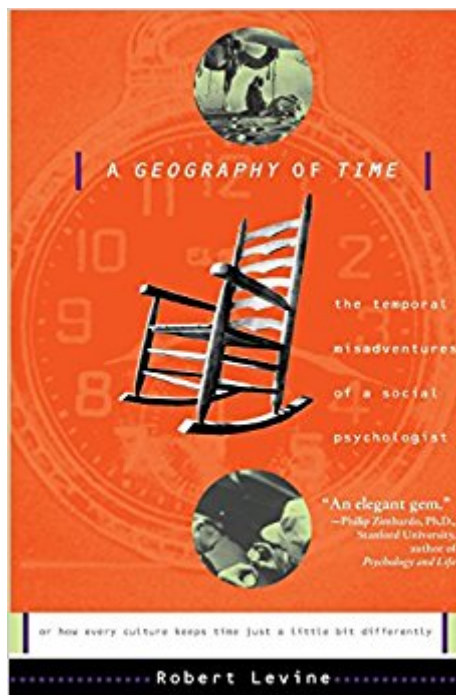


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A Geography Of Time: The Temporal Misadventures Of A Social Psychologist



Synopsis

In this engaging and spirited book, eminent social psychologist Robert Levine asks us to explore a dimension of our experience that we take for granted—our perception of time. When we travel to a different country, or even a different city in the United States, we assume that a certain amount of cultural adjustment will be required, whether it's getting used to new food or negotiating a foreign language, adapting to a different standard of living or another currency. In fact, what contributes most to our sense of disorientation is having to adapt to another culture's sense of time. Levine, who has devoted his career to studying time and the pace of life, takes us on an enchanting tour of time through the ages and around the world. As he recounts his unique experiences with humor and deep insight, we travel with him to Brazil, where to be three hours late is perfectly acceptable, and to Japan, where he finds a sense of the long-term that is unheard of in the West. We visit communities in the United States and find that population size affects the pace of life—and even the pace of walking. We travel back in time to ancient Greece to examine early clocks and sundials, then move forward through the centuries to the beginnings of "clock time" during the Industrial Revolution. We learn that there are places in the world today where people still live according to "nature time," the rhythm of the sun and the seasons, and "event time," the structuring of time around happenings (when you want to make a late appointment in Burundi, you say, "I'll see you when the cows come in"). Levine raises some fascinating questions. How do we use our time? Are we being ruled by the clock? What is this doing to our cities? To our relationships? To our own bodies and psyches? Are there decisions we have made without conscious choice? Alternative tempos we might prefer? Perhaps, Levine argues, our goal should be to try to live in a "multitemporal" society, one in which we learn to move back and forth among nature time, event time, and clock time. In other words, each of us must chart our own geography of time. If we can do that, we will have achieved temporal prosperity.

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Customer Reviews

On time, out of time, time out, time is money--if our vernacular is any indication, the concept of time has certainly infiltrated American culture. Does everybody in the world share the same perception of time? In *A Geography of Time*, psychologist Robert Levine puts time to the test by sending teams of researchers all over the world to measure everything from the average walking speed to the time it takes to buy a stamp at the post office. Levine scatters his findings among engaging accounts of his own encounters with the various perceptions of time in different cultures. From the history of clocks to how people tell time today, *A Geography of Time* is jam-packed with "timely" information. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Not limited by conventional notions of time?or "clock time," as he calls it?Levine (psychology, California State Univ., Fresno) presents a wide-ranging work loosely organized around a social construct of time. The result is an intellectualized "places-rated" guide containing observations on where people are the most generous and talk the fastest, as well as discussions of how "time wars" are waged and deeper insights into South American, Japanese, and other cultures through their perception of time. The first part of the book covers concepts of time and the history of the techniques used to measure it. The focus then shifts to the author's cross-cultural research on pace of life and its social implications. Time literacy, a type of multiculturalism, is advocated in the final section, which also contains advice for approaching life in "slower" cultures. Unique, wry, and readable, this well-documented book is recommended for social psychology collections and public libraries for sophisticated readers with the time to spare.?Antoinette Brinkman, Southwest Indiana Mental Health Ctr. Lib., EvansvilleCopyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I love this book! It is brilliantly researched and an engaging read. It is informative about time, cultures, differences, and similarities and does a brilliant job of linking facts and data with our human experience. It is the kind of book that is energizing for all the new ideas and insights available to the reader.Dr. Tracy Brower, author of *Bring Work to Life by Bringing Life to Work: A Guide for Leaders*

and Organizations

I absolutely loved this book. I actually began reading it in the library and enjoyed it so much, I decided I would like to own it so I could refer back to it over "time." If you have a curious mind and would like to stretch your imagination about how long you will be on this journey and this planet, you will enjoy reading this great book.M.M.

Am enjoying reading this book. I fully appreciate how differing temporal views impact individuals and differ culturally. Recommended read; especially for travelers and educators.

This book was great introduction to time and culture. I found the study of Japan most interesting. The study I am most interested in is how time is used in planning and this was not covered. It seems there is a big difference between business and governments/scientists. The rule seems to be that it is difficult to convince someone when his pay is based on his not understanding it.

It is amazing how different cultures deal differently with time. This book is a very interesting journey across different cultures and the way each folk deals with time. Fast and slow, meaningful and rough. Knowing the way other people think and feel may help to understand other nations and foreigner cultures, but certainly is the best way to understand ourselves.

Having grown up in Germany it was rather normal to have a certain type of time and a certain timeliness. That not everyone shared my timeliness became obvious early on. But to read how different cultures perceive time and interact with it in their social context is a fascinating discovery. I personally can only recommend it as a must read for people that wish to interact with other cultures without being offended or driven mad by their different style.

At times didactic or reductionist in its academic approach, the book overall is an interesting read on the concept of time. I especially enjoyed the historical takes on time and learning how our current constructs of time came to be.

As a westerner living in a third world Asian country, this book is very easy to relate to. Fantastic insight into the impact culture has on how we view time. This book will challenge your own perceptions.

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