking published a simplified and an abridged version of the book. Accompanying the book was a documentary/film directed by Steven Spielberg documenting Hawking's accomplishments and personal life. The success of the film resulted into publication of a reader's companion for both the book and film. Subsequent success of the companion resulted into a six-part TV miniseries. In 2008, the illustrative edition of the "A Brief History of Time" was combined with other



Not necessary

versions to yield the Hawking's edition titled "The Universe in a Nutshell". All these demonstrate the continued popularity of the book.

Scholars, critics including Hawking's mother have continually developed a variety of explanations regarding the exceptional success of the book. Most of the commentators have attributed the prodigious sales of the book to the genuine talent of the author and his use of simple language including the use of analogies, similes, and humor which make the complex physical and mathematical ideologies easy to understand. Just like Einstein, Hawking's ability to communicate his childlike wonders regarding the mysteries surrounding the universe endears him to the readers. On the contrary, few of Hawking's fierce critics controversially admonished the publisher of the book for having exploited the disabilities by Hawking for his commercial gains. For better part of Hawking's life, he suffered an incredibly debilitating health conditions of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. This health condition required him to using a wheelchair as shown in the front page of the book. Nevertheless, Hawking is credited for overcoming this disability and growing to become the most successful scientist. As such, he has served as a science popularizer as well as being a source of inspiration. In his own admission, Hawking states that his motivation for writing the book which took him over five years, was to help him in providing for his family and educate his children.

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Hawking's book "A Brief History of Time" has tried to provide answers to a number of basic questions to nonscientists about the universe. For instance, questions regarding; the origin of the universe, how the universe will end, the structuring of the universe, and whether or not the universe is finite. With regard to the way modern scientists responds to these questions, Hawking made use of two theories which are fundamental which are the general relativity as well as quantum mechanics. Just like other theories, both relativity and quantum mechanics theories are

provisional and not consistent with each other. Nonetheless, both theories superseded the models of universe and matter put forth by Sir Isaac Newton.

On a personal basis, I believe there are elements of truth both in Hawking's theory about the universe and the Biblical creation of the universe. The universe is very dynamic and its understanding can lead man to Heaven. This is because that time when the ultimate triumph of human reason will be achieved, human beings will become God-capable of the circumstances that led to creation. However, it is essential to have this power accompanied by some moral framework provided by our individual religious beliefs. Putting the view of the church, one can only sympathize with Hawking and his desire in presenting himself as the new Galileo and an intellectual hero who fights against fixed orthodoxy.

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