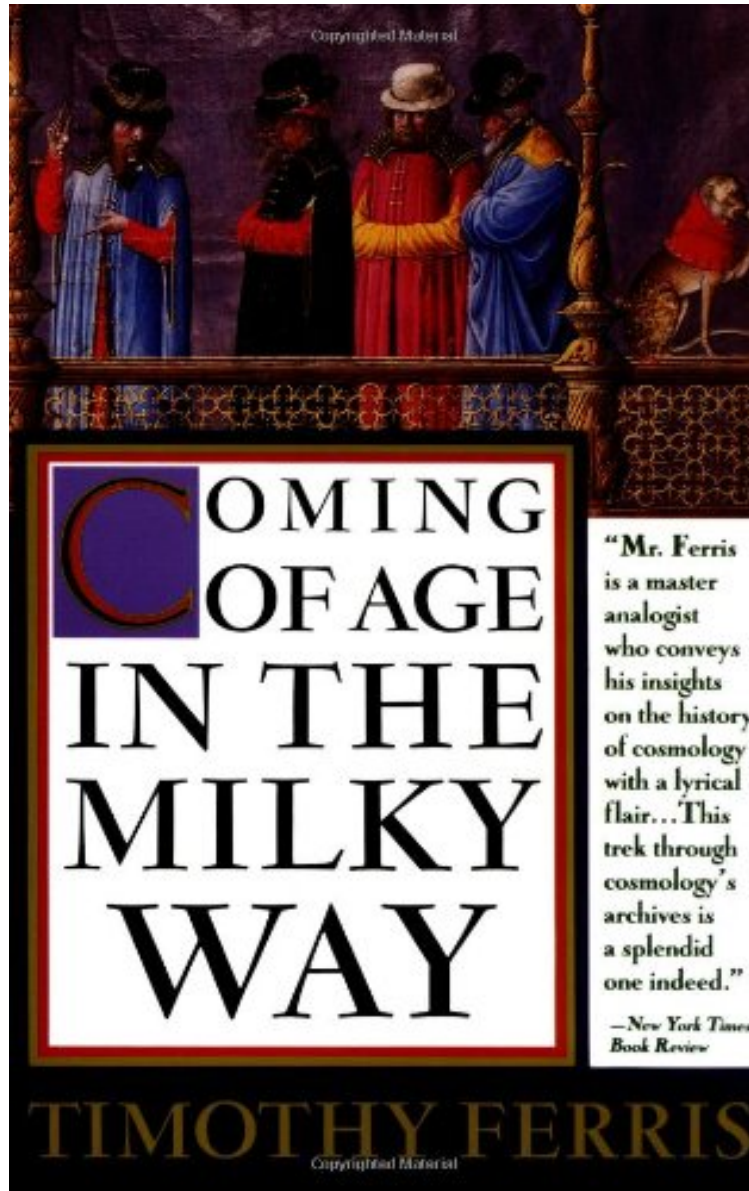


(Ebook free) Coming of Age in the Milky Way

## Coming of Age in the Milky Way

*Timothy Ferris*

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**Timothy Ferris : Coming of Age in the Milky Way** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Coming of Age in the Milky Way:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Solid Historical Introduction to Cosmology By Kevin Pallister  
Coming of Age in the Milky Way is an enjoyable history of cosmology and related fields. Ferris explains both the science itself and the personalities that made monumental contributions to our understanding of the cosmos.

Although it's a bit dated now, this is still a good book for the layperson interested in astronomy and cosmology. Some of Ferris's metaphors regarding the size of the cosmos are truly stunning, and the sizable glossary and timeline at the end of the book are handy references. One downside for me was that after assuming very little scientific background on the reader's part for the majority of the book, Ferris seems to make less effort to explain the science of quantum mechanics and recent developments in particle physics. These concluding chapters give an overview of how these fields developed, but are not the best introduction to these topics. Otherwise this is an enjoyable and highly accessible book for scientific beginners or novices. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Listening to the music of the spheres By Odysseus at home Cosmos is a battlefield for the conflict between science and religion. Putting aside those books that defend one option (there is a god behind everything) or the other (there isn't), you have the chance of reading a book with no side to defend. This is the case, from my perspective, of "Coming of Age in the Milky Way." Timothy Ferris is not a scientist but a journalist. In fact, a very special one. As long as you read the book you realize how much work there is behind the writing. I mean, hard work. Given that it is not easy to write about Space, Time and Creation, given the math and the physics and the chemistry involved, the merit is so big that you think that --in the case of Ferris-- that is not a virtue but a talent. Thus, the merit of the book is that it gives you not only information but a Weltanschauung (a world view) that you won't forget. In fact, I finished the reading two weeks ago and some ideas are still with me. Referring to the Kepler second law ("Each planet sweeps out equal areas in equal times"), Ferris writes: "The second law revealed something even more astonishing, a Bach fugue in the sky." He is always giving you those sparks of beauty. And they are always in the right place. The book was not written as an excuse to make poetry but for showing us what we know about the cosmos and what we should expect for the next years. Anyway, the author has his inspired moments and --fortunately-- share them with us. In this vein, chapter 19 "Mind and matter" offers the most inspired and attractive lucubration. The idea of a galaxy whose "ultimate purpose" is to build a nervous system brings you to the limits where poetry and science are touching each other. "Life," tells us Ferris, "might be the galaxy's way of evolving a brain." All right, I won't tell you the whole program that Ferris proposes. I would prefer you to read it by yourself. In any case it is astonishing, beautiful and (why not) probable. It makes you dream and hallucinate. I mean it. To read "Coming of age..." won't let you with the sensation that you could do something better, independently of having a program for proving that there is a god out there or not. Ferris is not trying to convince you of nothing. What he does is to let you hear the celestial music of the spheres. Nothing else. Finally, if you want to know about science, scientist, scientific progress, and not only that but understand them at a very good level, just buy it and then read it. You'll see I'm right. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good source for the history of cosmology By Ismael de Leon H. This is not a science book, but rather a history of science book. Although precise and interesting, it does go way too far in scientific nomenclature for the average reader. The part on quantum physics gets a little too specific, making concepts hard to understand, possibly making the reader feel lost at times. It does a great job though, unifying many centuries worth of knowledge (and ignorance) into a compact book that helps to grab the whole scope of cosmology throughout the centuries.

Winner of the 1988 American Institute of Physics Prize and named one of 1988's best books by the New York Times Book Review, this brilliant, lively and informative book seeks to comprehend the enormities of cosmic space and time and how this quest has shaped religion, politics and philosophy.

From Publishers Weekly The ancient Egyptians regarded the sky as a kind of tent canopy. Thirty centuries later, astronomer William Herschel argued that the sun belongs to a huge cluster of stars (a galaxy, as we call it today) and charted great swaths of intergalactic space through a telescope. How the human species slowly awakened to the vast reaches of space and time is the story absorbingly told by popular science writer Ferris (*The Red Limit, Galaxies*). His narrative humanizes the scientific enterprise Galileo emerges here as a careerist, and Johannes Kepler as a self-loathing neurotic. Although it covers well-trod ground, this remarkable synthesis makes broad areas of science accessible to the layperson, from Darwin's and Lyell's investigations of the age of the earth to modern physicists' quest for a perfectly symmetrical, hyperdimensional universe. BOMC alternate. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc. From School Library Journal YA In the first section, Ferris uses historical anecdotes to relate astronomical discoveries and the foibles of their discoverers in a successful attempt to show the "big names" of science as real persons, warts and all. The second section, on the history of space and time, is also well done, if lacking in the human details. The third section, which deals with cosmology and modern physics, uses a philosophical approach to discuss difficult material; the result is not easy to absorb, but it is good base material for students who will ask questions and go further on their own. Throughout the book, introductory quotations are used to advantage to tease readers into the next topic. Bob Fliess, Episcopal High School, Bellaire, Tex. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc. From the Publisher Winner of the 1988 American Institute of Physics Prize and named one of 1988's best books by the New York Times Book Review, this brilliant, lively and informative book seeks to comprehend the enormities of cosmic space and time and how this quest has shaped religion, politics and philosophy.