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The Lightness Of Being: Mass, Ether, And The Unification Of Forces

THE LIGHTNESS OF BEING
FRANK WILCZEK

MASS, ETHER, AND THE UNIFICATION OF FORCES



Synopsis

Our understanding of nature's deepest reality has changed radically, but almost without our noticing, over the past 25 years. Transcending the clash of older ideas about matter and space, acclaimed physicist Frank Wilczek explains a remarkable new discovery: matter is built from almost weightless units, and pure energy is the ultimate source of mass. He calls it "The Lightness of Being." Space is no mere container, empty and passive. It is a dynamic grid, modern ether, and its spontaneous activity creates and destroys particles. This new understanding of mass explains the puzzling feebleness of gravity, and a gorgeous unification of all the forces comes sharply into focus. The Lightness of Being is the first book to explore the implications of these revolutionary ideas about mass, energy, and the nature of empty space. In it, Wilczek masterfully presents new perspectives on our incredible universe and envisions a new golden age of fundamental physics.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The book is entertaining and describes what some physicists think today of reality. But we must take care, for along history many persons have proposed "final", "true" theories of reality, only to see them superseded by other theories. There is a big, big defect in the book: all the text is built around the concept of "energy", but the author does not care, or can, define that concept. There is "energy" but, what "energy" is-- energy? Further on, in many pages, the author speaks of infinite number of bodies, infinite space, infinite "infinite". But there is no infinite. This is a mathematical concept, not a physical one because by definition we cannot measure infinite concepts. In the third place, the book is rather

alternatives, but maybe a little more frank look at possible drawbacks to the theory. The author does attempt to do this, but it doesn't seem like he really believes them. Which may be because he is right, I don't know, I'll have to keep reading until someone discovers the answer. Finally, one point I don't quite agree. The author argues that if we try understanding all the elements of particle physics it really shouldn't be so hard. And I agree in principle, I have no problem with atoms or electron or protons or neutrons, but when people start talking colors and flavors and strange and charmed quarks I start to feel a bit unfocused. I don't know if it's because I studied the one set in school and not the other, or if it has something to do with all the silly names that particle physicists seem to prefer.

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