

*There has been a lot of debate in the scientific and philosophical communities regarding what will happen if someone travels back in time. Reviewing the literature, I perceive a real danger here.*

*Some believe that time is fixed, that a traveler to the past will not be able to take any action which will prevent his trip to the past, but will rather cause that trip. It has been simplified to a billiard ball problem, and stated that a billiard ball which travels back in time and collides with itself will alter its own trajectory such that it will travel to the past and strike itself. This fails the test of Occam's Razor: in this case, the object will never travel to the past, because it is simpler to assume that it never collides with itself than that in doing so it causes its own trajectory. By this theory, my plan to travel back in time and kill my younger self must be doomed to fail, since success would prevent the attempt. If this is the case, nothing will come of my trip except that there will be two of me for one day, and the older one will survive to the next day, remembering having made the trip.*

*Others suggest that there are many parallel universes, and that a trip backwards in time automatically delivers a person to another universe; thus any changes made will not affect the causes which led to the trip, which are in another world. This is intrinsically not time travel, except in the sense of traveling in what has been called "sideways time" to parallel dimensions. Further, the scientific discussion revolved around time travel by wormhole, in which the time differential was created by a difference in velocity between the ends of the tunnel. Such time dilation clearly does not cause those affected to move to another universe; since the days of supersonic travel and more so with the advent of interplanetary travel, we have experienced such time dilation on a regular basis, and those so affected do not seem to be shifted to another dimension. Were it otherwise, they would pass through an infinite number of dimensions, as the change in time for them is incremental. Thus the wormhole theory must deliver travelers to the past of the same universe. Whether there are ways to travel to other dimensions is immaterial; the science of time travel suggests that we can travel to our own past. Even so, if this theory is correct, the result of my experiment will be that my older self will be able to kill my younger self, and yet will survive to the next day—a different result demonstrating by experiment which theory is true.*

*However, there is a third theory found in obscure works of entertainment from the end of the last century. This could be called the replacement timeline theory. The theory contends that ANY trip to the past rewrites history, and thus undoes its own cause, writing a new history between the point of departure and the point of arrival. When time reaches the original point of departure, it must confirm itself by causing the changes in history, or else repeat that history with the new alterations until it does so. This results in one of three possible anomalies in time. The first, and simplest, has been called the N-jump; it occurs if a time traveler's actions will not interfere with himself in any way which would affect his actions. An observer who poses as a beggar in Rome and does not interfere in any way would most likely cause this, as his actions are unlikely to make any critical changes in history and thus he will make the same trip at the same time. The second, the most likely, is an infinity loop; in this case, the traveler has somehow prevented his own trip, thus undoing the cause of his presence in the past. This is the predicted result of my experiment: when my younger self dies, he will be unable to make the trip back to kill his younger self, who will therefore survive to make the trip. The day will repeat perpetually, alternating between the two timelines. The third outcome, originally called a sawtooth snap, has been dubbed a cycling causality by some; this occurs when something in time changes which affects the time journey but does not prevent it. A traveler who tells himself about his trip is likely to create a sawtooth snap, because his younger self has new information and will probably do things differently when he makes the same trip; if he also conveys information to his younger self, it is likely to be different information, and so the repetitions will continue until the information delivered stabilizes. A sawtooth snap will eventually become either an infinity loop or an N-jump, depending on whether it establishes its own cause in a single time line or fails to cause itself at some point. Infinity loops stemming from sawtooth snaps may have innumerable distinct repeating histories, any number of which could be part of the loop. A sawtooth snap similarly occurs if any one person in the repeating anomaly is aware of the repetition. My experiment should create an infinity loop; if so, no one will ever know the results. For this reason, I have chosen to travel back in time and shoot myself on the happiest day in the lives of the most people in the world, Unification Day.*

