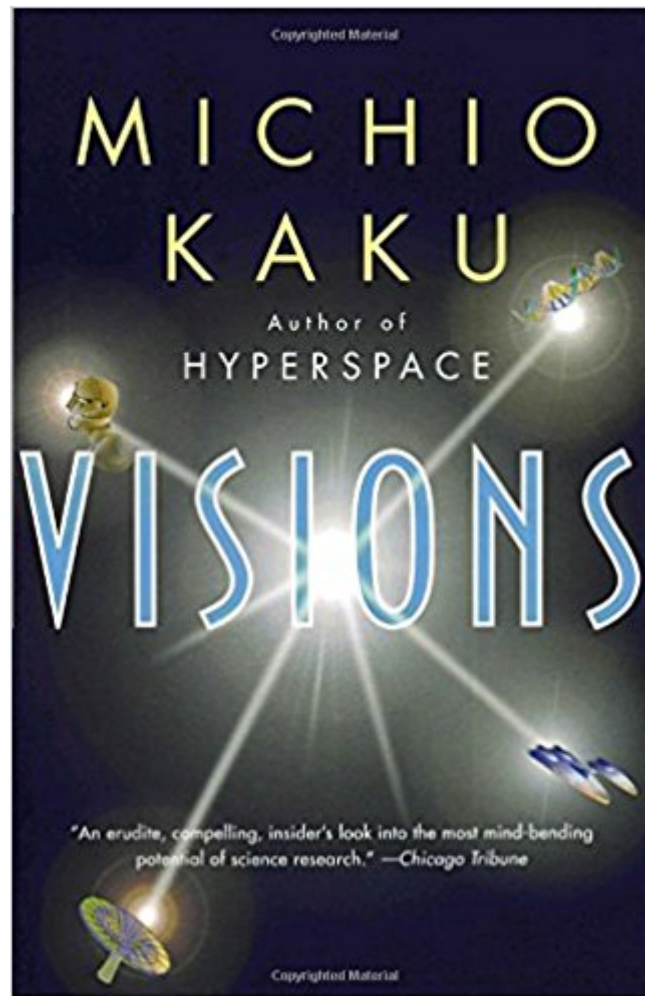




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Visions: How Science Will Revolutionize The 21st Century



Synopsis

In *Visions*, physicist and author Michio Kaku examines the great scientific revolutions that have dramatically reshaped the twentieth century--the quantum mechanics, biogenetics, and artificial intelligence--and shows how they will change and alter science and the way we live. The next century will witness more far-reaching scientific revolutions, as we make the transition from unraveling the secrets of nature to becoming masters of nature. We will no longer be passive bystanders to the dance of the universe, but will become creative choreographers of matter, life, and intelligence. The first section of *Visions* presents a shocking look at a cyber-world infiltrated by millions of tiny intelligence systems. Part two illustrates how the decoding of DNA's genetic structure will allow humans the "godlike ability to manipulate life almost at will." Finally, *VISIONS* focuses on the future of quantum physics, in which physicists will perfect new ways to manipulate matter and harness the cosmic energy of the universe. What makes Michio Kaku's vision of the science of the future so compelling--and so different from the mere forecasts of most thinkers--is that it is based on the groundbreaking research taking place in labs today, as well as the consensus of over 150 of Kaku's scientific colleagues. Science, for all its breathtaking change, evolves slowly; we can accurately predict, asserts Kaku, what the direction of science will be, based on the paths that are being forged today. A thrilling, unique narrative that brings together the thinking of many of the world's most accomplished scientists to explore the world of the future, *Visions* is science writing at its best.

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Customer Reviews

Take it easy: that's Michio Kaku's motto. Given the extraordinary advances science has thrown up in time for the millennium, the only way you could possibly fit them into a single volume is by a correspondingly massive simplification. Subtitled *How Science Will Revolutionize the 21st Century and Beyond*, *Visions* assumes that, by and large, scientists get to do whatever they like, that all technologies are consumer technologies, and that consumers welcome anything and everything science throws at them. Kaku gets away with this frankly dodgy strategy by dint of sheer hard work. He has based his predictions on interviews with more than 150 renowned working scientists; he integrates these interviews with a huge body of original journalistic material; and, above all, he roots that mass of information on an entirely reasonable model of what the purpose of science will be in the third millennium. Up until now, science has expended its efforts on decoding most of the fundamental natural processes--"the dance," as Kaku puts it, of elementary particles deep inside stars and the rhythms of DNA molecules coiling and uncoiling within our bodies. Science's task now, Kaku believes, is to cross-pollinate advances thrown up by the study of matter, biology, and mind--modern science's three main theaters of endeavor. "We are now making the transition from amateur chess players to grand masters," he writes, "from observers to choreographers of nature." Then again, he also believes that "the Internet ... will eventually become a 'Magic Mirror' that appears in fairy tales, able to speak with the wisdom of the human race." Kaku, in short, deserves a good slapping--but he also deserves to be read. --Simon Ings, .co.uk

Here's another entry in the game of predicting what science and technology will come up with after the turn of the millennium, this one from a theoretical physicist. Kaku, author of *Hyperspace* (1994), defines his central thesis in a few words: We humans are about to make the transition "from being passive observers of Nature to active choreographers of Nature." He forecasts major breakthroughs in three specific areas: computer science, molecular biology, and quantum physics. While all three of these disciplines have already had a significant impact on our daily lives, Kaku finds a broad consensus among scientists, many of whom believe that everything we have seen so far is merely a prelude to what lies in store. In particular, while the development to date of these areas of science has been marked by extreme specialization, the 21st century is likely to be an age of synergy, in which each area builds on the discoveries of the others. On a 20-year time frame, computer chips will become smaller, cheaper, and almost ubiquitous; genetic therapy will have cured many diseases, possibly including most cancers. But beyond that point, it appears that fundamental bottlenecks in both computer science and molecular biology will necessitate new breakthroughs, many of which will derive from quantum physics. This may fuel a new round of technological

innovations, among them artificial intelligence (a robot in every home), tailor-made organisms (new foods and medicines), nanotechnology, and new energy sources. Kaku does not ignore the potential downside of these developments, examining such nightmare scenarios as robot killing machines fighting future wars and a revived eugenics movement. But if all goes well, says Kaku, we may well develop into a true planetary society, the first step toward making the entire universe our home. With this fascinating volume, Kaku positions himself as a worthy successor to the late Carl Sagan as a spokesman for the potential of science to revolutionize our lives. (Author tour) --

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I have been a huge fan of Michio since the late 90s and read every book he puts out. Somehow this one slipped by me and I had to go back and get it. You know you are reading a Kaku book because he elegantly explains complicated subject matter that both novices and experts can relate to. I would like to be revived 500 years after I die and make a checklist of Michio's predictions from this book and other and see how accurate he was. Like Jules Verne, people a century and a half from now will look back on Michio's writings and predictions about the future and wonder how we got it so right. If even a quarter of what Michio says in this book comes to be, the future will be amazing!

As I write this Visions is thirteen years old, and many of the reviews go back nearly that far. So, since this book is predicting things that are supposed to happen, and as of now (June 2011) many of the things the author predicts are supposed to have already happened, I can do a quick review with the benefit of hindsight. And the verdict is: He nails it! Remember, in 1998 the internet was relatively new, dial-up connection speeds of 128 baud were considered fast, more people than not still had rabbit ears on their televisions. Michio Kaku posits that by 2010 we'll have flat screen televisions light enough to hang on a wall (there'll be competition between LCD and plasma models), cable companies will be taking over voice communication from the copper-wired telephone companies, movies will be available on demand on computers (once they break the 4Mbps barrier ... I just upgraded my home system to 40Mbps a few weeks ago), and a lot more that in fact has turned out to be absolutely true and correct. He doesn't use the term "the cloud" but he describes exactly what it is, and it's happening now. He's even pretty close on the timing. Obviously the further you look into the future the harder it is to predict with accuracy. But Dr. Kaku has been so spot on during the first section that his credibility with the fascinating parts to follow is beyond question. Yes, he might be off on some things, but based on his earlier success he probably won't be off by

much. Another thing about this author is that although he's a Big Brain he can put things in terms easily grasped by us Merely Normals. The book isn't like a text book, it's like an inspirational speech. In short, fun to read. So yeah, it's getting close to being old enough to want to borrow the keys to the car, but it's still quite viable, very readable, enjoyable and thought provoking. I read two to three books a week, mostly fiction, followed by history and biographies. This is the first "science" book I've read in several years and it's going to lead me to buy more, especially by this author. What better recommendation can anyone give than that?

I think this guy is AWESOME! I wish people like this would teach classes. It would be, what's the word.....INTERESTING! A child might actually retain something (called learning). If the man who helped come up with String Theory can write a book that a great majority of people can understand, why is it that most text books are boring, ramble on and on about a bunch of crap that's more convoluted than tangled string, and present it in a format that's not laid out in a manner to help a person learn? (I'm an old dog going back to school for a new degree....that's how I know this type of "alleged learning" is still happening today).

A really complex book with technical jargon from an acclaimed physicist who knows his set topics well. The book establishes three key scientific revolutions that have, are, or will shape our human civilization for years to come.

Love this book! Written for the layman in the late 90's, Kaku realistically predicts our future based on interviews with the scientists at the leading edge. His predictions of auto-driving cars, commuter drones, and more 2020, is unfolding around us now. Robots, artificial intelligence, long-life extension...we have an very exciting future ahead. Worthy read.

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