The thermodynamic Universe

Exploring the Limits of Physics

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The **thermodynamic** Universe

Exploring the Limits of Physics

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Preface

The progress of Science has had its share of twists and turns, whether it be at the beginning of the nineteenth century or the beginning of the twentieth century, in more recent times. On these two occasions new ideas had to be invoked, indeed were forced upon us which led to a paradigm shift—the Atomic Theory and its consequences in the nineteenth century and Relativity and Quantum Theory in the twentieth century. After a century of dedicated and even frenetic work by some of the greatest minds in the world, it is now becoming apparent that we have reached yet another such turning point.

The attempts to provide a unified description of Quantum Theory and General Relativity or Gravitation have led to approaches like the String Theory and Derivative Theories. There has been impressive progress, particularly in String Theories over the past few decades. At the cosmic scale, the Standard Big Bang Cosmology had been perfected. A complete description of the Universe seemed to be falling into place.

This rosy picture was spoilt in the last years of the twentieth century. On the one hand, we were suddenly confronted with the realization that far from a decelerating Universe, being held back by Dark Matter, the Universe is actually accelerating, driven by Dark Energy. Indeed this had been predicted by the author in 1997 itself. At the micro scale, slowly the realization dawned that the various String Theories were leading to more and more exotic but unrealistic scenarios—our expectation of a Theory of Everything remained far from reality.

We would like to suggest that we are confronted with yet another paradigm shift. Rather than the reductionist approach which was at the heart of twentieth century physics, perhaps we have to invoke a Universe that is “Thermodynamic” in nature, in that fundamental properties result

from collective or cooperative phenomena. That is the theme of this book, which is based on some hundred papers written by the author over the past decade as also two books, “The Chaotic Universe: From the Planck to the Hubble Scale” published by Nova Science, New York and “The Universe of Fluctuations” published by Springer.

There are some satisfying features. Firstly, there is contact and agreement with experiment and observation. Indeed as Prof. Abdus Salam would say, “experiment is at the heart of physics”. Secondly, established conventional theories follow as suitable limiting cases of the present ideas. Furthermore, the ideas are simple and explain several phenomena at once whether it be a mass spectrum formula that gives the masses of all known elementary particles (and predicts others) or the deduction from theory of the supposedly miraculous, but empirical Large Number relations—and so on. This is very much in the spirit of science, finding a common denominator for the goings on in the Universe.

Following the suggestion of some important reviewers, the book has been written with a pedagogic flavour so as to be accessible to a larger audience of graduate and informed students. This has been done at the risk of being repetitive on the one hand, and on the other several simple references have been given.

I would particularly like to express my thanks to my friend, Prof. Walter Greiner, Director of the Frankfurt Institute for Advanced Studies, for his encouragement and suggestions and Mrs. Y. Padma for painstakingly preparing the manuscript.

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Contents

<i>Preface</i>	v
1. The Limits of Physics	1
1.1 Our Scientific Legacy	1
1.2 The Advanced and Retarded Fields	6
1.3 Quantum Mechanical Considerations	11
1.4 The Limits of Special Relativity	14
1.5 Discussion	14
1.6 The Quantum Universe	17
1.7 The Strong and Weak Interactions	19
1.8 Gauge Fields	22
1.9 Standard Cosmology	27
1.10 Bosonic Strings	30
1.11 End of the Road?	34
2. Law Without Law	45
2.1 A “Lawless” Universe?	45
2.2 The Emergence of Spacetime	48
2.3 Spacetime	60
2.4 Further Considerations	61
2.5 The Path Integral Formulation	66
2.6 Remarks	68
3. The Universe of Fluctuations	73
3.1 The New Cosmos	73
3.2 The Mysterious Dark Energy	76

3.3	Issues and Ramifications	84
3.4	Tests	85
3.5	Other Consequences	88
3.6	The Anomalous Acceleration of the Pioneer Spacecrafts .	91
3.7	The Binary Pulsar	91
3.8	Change in Orbital Parameters	93
3.9	Remarks	95
3.10	Further Considerations	109
4.	The Thermodynamic Universe	121
4.1	Introduction	121
4.2	The Planck and Compton Scales	124
4.3	The Transition	130
4.4	Photon Mass	134
4.5	Further Theoretical Support	136
4.6	Remarks	138
4.7	The Mass Spectrum	144
4.8	Further Remarks	146
5.	Spacetime Models and Tests	157
5.1	The Nature of Spacetime	157
5.2	Other Formulations	172
5.3	Multiply Connected Space and Spin	176
5.4	Lorentz Symmetry Violation Tests	179
5.5	The Finsler Spacetime Approach	182
5.6	Remarks	183
5.7	A Test for Non Commutative Spacetime	184
6.	The Origin of Mass, Spin and Interaction	185
6.1	The Unification Mantra	185
6.2	Compton Scale Considerations	190
6.3	Remarks	196
6.4	Fuzzy Spacetime and Fermions	197
6.5	Branes	200
6.6	Dirac’s Membrane and p-branes	201
6.7	A Modified Klein-Gordan Equation	202
6.8	A Modified Dirac Equation	204
7.	The Enigma of Gravitation	207

7.1	Gravitation in a New Light	207
7.2	Remarks	213
7.3	Gravitation and Black Hole Thermodynamics Again . . .	215
7.4	Further Remarks	218
7.5	Gravitation From Fluctuations	220
8.	An Adventurer's Miscellany	223
8.1	“Scaled” Quantum Mechanics	223
8.2	Quantum Geometry I	230
8.3	Quantum Geometry II	233
8.4	Large Scale Structures	235
8.5	The Puzzle of Gravitation	237
8.6	A New Short Range Force	240
8.7	Gravitational Effects	242
8.8	Bosons as Bound States of Fermions: The Neutrino Universe	243
8.9	Quantum Mechanics, General Relativity and The Land- scape of Multiply Connected Universes	247
8.10	The Monopole	253
8.11	Fermions and Bosons	256
	<i>Bibliography</i>	271
	<i>Index</i>	289