



Science and science fiction

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As a practicing physicist who has written science fiction, I will explore the similarities and differences between the process of writing science fiction and the process of “producing” science, specifically theoretical physics. What are the ground rules for introducing unproven new ideas in science fiction, and how do they differ from the corresponding rules in physics? How predictive is science fiction? (For that matter, how predictive is theoretical physics?) While science fiction has been dubbed “the literature of ideas,” there are crucial differences between the role that ideas play in science fiction versus their role in science, as well as differences in the actual way in which ideas are presented. Finally, I will examine whether a background as a research scientist provides any advantage in writing science fiction, or whether it can actually be a hindrance at times.

Wednesday

March 21

4:00 P.M.

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PHYSICS