

POPULATION EDUCATION TEXTBOOK

TIME PERSPECTIVES

Time and Man, by L. R. B. Elton and H. Messel. Pergamon Press, Oxford and New York, 1979, 114 p., \$8.00 (hardback), \$4.00 (paper).

This book can be read for fun by anyone with intellectual curiosity. It is written at a level intelligible to a good high school student. It states central points simply and illustrates them well with clear diagrams and apt quotations. It is, therefore, just right for professional scientists outside their areas of expertise. But its appeal is not limited to scientists.

The book shows that the natural sciences, the sciences of man, technology, philosophy, religion, and literature have contributed to understanding the many facets of time. The authors evidently respect creative insight of high qual-

ity, whether the insight is due to Einstein or Beethoven, St. Augustine or James Joyce.

There are interesting details about making clocks, the history of the calendar, relativistic, thermodynamic, and cosmological aspects of time. I liked the account of Olbers' paradox, which arises from the question, "Why is the sky dark at night?" Biological effects of changes in the length of day, month, and year during geological time are described. What the authors said Piaget said about children's concepts of time confused me, but that may not be the authors' fault. Quotes of T. S. Eliot on time whet the appetite for more.

All this, in little more than 100 pages, makes reading *Time and Man* time well spent.

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