WHAT IS REAL?

Space -Time Singularities or Quantum Black Holes? Dark Matter or Planck Mass Particles? General Relativity or Quantum Gravity? Volume or Area Entropy Law?

BALUNGI FRANCIS

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DEDICATION

To Carlo Rovelli

PREFACE

What exactly is physical reality? In elegant and accessible prose, theoretical physicist Balungi Francis leads us on a wondrous journey from space-time singularities to Quantum Black Holes without information loss, from the Bekenstein-Hawking Area entropy law to his famous Volume entropy law of Black holes, from Modified Newtonian Dynamics, Dark Matter to Planck mass particles, from White Dwarfs to Black Holes and from General Relativity to his own work in Quantum Gravity. As he shows us how the idea of reality has evolved overtime, Balungi offers deeper explanations of the theories he introduced so concisely in Quantum Gravity in a Nutshell1. Balungi invites us to imagine a marvelous world where space breaks up into tiny grains, singularities disappears, information loss in BHs resolved, time disappears at the smallest scales, and black holes are waiting to explode.

This wonderful and exciting book is optimal for physics graduate students and researchers. The physical explanations are exceedingly well written and integrated with formulas. Quantum Gravity is the next big thing and this book will help the reader understand and use the theory.

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What is real? Is it Volume or Area Entropy Law of Black Holes?

The development of general relativity followed a publication of acceleration under special relativity in 1907 by Albert Einstein. In his article, he argued that any mass will "Distort" the region of space around it so that all freely moving objects will follow the same curved paths curving toward the mass producing the distortions. Then in 1916, Schwarzschild found a solution to the Einstein field equations, laying the groundwork for the description of gravitational collapse and eventually black holes.

A black hole is created when a dying star collapses to a singular point, concealed by an "event horizon;" the black hole is so dense and has such strong gravity that nothing, including light, can escape it; black holes are predicted by general relativity, and though they cannot be "seen," several have been inferred from astronomical observations of binary stars and massive collapsed stars at the centers of galaxies.

These objects have puzzled the minds of great thinkers for many years. History puts it that, they were first predicated by John Michell and Pierre-Simon Laplace in the 18th century but David Finkelstein was the first person to publish a promising explanation of them in 1958 based on Karl Schwarz child's formulations of a solution to general relativity that characterized black holes in 1916.

In 1971, Hawking developed what is known as the second law of black hole mechanics in which the total area of the event horizons of any collection of classical black holes can never decrease, even if they collide and merge. This was similar to the second law of thermodynamics which states that, the entropy of a system can never decrease.

Then in 1972 Bekenstein proposed an analogy between black hole physics and thermodynamics in which he derived a relation between the entropy of black hole entropy and the area of its event horizon.

$$S = \frac{Akc^3}{4G\hbar}$$

In 1974, Hawking predicted an entirely astonishing phenomenon about black holes, in which he ascertained with accuracy that black holes do radiate or emit particles in a perfect black body spectrum.

$$T = \frac{\hbar c^3}{8\pi GMk}$$

The Bekenstein-Hawking area entropy law raises a number of questions. Why does the entropy of a Black hole scale with its area and not with its volume? For systems that we have studied, the entropy is proportional to the volume of the system. If entropy is proportional to area, so what do we make of all those thermodynamic relations that include volume, like Boyle's law or descriptions for a gas in a box? In otherwords how do we associate volume to the entropy of a Black hole?

In the previous section we defined a Black hole as a mathematical spacetime singularity that is, a position in space where quantities used to determine the gravitational field become infinite; such quantities include the curvature of spacetime and the density of matter. That is, for high or infinite densites where matter is enclosed in a very small volume of space General relativity breaks down.

Quantum mechanics suggests that there may be no such thing in nature as a point in space-time, implying that space-time is always smeared out, occupying some minimum region. The minimum smeared-out volume of space-time is a profound property in any quantized theory of gravity and such an outcome lies in a widespread expectation that singularities will be resolved in a quantum theory of gravity. Therefore associating area to the entropy of a black hole means that the black hole has no volume which may not be true in a theory of quantum mechanics in curved space-time.

If density is the amount of energy contained within a given volume of space, then a Black hole must have a density and its volume will be determined by the amount of space enclosed by the surface area of its event horizon. Then from our famous equation (1) we can derive the volume entropy law of a Black hole. Let the energy density of a black hole be given as the work done on the system by exterior agents (W) per unit volume (V),

$$\rho = \frac{W}{V} = \frac{F^2}{8\pi\alpha\hbar c}$$

Since the gravitational force of a black hole is very strong and is given by, $F = \frac{c^4}{G}$. Then the work done by exterior agents on a black hole is related to its volume as,

$$W = \frac{c^7}{8\pi\alpha\hbar G^2} \mathbf{V} = \mathbf{P}\mathbf{V} \tag{6}$$

Where, P denotes the Planck pressure (or energy density) of a Black hole.

Since entropy is the quantity of heat or workdone (W) per unit temperature of a black hole (T) then from the following simple rule we derive the temperature of a Black hole as,

$$E_{pl} = NkT$$

Where, E_{pl} is the Planck energy, k is the Boltzmann constant and N is the Avagadro number given as,

$$N = \frac{W}{E_{pl}}$$

From which the temperature of a Black hole is given by

$$T = \frac{\alpha \hbar^2 G}{kc^2 V}$$

If the Black hole is a sphere with a Planck length $l_p = 1.616 \times 10^{-35} m$, then the volume of this Black hole is approximately, l_p^{3} . Therefore a Black hole with this volume will have the temperature $T = 1.416 \times 10^{32} K$ and this is exactly the earliest temperature in the history of the universe.

Then finally the entropy of a Black hole will be given as

$$S = \frac{W}{T}$$

$$S = \frac{V^2 k c^9}{8\pi \alpha^2 \hbar^3 G^3} \approx \frac{V^2 k}{8 l_p^6}$$
(7)

This reduces to the Bekenstein-Hawking area entropy law when the volume of the black hole is,

$$V = l_p^2 \sqrt{2A} \tag{8}$$

As we said earlier the volume of a Black hole is determined by the amount of space enclosed by the surface area of its event horizon.

This section has presented a new approach to the entropy of Black holes. The major result of the research is the derivation of the volume entropy law that is different from the Bekenstein-Hawking area entropy law. As far as this book is concerned there is no other theory from which such a calculation can proceed. Hence the methods used in here are the only one from which a detailed quantum theory of gravity precedes and where the result of the volume entropy law can be achieved.

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Is it Dark Matter, MOND or Quantum Black Holes?

Since the 1970s and early 1980s, a growing amount of observational data has been accumulating that shows that Newtonian and Einstein gravity cannot describe the motion of the outermost stars and gas in galaxies correctly, if only their visible mass is accounted for in the gravitational field equations.

To save Einstein's and Newton's theories, many physicists and astronomers have postulated that there must exist a large amount of "dark matter" in galaxies and also clusters of galaxies that could strengthen the pull of gravity and lead to an agreement of the theories with the data. This invisible and undetected matter removes any need to modify Newton's and Einstein's gravitational theories. Invoking dark matter is a less radical, less scary alternative for most physicists than inventing a new theory of gravity.



Fig. Galaxy data that show that Newtonian and Einstein gravity do not fit the observed speed of stars in orbits inside a galaxy such as NGC 6503

If dark matter is not detected and does not exist, then Einstein's and Newton's gravity theories must be modified. Can this be done successfully?

Yes it can be done only if we develop a theory that can determine the values of the vacuum energy density and cosmological constant which have been observed experimentally by Planck collaboration (2018) ($\rho = 5.364 \times 10^{-10} J/m^3$ and $\Lambda = 1.11 \times 10^{-52}$) with confidence. Attempts to find a way to measure or to calculate the value of the vacuum energy density and the cosmological constant have all either failed or

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Epilogue

I hope that this book has succeeded in describing to you, the reader, how difficult it is to try to wrest precious, fundamental secrets from nature. That quest can be compared to climbing a mountain, and when reaching the peak, seeing another higher mountain that tempts us to ascend to even greater heights. And when we do reach the higher peak, we discover as we look across the valley yet another peak that calls. In the end, it is the wonderful experience of scaling the mountain-of attempting to understand the secrets of nature-that motivates us as scientists. There is of course the additional thrill, upon reaching the top of a mountain, to ram in the flagpole announcing one's victory. But that is only a momentary emotion soon superseded by the new challenges presented by the higher peak on the horizon.

For readers who have a background in physics, let us think about Einstein's gravitational theory in an abstract, whole sense. Then let us think about QG. Do we get the same aesthetic pleasure from considering QG as we do from Einstein's gravity theory? To reach a true appreciation of the elegance of QG as a gravity theory, it is necessary to explore all the technical details of QG and see how it works as a whole theoretical framework. One has to experience its successes in explaining data and naturally allowing for a cosmology with no singularity at the beginning of the universe, and no dark matter, and a unified description of the accelerating universe. Only after the laborious work of achieving a technical understanding of QG's theoretical structure can one truly appreciate QG's elegance. I hope that future generations of physicists will be motivated to study the theory in the same depth as Carlo Rovelli, Joel Brownstein, and I have done, and appreciate its intrinsic beauty.

There is still important research to perform before we have a complete picture of where we stand with quantum gravity. Perhaps with more attention being paid by other physicists who can investigate QG and apply it to other observational data, we will arrive at a more convincing stateof-the-art of gravity. The ultimate tests for QG, or any alternative gravity theory, can be stated simply: With a minimum number of assumptions that are physically consistent, how much observational data can be explained? More important, can the theory make testable predictions that cannot be accounted for by competing theories? In the latter part of this book, I have suggested several ways that future observations and experiments can verify or falsify QG.

In probing the mysteries of nature, physicists need to have faith that we can through mathematical equations reach a true understanding of nature such that the predictions of our equations can be verified by experiment or observation. We need to continually aspire to that goal despite the modern trend in theoretical physics of indulging in speculations that can never be proved or falsified by reality.

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Glossary

Absolute space and time—the Newtonian concepts of space and time, in which space is independent of the material bodies within it, and time flows at the same rate throughout the universe without regard to the locations of different observers and their experience of "now."

Acceleration—the rate at which the speed or velocity of a body changes.

Accelerating universe—the discovery in 1998, through data from very distant supernovae, that the expansion of the universe in the wake of the big bang is not slowing down, but is actually speeding up at this point in its history; groups of astronomers in California and Australia independently discovered that the light from the supernovae appears dimmer than would be expected if the universe were slowing down.

Action—the mathematical expression used to describe a physical system by requiring only the knowledge of the initial and final states of the system; the values of the physical variables at all intermediate states are determined by minimizing the action.

Anthropic principle—the idea that our existence in the universe imposes constraints on its properties; an extreme version claims that we owe our existence to this principle.

Asymptotic freedom (or safety)—a property of quantum field theory in which the strength of the coupling between elementary particles vanishes with increasing energy and/or decreasing distance, such that the elementary particles approach free particles with no external forces acting on them; moreover for decreasing energy and/or increasing distance between the particles, the strength of the particle force increases indefinitely. **Baryon**—a subatomic particle composed of three quarks, such as the proton and neutron.

Big bang theory—the theory that the universe began with a violent explosion of spacetime, and that matter and energy originated from an infinitely small and dense point.

Big crunch—similar to the big bang, this idea postulates an end to the universe in a singularity.

Binary stars—a common astrophysical system in which two stars rotate around each other; also called a "double star."

Blackbody—a physical system that absorbs all radiation that hits it, and emits characteristic radiation energy depending upon temperature; the concept of blackbodies is useful, among other things, in learning the temperature of stars.

Black hole—created when a dying star collapses to a singular point, concealed by an "event horizon;" the black hole is so dense and has such strong gravity that nothing, including light, can escape it; black holes are predicted by general relativity, and though they cannot be "seen," several have been inferred from astronomical observations of binary stars and massive collapsed stars at the centers of galaxies.

Boson—a particle with integer spin, such as photons, mesons, and gravitons, which carries the forces between fermions.

Brane—shortened from "membrane," a higher-dimensional extension of a onedimensional string.

Cassini spacecraft—NASA mission to Saturn, launched in 1997, that in addition to making detailed studies of Saturn and its moons, determined a bound on the variations of Newton's gravitational constant with time.

Causality—the concept that every event has in its past events that caused it, but no event can play a role in causing events in its past.

Classical theory—a physical theory, such as Newton's gravity theory or Einstein's general relativity, that is concerned with the macroscopic universe, as opposed to theories concerning events at the submicroscopic level such

as quantum mechanics and the standard model of particle physics.

Copernican revolution—the paradigm shift begun by Nicolaus Copernicus in the early sixteenth century, when he identified the sun, rather than the Earth, as the center of the known universe.

Cosmic microwave background (CMB)—the first significant evidence for the big bang theory; initially found in 1964 and studied further by NASA teams in 1989 and the early 2000s, the CMB is a smooth signature of microwaves everywhere in the sky, representing the "afterglow" of the big bang: Infrared light produced about 400,000 years after the big bang had redshifted through the stretching of spacetime during fourteen billion years of expansion to the microwave part of the electromagnetic spectrum, revealing a great deal of information about the early universe.

Cosmological constant—a mathematical term that Einstein inserted into his gravity field equations in 1917 to keep the universe static and eternal; although he later regretted this and called it his "biggest blunder," cosmologists today still use the cosmological constant, and some equate it with the mysterious dark energy.

Coupling constant—a term that indicates the strength of an interaction between particles or fields; electric charge and Newton's gravitational constant are coupling constants.

Crystalline spheres—concentric transparent spheres in ancient Greek cosmology that held the moon, sun, planets, and stars in place and made them revolve around the Earth; they were part of the western conception of the universe until the Renaissance.

Curvature—the deviation from a Euclidean spacetime due to the warping of the geometry by massive bodies.

Dark energy—a mysterious form of energy that has been associated with negative pressure vacuum energy and Einstein's cosmological constant; it is hypothesized to explain the data on the accelerating expansion of the universe; according to the standard model, the dark energy, which is spread uniformly

throughout the universe, makes up about 70 percent of the total mass and energy content of the universe.

Dark matter—invisible, not-yet-detected, unknown particles of matter, representing about 30 percent of the total mass of matter according to the standard model; its presence is necessary if Newton's and Einstein's gravity theories are to fit data from galaxies, clusters of galaxies, and cosmology; together, dark

matter and dark energy mean that 96 percent of the matter and energy in the universe is invisible.

Deferent—in the ancient Ptolemaic concept of the universe, a large circle representing the orbit of a planet around the Earth.

Doppler principle or **Doppler effect**—the discovery by the nineteenth-century Austrian scientist Christian Doppler that when sound or light waves are moving toward an observer, the apparent frequency of the waves will be shortened, while if they are moving away from an observer, they will be lengthened; in

astronomy this means that the light emitted by galaxies moving away from us is redshifted, and that from nearby galaxies moving toward us is blueshifted.

Dwarf galaxy—a small galaxy (containing several billion stars) orbiting a larger galaxy; the Milky Way has over a dozen dwarf galaxies as companions, including the Large Magellanic Cloud and Small Magellanic Cloud.

Dynamics—the physics of matter in motion.

Electromagnetism—the unified force of electricity and magnetism, discovered to be the same phenomenon by Michael Faraday and James Clerk Maxwell in the nineteenth century.

Electromagnetic radiation—a term for wave motion of electromagnetic fields which propagate with the speed of light—300,000 kilometers per second—and differ only in

wavelength; this includes visible light, ultraviolet light, infrared radiation,

X-rays, gamma rays, and radio waves.

Electron—an elementary particle carrying negative charge that orbits the nucleus of an atom.

Eötvös experiments—torsion balance experiments performed by Hungarian Count Roland von Eötvös in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that showed that inertial and gravitational mass were the same to one part in 1011; this was a more accurate determination of the equivalence principle than results achieved by Isaac Newton and, later, Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel.

Epicycle—in the Ptolemaic universe, a pattern of small circles traced out by a planet at the edge of its "deferent" as it orbited the Earth; this was how the Greeks accounted for the apparent retrograde motions of the planets.

Equivalence principle—the phenomenon first noted by Galileo that bodies falling in a gravitational field fall at the same rate, independent of their weight and composition; Einstein extended the principle to show that gravitation is identical (equivalent) to acceleration.

Escape velocity—the speed at which a body must travel in order to escape a strong gravitational field; rockets fired into orbits around the Earth have calculated escape velocities, as do galaxies at the periphery of galaxy clusters.

Ether (or aether)—a substance whose origins were in the Greek concept of "quintessence," the ether was the medium through which energy and matter moved, something more than a vacuum and less than air; in the late nineteenth century the Michelson-Morley experiment disproved the existence of the ether.

Euclidean geometry—plane geometry developed by the third-century **bc** Greek mathematician Euclid; in this geometry, parallel lines never meet.

Fermion—a particle with half-integer spin, like protons and electrons, that make up matter.

Field—a physical term describing the forces between massive bodies in gravity and electric charges in electromagnetism; Michael Faraday discovered the concept of field when studying magnetic conductors.

Field equations—differential equations describing the physical properties of interacting massive particles in gravity and electric charges in electromagnetism; Maxwell's equations for electromagnetism and Einstein's equations of gravity are prominent examples in physics.

Fifth force or **"skew" force**—a new force in MOG that has the effect of modifying gravity over limited length scales; it is carried by a particle with mass called the phion.

Fine-tuning—the unnatural cancellation of two or more large numbers involving an absurd number of decimal places, when one is attempting to explain a physical phenomenon; this signals that a true understanding of the physical phenomenon has not been achieved.

Fixed stars—an ancient Greek concept in which all the stars were static in the sky, and moved around the Earth on a distant crystalline sphere.

Frame of reference—the three spatial coordinates and one time coordinate that an observer uses to denote the position of a particle in space and time.

Galaxy—organized group of hundreds of billions of stars, such as our Milky Way.

Galaxy cluster—many galaxies held together by mutual gravity but not in as organized a fashion as stars within a single galaxy.

Galaxy rotation curve—a plot of the Doppler shift data recording the observed velocities of stars in galaxies; those stars at the periphery of giant spiral galaxies are observed to be going faster than they "should be" according to Newton's and Einstein's gravity theories.

General relativity—Einstein's revolutionary gravity theory, created in 1916 from a mathematical generalization of his theory of special relativity; it changed our concept of gravity

from Newton's universal force to the warping of the geometry of spacetime in the presence of matter and energy.

Geodesic—the shortest path between two neighboring points, which is a straight line in Euclidian geometry, and a unique curved path in four-dimensional spacetime.

Globular cluster—a relatively small, dense system of up to millions of stars occurring commonly in galaxies.

Gravitational lensing—the bending of light by the curvature of spacetime; galaxies and clusters of galaxies act as lenses, distorting the images of distant bright galaxies or quasars as the light passes through or near them.

Gravitational mass—the active mass of a body that produces a gravitational force on other bodies.

Gravitational waves—ripples in the curvature of spacetime predicted by general relativity; although any accelerating body can produce gravitational radiation or waves, those that could be detected by experiments would be caused by cataclysmic cosmic events.

Graviton—the hypothetical smallest packet of gravitational energy, comparable to the photon for electromagnetic energy; the graviton has not yet been seen experimentally.

Group (in mathematics)—in abstract algebra, a set that obeys a binary operation that satisfies certain axioms; for example, the property of addition of integers makes a group; the branch of mathematics that studies groups is called group theory.

Hadron—a generic word for fermion particles that undergo strong nuclear interactions.

Hamiltonian—an alternative way of deriving the differential equations of motion for a physical system using the calculus of variations; Hamilton's principle is also called the "principle of stationary action" and was originally formulated by Sir William Rowan Hamilton for classical mechanics; the principle applies to classical fields such as the gravitational and electromagnetic fields, and has had important applications in quantum mechanics and quantum field theory.

Homogeneous—in cosmology, when the universe appears the same to all observers, no matter where they are in the universe.

Inertia—the tendency of a body to remain in uniform motion once it is moving, and to stay at rest if it is at rest; Galileo discovered the law of inertia in the early seventeenth century.

Inertial mass—the mass of a body that resists an external force; since Newton, it has been known experimentally that inertial and gravitational mass are equal; Einstein used this equivalence of inertial and gravitational mass to postulate his equivalence principle, which was a cornerstone of his gravity theory.

Inflation theory—a theory proposed by Alan Guth and others to resolve the flatness, horizon, and homogeneity problems in the standard big bang model; the very early universe is pictured as expanding exponentially fast in a fraction of a second.

Interferometry—the use of two or more telescopes, which in combination create a receiver in effect as large as the distance between them; radio astronomy in particular makes use of interferometry.

Inverse square law—discovered by Newton, based on earlier work by Kepler, this law states that the force of gravity between two massive bodies or point particles decreases as the inverse square of the distance between them.

Isotropic—in cosmology, when the universe looks the same to an observer, no matter in which direction she looks.

Kelvin temperature scale—designed by Lord Kelvin (William Thomson) in the mid-1800s to measure very cold temperatures, its starting point is absolute zero, the coldest possible temperature in the universe, corresponding to –

273.15 degrees Celsius; water's freezing point is 273.15K (0°C), while its boiling point is 373.15K (100°C).

Lagrange points—discovered by the Italian-French mathematician Joseph-Louis Lagrange, these five special points are in the vicinity of two orbiting masses where a third, smaller mass can orbit at a fixed distance from the larger masses; at the Lagrange points, the gravitational pull of the two large masses precisely equals the centripetal force required to keep the third body, such as a satellite, in a bound orbit; three of the Lagrange points are unstable, two are stable.

Lagrangian—named after Joseph-Louis Lagrange, and denoted by L, this mathematical expression summarizes the dynamical properties of a physical system; it is defined in classical mechanics as the kinetic energy T minus the potential energy V; the equations of motion of a system of particles may be derived from the Euler-Lagrange equations, a family of partial differential equations.

Light cone—a mathematical means of expressing past, present, and future space and time in terms of spacetime geometry; in four-dimensional Minkowski spacetime, the light rays emanating from or arriving at an event separate spacetime into a past cone and a future cone which meet at a point corresponding

to the event.

Lorentz transformations—

mathematical transformations from one inertial frame of reference to another such that the laws of physics remain the same; named after Hendrik Lorentz, who developed them in 1904, these transformations form the basic mathematical equations underlying special relativity.

Mercury anomaly—a phenomenon in which the perihelion of Mercury's orbit advances more rapidly than predicted by Newton's equations of gravity; when Einstein showed that his gravity theory predicted the anomalous precession, it was the first empirical evidence that general relativity might be correct. **Meson**—a short-lived boson composed of a quark and an antiquark, believed to bind protons and neutrons together in the atomic nucleus.

Metric tensor—mathematical symmetric tensor coefficients that determine the infinitesimal distance between two points in spacetime; in effect the metric tensor distinguishes between Euclidean and non-Euclidean geometry.

Michelson-Morley experiment—1887 experiment by Albert Michelson and Edward Morley that proved that the ether did not exist; beams of light traveling in the same direction, and in the perpendicular direction, as the supposed ether showed no difference in speed or arrival time at their destination.

Milky Way—the spiral galaxy that contains our solar system. **Minkowski spacetime**—the geometrically flat spacetime, with no gravitational effects, first described by the Swiss mathematician Hermann Minkowski; it became the setting of Einstein's theory of gravity.

MOG—my relativistic modified theory of gravitation, which generalizes Einstein's general relativity; MOG stands for "Modified Gravity."

MOND—a modification of Newtonian gravity published by Mordehai Milgrom in 1983; this is a nonrelativistic phenomenological model used to describe rotational velocity curves of galaxies; MOND stands for "Modified Newtonian Dynamics."

Neutrino—an elementary particle with zero electric charge; very difficult to detect, it is created in radioactive decays and is able to pass through matter almost undisturbed; it is considered to have a tiny mass that has not yet been accurately measured.

Neutron—an elementary and electrically neutral particle found in the atomic nucleus, and having about the same mass as the proton.

Nuclear force—another name for the strong force that binds protons and neutrons together in the atomic nucleus.

Nucleon—a generic name for a proton or neutron within the atomic nucleus.

Neutron star—the collapsed core of a star that remains after a supernova explosion; it is extremely dense, relatively small, and composed of neutrons.

Newton's gravitational constant—the constant of proportionality, G, which occurs in the Newtonian law of gravitation, and says that the attractive force between

two bodies is proportional to the product of their masses and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them; its numerical value is: $G = 6.67428 \pm 0.00067 \times 10-11$ m3 kg-1 s-2.

Nonsymmetric field theory (Einstein)—a mathematical description of the geometry of spacetime based on a metric tensor that has both a symmetric part and an antisymmetric part; Einstein used this geometry to formulate a unified field theory of gravitation and electromagnetism.

Nonsymmetric Gravitation Theory (NGT)—my generalization of Einstein's purely gravitation theory (general relativity) that introduces the antisymmetric field as an extra component of the gravitational field; mathematically speaking, the nonsymmetric field structure is described by a non-Riemannian geometry.

Parallax—the apparent movement of a nearer object relative to a distant background when one views the object from two different positions; used with triangulation for measuring distances in astronomy.

Paradigm shift—a revolutionary change in belief, popularized by the philosopher Thomas Kuhn, in which the majority of scientists in a given field discard a traditional theory of nature in favor of a new one that passes the tests of experiment and observation; Darwin's theory of natural selection, Newton's gravity theory, and Einstein's general relativity all represented paradigm shifts.

Parsec—a unit of astronomical length equal to 3.262 light years.

Particle-wave duality—the fact that light in all parts of the electromagnetic spectrum (including radio waves, X-rays, etc., as well as visible light) sometimes acts like waves and sometimes acts like particles or photons; gravitation may be similar, manifesting as waves in spacetime or graviton particles.

Perihelion—the position in a planet's elliptical orbit when it is closest to the sun.

Perihelion advance—the movement, or changes, in the position of a planet's perihelion in successive revolutions of its orbit over time; the most dramatic perihelion advance is Mercury's, whose orbit traces a rosette pattern.

Perturbation theory—a mathematical method for finding an approximate solution to an equation that cannot be solved exactly, by expanding the solution in a series in which each successive term is smaller than the preceding one.

Phion—name given to the massive vector field in MOG; it is represented both by a boson particle, which carries the fifth force, and a field.

Photoelectric effect—the ejection of electrons from a metal by X-rays, which proved the existence of photons; Einstein's explanation of this effect in 1905 won him the Nobel Prize in 1921; separate experiments proving and demonstrating

the existence of photons were performed in 1922 by Thomas Millikan and Arthur Compton, who received the Nobel Prize for this work in 1923 and 1927, respectively.

Photon—the quantum particle that carries the energy of electromagnetic waves; the spin of the photon is 1 times Planck's constant h.

Pioneer 10 and 11 spacecraft—launched by NASA in the early 1970s to explore the outer solar system, these spacecraft show a small, anomalous acceleration as they leave the inner solar system.

Planck's constant (h)—a fundamental constant that plays a crucial role in quantum mechanics, determining the size of

quantum packages of energy such as the photon; it is named after Max Planck, a founder of quantum mechanics

Principle of general covariance—Einstein's principle that the laws of physics remain the same whatever the frame of reference an observer uses to measure physical quantities.

Principle of least action—more accurately the principle of *stationary* action, this variational principle, when applied to a mechanical system or a field theory, can be used to derive the equations of motion of the system; the credit for discovering the principle is given to Pierre-Louis Moreau Maupertius but it may have been discovered independently by Leonhard Euler or Gottfried Leibniz.

Proton—an elementary particle that carries positive electrical charge and is the nucleus of a hydrogen atom.

Ptolemaic model of the universe—the predominant theory of the universe until the Renaissance, in which the Earth was the heavy center of the universe and all other heavenly bodies, including the moon, sun, planets, and stars, orbited around it; named for Claudius Ptolemy.

Quantize—to apply the principles of quantum mechanics to the behavior of matter and energy (such as the electromagnetic or gravitational field energy); breaking down a field into its smallest units or packets of energy.

Quantum field theory—the modern relativistic version of quantum mechanics used to describe the physics of elementary particles; it can also be used in nonrelativistic fieldlike systems in condensed matter physics.

Quantum gravity—attempts to unify gravity with quantum mechanics.

Quantum mechanics—the theory of the interaction between quanta (radiation) and matter; the effects of quantum mechanics become observable at the submicroscopic distance scales of atomic and particle physics, but macroscopic quantum effects can be seen in the phenomenon of quantum entanglement. **Quantum spin**—the intrinsic quantum angular momentum of an elementary particle; this is in contrast to the classical orbital angular momentum of a body rotating about a point in space.

Quark—the fundamental constituent of all particles that interact through the strong nuclear force; quarks are fractionally charged, and come in several varieties; because they are confined within particles such as protons and neutrons, they cannot be detected as free particles.

Quasars—"quasi-stellar objects," the farthest distant objects that can be detected with radio and optical telescopes; they are exceedingly bright, and are believed to be young, newly forming galaxies; it was the discovery of quasars in 1960 that quashed the steady-state theory of the universe in favor of the big bang.

Quintessence—a fifth element in the ancient Greek worldview, along with earth, water, fire and air, whose purpose was to move the crystalline spheres that supported the heavenly bodies orbiting the Earth; eventually this concept became known as the "ether," which provided the *something* that bodies needed to be in contact with in order to move; although Einstein's special theory of relativity dispensed with the ether, recent explanations of the acceleration of the universe call the varying negative pressure vacuum energy "quintessence."

Redshift—a useful phenomenon based on the Doppler principle that can indicate whether and how fast bodies in the universe are receding from an observer's position on Earth; as galaxies move rapidly away from us, the frequency of the wavelength of their light is shifted toward the red end of the electromagnetic

spectrum; the amount of this shifting indicates the distance of the galaxy.

Riemann curvature tensor—a mathematical term that specifies the curvature of four-dimensional spacetime.

Riemannian geometry—a non-Euclidean geometry developed in the mid-nineteenth century by the German mathematician George Bernhard Riemann that describes curved surfaces on which parallel lines *can* converge, diverge, and even intersect, unlike Euclidean geometry; Einstein made Riemannian geometry the mathematical formalism of general relativity.

Satellite galaxy—a galaxy that orbits a host galaxy or even a cluster of galaxies.

Scalar field—a physical term that associates a value without direction to every point in space, such as temperature, density, and pressure; this is in contrast to a vector field, which has a direction in space; in Newtonian physics or in electrostatics, the potential energy is a scalar field and its gradient is the vector force field; in quantum field theory, a scalar field describes a boson particle with spin zero.

Scale invariance—distribution of objects or patterns such that the same shapes and distributions remain if one increases or decreases the size of the length scales or space in which the objects are observed; a common example of scale invariance

is fractal patterns.

Schwarzschild solution—an exact spherically symmetric static solution of Einstein's field equations in general relativity, worked out by the astronomer Karl Schwarzschild in 1916, which predicted the existence of black holes.

Self-gravitating system—a group of objects or astrophysical bodies held together by mutual gravitation, such as a cluster of galaxies; this is in contrast to a "bound system" like our solar system, in which bodies are mainly attracted to and revolve around a central mass.

Singularity—a place where the solutions of differential equations break down; a spacetime singularity is a position in space where quantities used to determine the gravitational field become infinite; such quantities include the curvature of spacetime and the density of matter.

Spacetime—in relativity theory, a combination of the three dimensions of space with time into a four-dimensional geometry; first introduced into relativity by Hermann Minkowski in 1908.

Special theory of relativity—Einstein's initial theory of relativity, published in 1905, in which he explored the "special" case of transforming the laws of physics from one uniformly moving frame of reference to another; the equations

of special relativity revealed that the speed of light is a constant, that objects appear contracted in the direction of motion when moving at close to the speed of light, and that E = mc2, or energy is equal to mass times the speed of light squared.

Spin—see quantum spin.

String theory—a theory based on the idea that the smallest units of matter are not point particles but vibrating strings; a popular research pursuit in physics for two decades, string theory has some attractive mathematical features, but has yet to make a testable prediction.

Strong force—see nuclear force.

Supernova—spectacular, brilliant death of a star by explosion and the release of heavy elements into space; supernovae type 1a are assumed to have the same intrinsic brightness and are therefore used as standard candles in estimating cosmic distances.

Supersymmetry—a theory developed in the 1970s which, proponents claim, describes the most fundamental spacetime symmetry of particle physics: For every boson particle there is a supersymmetric fermion partner, and for every fermion there exists a supersymmetric boson partner; to date, no supersymmetric particle partner has been detected.

Tully-Fisher law—a relation stating that the asymptotically flat rotational velocity of a star in a galaxy, raised to the fourth power, is proportional to the mass or luminosity of the galaxy.

Unified theory (or unified field theory)—a theory that unites the forces of nature; in Einstein's day those forces consisted of electromagnetism and gravity; today the weak and strong nuclear forces must also be taken into account, and perhaps someday MOG's fifth force or skew force will be included; no one has yet discovered a successful unified theory.

Vacuum—in quantum mechanics, the lowest energy state, which corresponds to the vacuum state of particle physics; the vacuum in modern quantum field theory is the state of perfect balance of creation and annihilation of particles and antiparticles.

Variable Speed of Light (VSL) cosmology—an alternative to inflation theory, in which the speed of light was much faster at the beginning of the universe than it is today; like inflation, this theory solves the horizon and flatness problems in the very early universe in the standard big bang model.

Vector field—a physical value that assigns a field with the position and direction of a vector in space; it describes the force field of gravity or the electric and magnetic force fields in James Clerk Maxwell's field equations.

Virial theorem—a means of estimating the average speed of galaxies within galaxy clusters from their estimated average kinetic and potential energies.

Vulcan—a hypothetical planet predicted by the nineteenthcentury astronomer Urbain Jean Joseph Le Verrier to be the closest orbiting planet to the sun; the presence of Vulcan would explain the anomalous precession of the perihelion of Mercury's orbit; Einstein later explained the anomalous precession in general relativity by gravity alone.

Weak force—one of the four fundamental forces of nature, associated with radioactivity such as beta decay in subatomic physics; it is much weaker than the strong nuclear force but still much stronger than gravity.

X-ray clusters—galaxy clusters with large amounts of extremely hot gas within them that emit X-rays; in such

clusters, this hot gas represents at least twice the mass of the luminous stars.

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