

# Review of Wikipedia Article on Parallel Universes

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parallel\\_universe\\_\(fiction\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parallel_universe_(fiction))

*“A parallel universe or alternative reality is a hypothetical or fictional self-contained separate reality coexisting with one's own.”*

The article also explains that an alternative reality can be a variant of our own, which is a key concept for my specific project, whereas a parallel universe may not have any relationship with our own world. It suggests that in a parallel universe the current laws of physics may not apply or may be different, for example, unlike in this universe where the speed of light is a constant. The quantum mechanical definition of parallel universes is of universes being separated by a single quantum event.

The article gives a history of science fiction and fantasy, which uses the concept of other worlds such as heaven and hell, Narnia and Wonderland (from Alice in Wonderland). Typically this is accessed via a form of portal, such as the wardrobe (in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, C.S. Lewis). The author has created a situation where the characters travel between the fantasy world and our own, or when the characters from another world leave and enter into our world.

It also says that it is a common treatment in science fiction to have things happening simultaneously, but with a range of plots and consequences. For example, significant historical events may have taken a different course.

One version of the concept of a parallel universe is where the universes shared a common history up to a particular point, where an event caused a point of divergence. In my project, the alternative universe is darker and creepier than our own, with the famous landmarks of Plymouth, such as Smeaton's Tower and Guildhall, adorned with massive crows, a gigantic prawn creature (from the surreal prawn sculpture near the Mayflower Steps in Plymouth), and a Dali-esque ostrich-bear-hedgehog.

In the section about films, it is explained that some time travel films such as *Back to the Future* use alternative realities to show what would happen when the characters interfere with their own history, creating a separate dystopic alternative universe, which they must correct by repeating their time travel to prevent themselves from causing it.

The article argues that, “strictly speaking, the universes are not parallel in that they cannot co-exist, rather they oscillate between one or the other”. In my augmented reality world, this alternative universe is oscillating with our own world; however, in my project the worlds can coexist.

The article also examines television programmes such as *Doctor Who* and *The Hitchhikers’ Guide to the Galaxy* in terms of their use of parallel universes. In the *Doctor Who* episode *Inferno*, the Doctor accidentally travels to a parallel universe when repairing the TARDIS console. This parallel universe is the same as ours but with some differences. In Douglas Adams’ book from the *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* series, he uses the idea of probability as a fifth dimension.

The article also mentions situations where parallel universes are used as a prison for evil beings, such as John Carpenter’s film *Prince of Darkness* (1987). In the film what is believed to be the essence of Satan is trapped in a glass canister found in a church, but it turns out to be an alien ‘son’ of something evil and powerful.

In conclusion, this article gives a range of examples of the use of the idea of parallel universe and alternative realities in fiction, considering the different media used. In my review, I’ve focused on how the article covers the use in science fiction, film and television.