

## João Magueijo's "Faster than the Speed of Light": A review



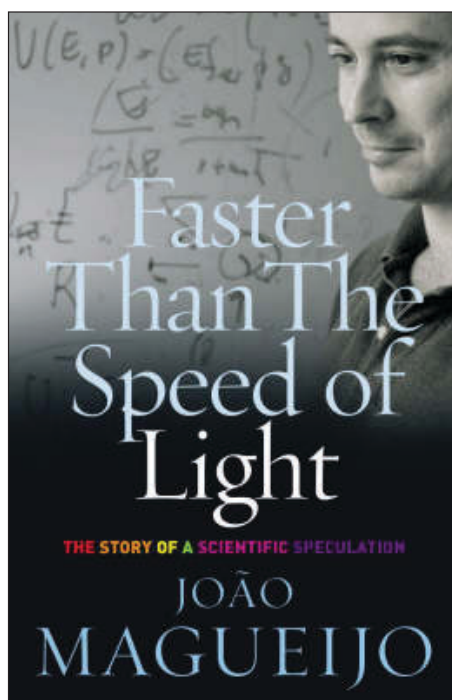
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Magueijo's book is the story of his journey in physics with the revolutionary, if not heretical, speculation that the speed of light may not actually be constant with respect to time. The book takes the reader from his original spark of inspiration in St. John's College, Cambridge, through the years that followed in Imperial College and other locations around the world pursuing the idea with his research partners.

The varying speed of light (VSL) theory is still very much alive in physics four years after the book was first published and anyone with an interest in cosmology should read this book. In order to give the reader the background, Magueijo first explains the other important ideas in cosmology – relativity, the beginnings of the universe, inflation, and cosmological problems – before telling the story of his own. As he says:

"Narrating the VSL story will force me to explain in detail the very ideas that theory contradicts or bypasses: relativity and inflation. Therefore,



on the forefront of research and the flaws in the system and some people which scientists must battle against.

Magueijo's literary style is grabbing, if a little provocative. You will not be bored by the literature, the story, or the science.

somewhat paradoxically, you will see them at their best – I have always felt that the most brilliant textbook ideas are best explained by their negatives. Forcing them to undergo cynical challenge, a counterpart to courtroom cross-examination, brings them to life.

For these reasons, I believe that you should still read this book even if in the end VSL does not deliver the goods. However, it is obvious that this story will be far more interesting should the goods indeed be abundantly delivered."

As well as explaining the science, the author recounts his experiences of a career in science, giving revealing insights into both the excitement of being