

The Practical Considerations of Time Travel

When considering the potentiality of time travel, an essential question comes to mind, the ramifications of attempting such a task, if possible. There is plenty to consider; foremost in my mind is the paradoxical consideration, better known as a temporal paradox. While science has provided us with various temporal paradoxes, one of the most famous would be the Grandfather Paradox. Consider a time traveler returning to the past and killing their grandparent(s). This action would prevent the birth of one of the time traveler's parents and, thus, the time traveler themselves. If the traveler could not have possibly existed, how did they invent the time machine and return to kill their grandparent? The grander consideration of this paradox is when the past changes in some way that produces a contradiction.

There is also the question of responsibility, and to what extent the time traveler is accountable to such potentialities; say to prevent past disasters/atrocities/calamities/etc. If one had the power to kill Adolf Hitler back in time, is one obligated to do so? The possibility of saving millions of lives weighed against the impossibility of understanding the ramification of such an action is almost dizzying to consider.

The sheer amount of "what if" scenarios either of these two considerations presents is mind-numbing. We have all seen movies where one little change in the past drastically augments the future: recall *Back to the Future*, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, Germany's *Run Lola Run*, the *Terminator* series, *Star Trek First Contact*, even *Austin Powers* dives into the unknown greatness of temporal disturbances—to name a few off the top of my head.

To answer the question presented, "if time travel became possible and would I do it? I am unsure. As I, and Hollywood, have outlined above, there is too much to consider for a simple yes or no. Would I love to see what the future of humanity will behold? Will we get over our inconsequential differences to unite for the common good of all, or will the never-ending divide break society down into nonexistence?

Well, perhaps some questions are better left unanswered.

Thank you for proposing an interesting question like this, Professor. There is so much more that can be addressed when considering time travel; however, sometimes, it is helpful to look at the potential for glory or desire for forbidden knowledge and consider the potential travesties that can accompany such actions.

I wish all my future time travels the best of luck with this week's reading and discussion post; H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine* is truly a fantastic read that promotes many exciting questions about what tomorrow will hold.

Respond:

Thank you, Professor! I appreciate your feedback and consideration. In my defense, however, the unconsidered consequences of time travel apply in any direction. For example, would it be ethical to pull a "Back to the Future" and return to 2021 with an almanac or sports record book from 2121? Does the use

of such information not have the possibility of augmenting the future in some unbeknownst way? In my post, I reference the unknown wonders that forward travel may behold; however, is it worth knowing the ultimate fate of humanity? To what purpose and for what reason? As Wells's Time Traveler finds out, sometimes what we uncover is disappointing, dangerous, or just plain unknowable. Yes, I could have answered the question with a simple, "YES! I would LOVE to travel into the future!" However, I think some of these ethical and consequential questions are important to consider. Thank you for responding to my post and allowing us the opportunity to reply. I truly appreciate the continued dialog and sharing of ideas. It is also fun to read the class's interpretation of these questions. I hope you have a fantastic day! Cheers!