

The Quest for Unification

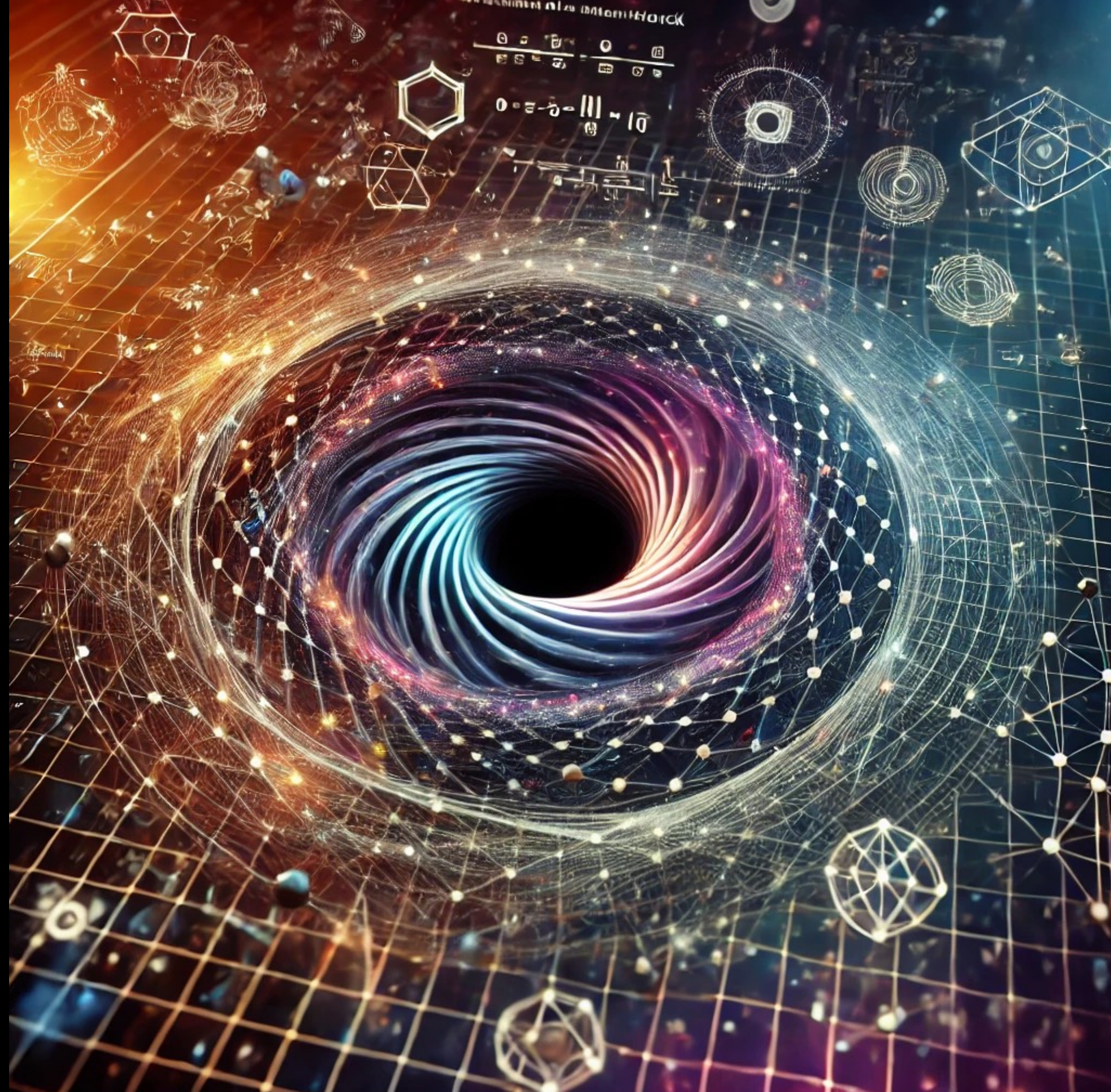
- Intersecting Mathematics, Physics and AI -

Daniel Persson

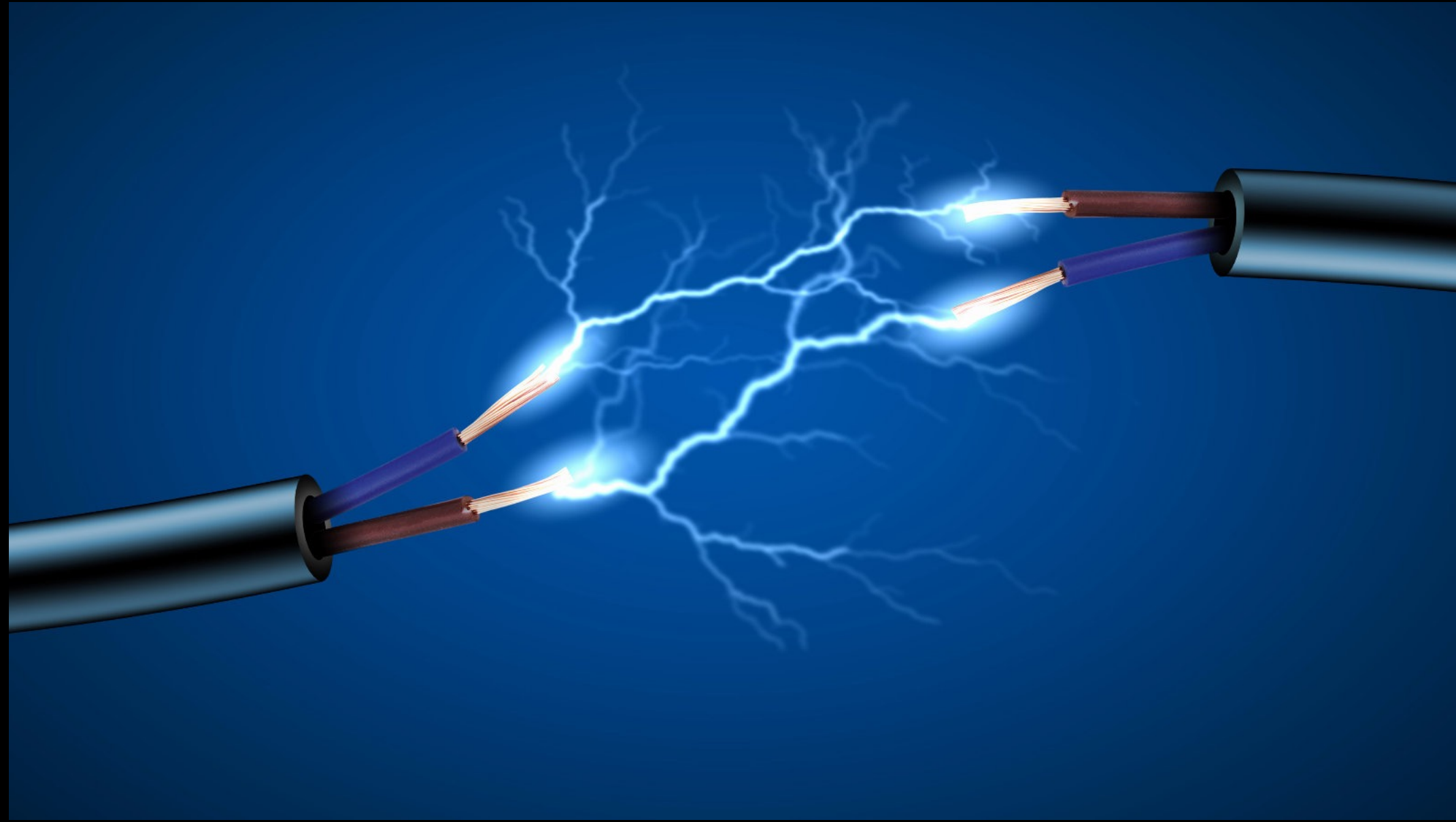
Department of Mathematical Sciences
Chalmers University of Technology
University of Gothenburg

Inauguration lecture

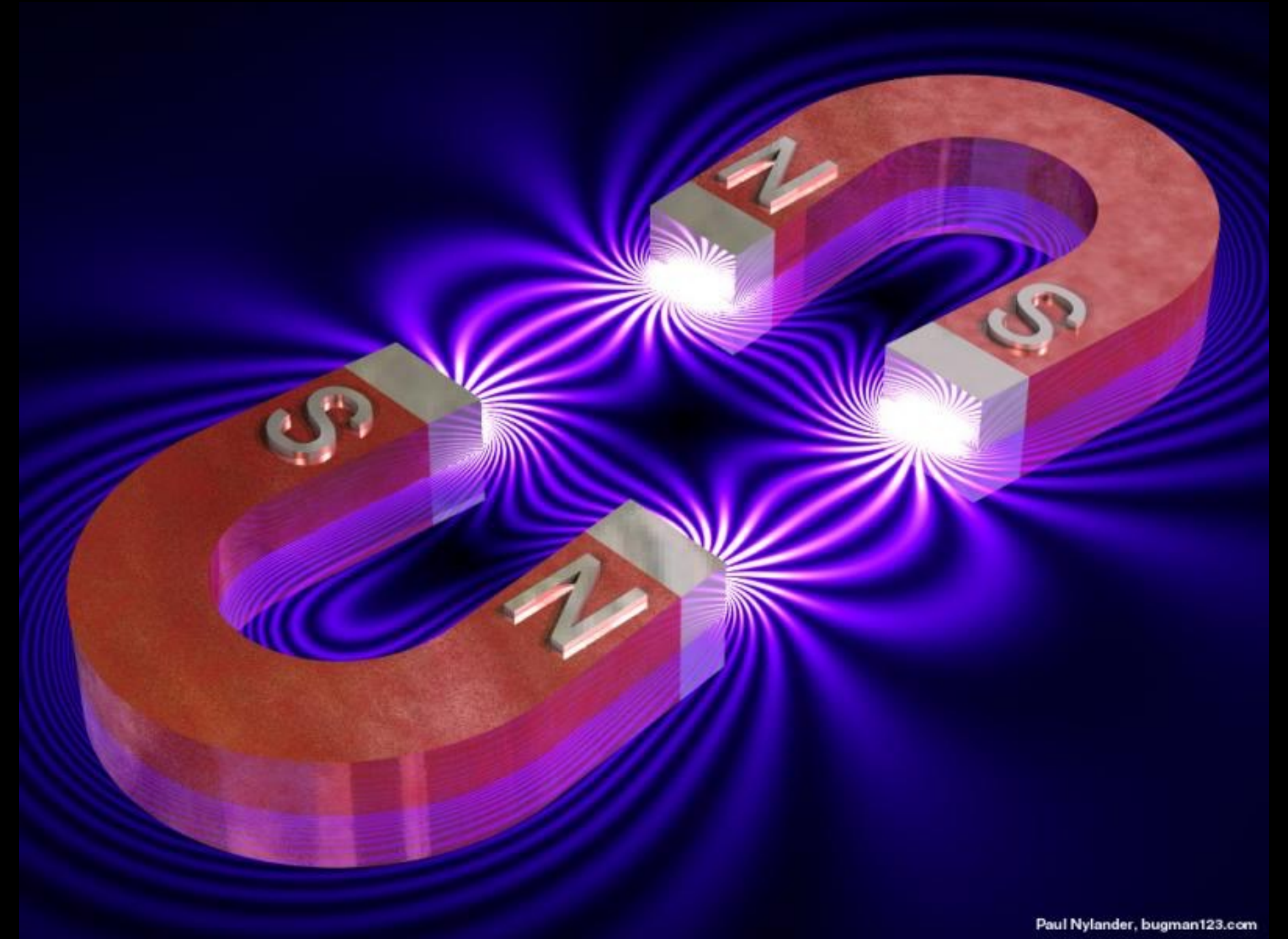
November 22, 2024



Unification



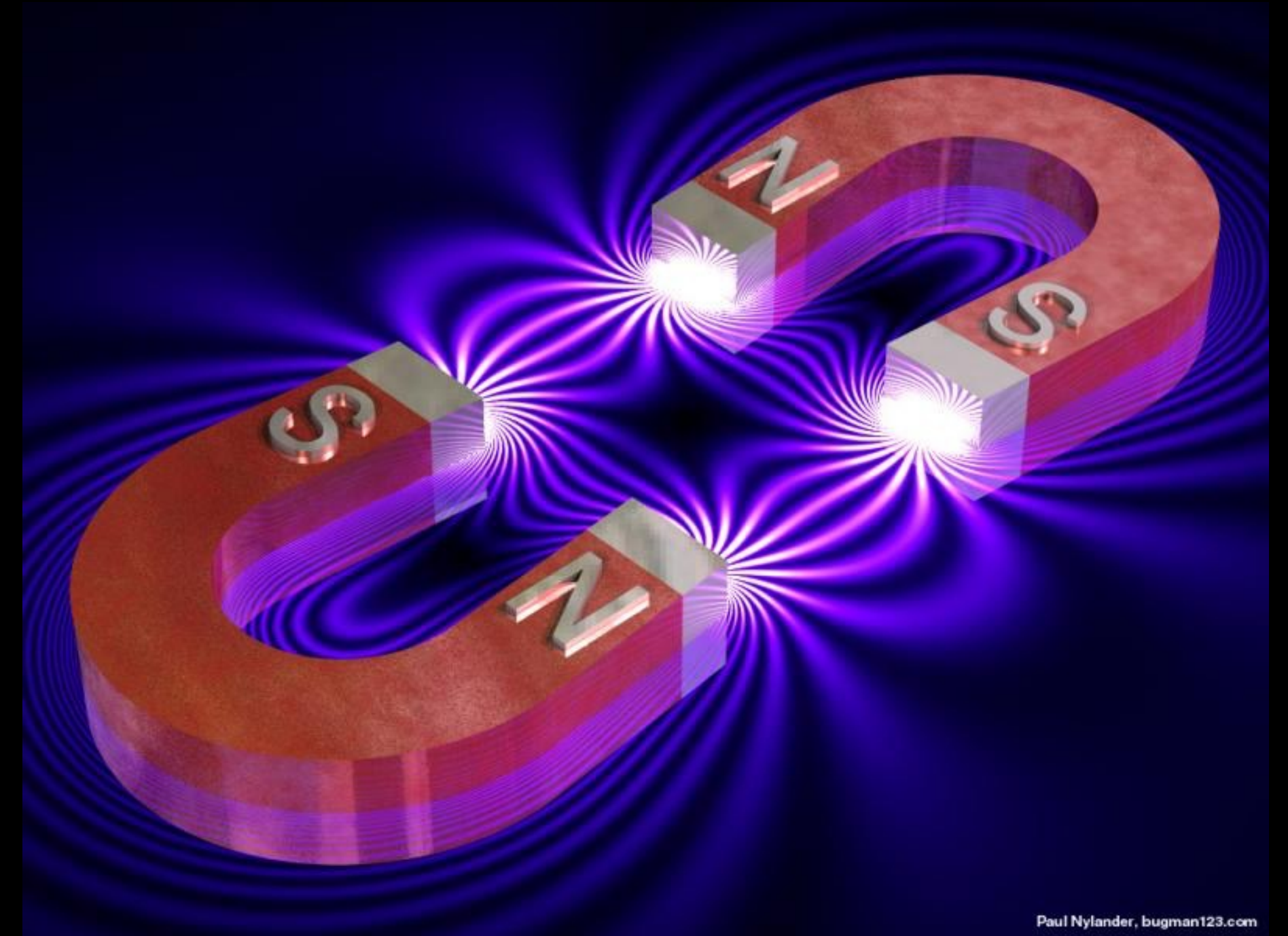
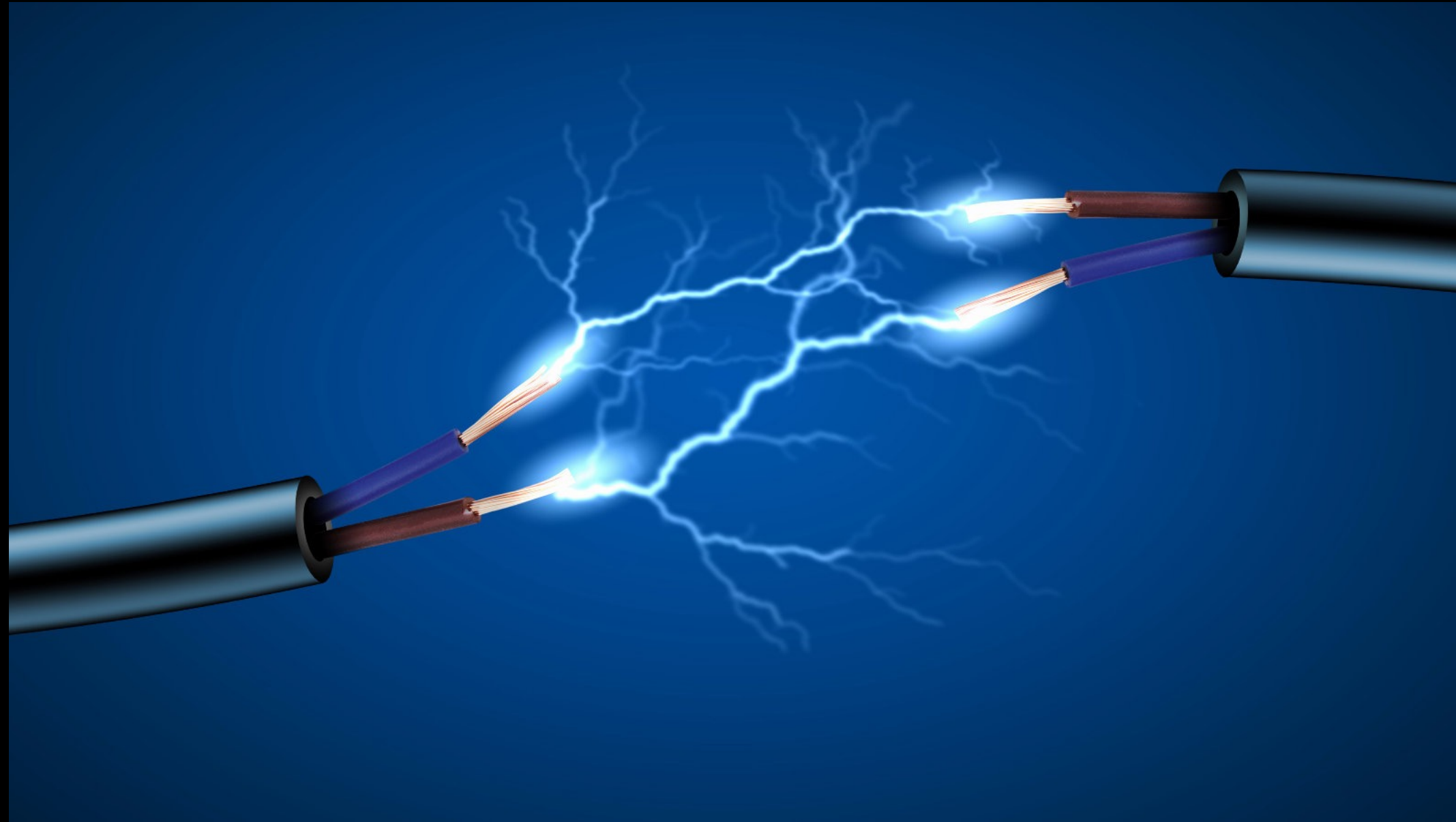
electricity



magnetism

Paul Nylander, bugman123.com

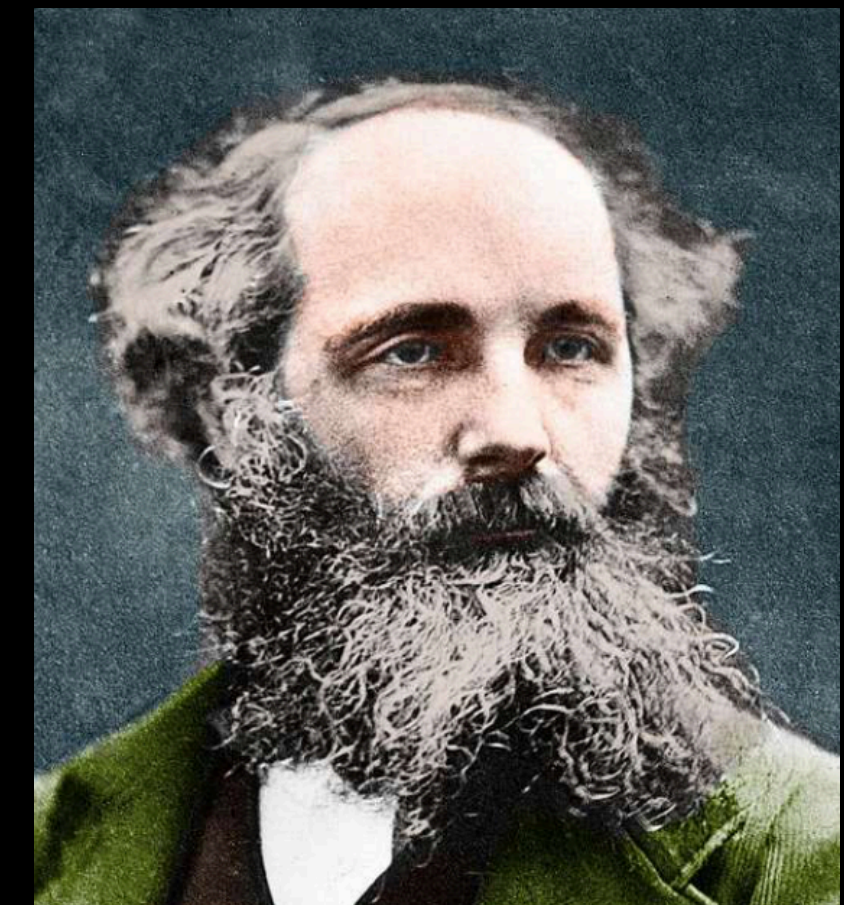
Unification



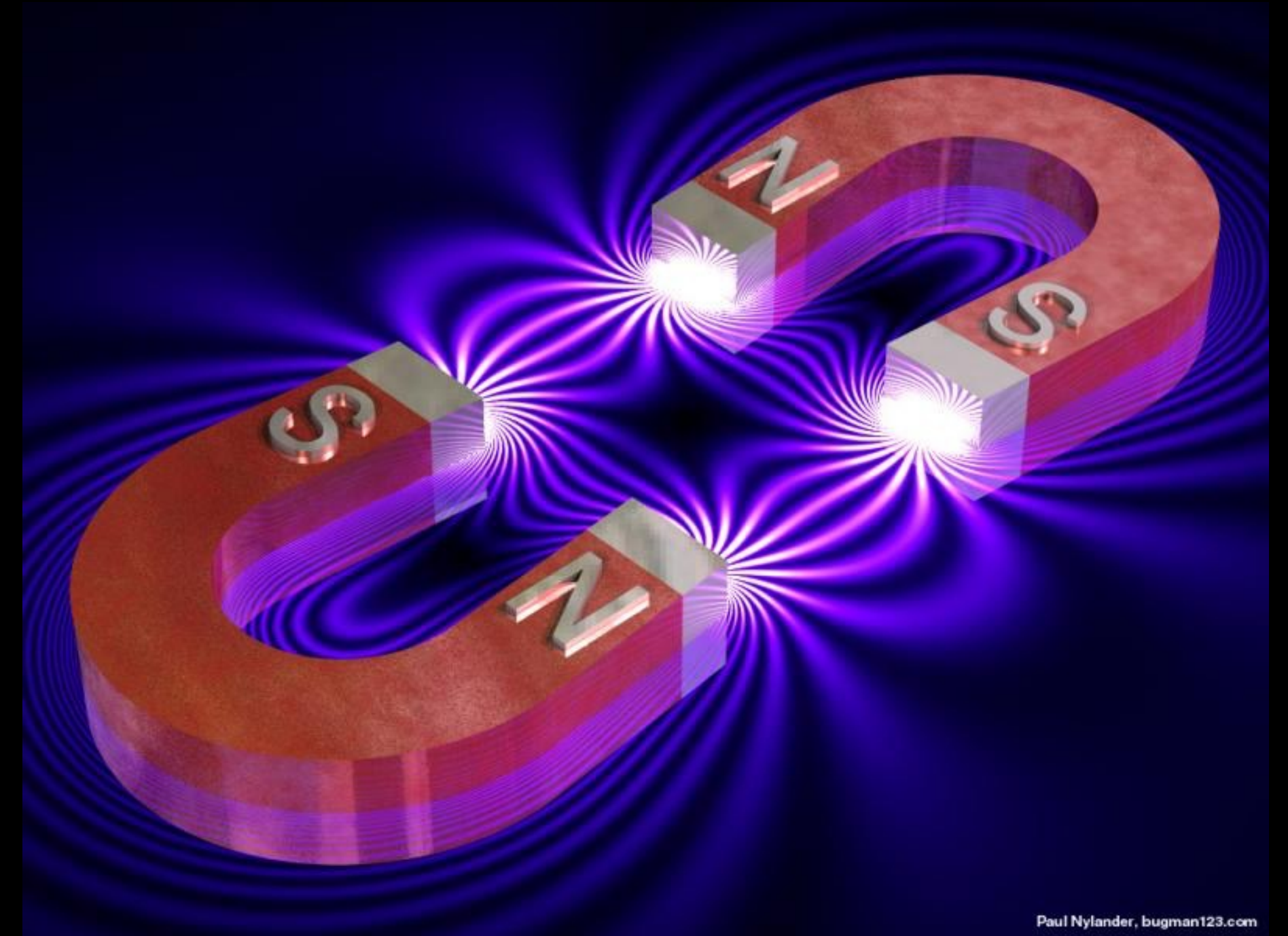
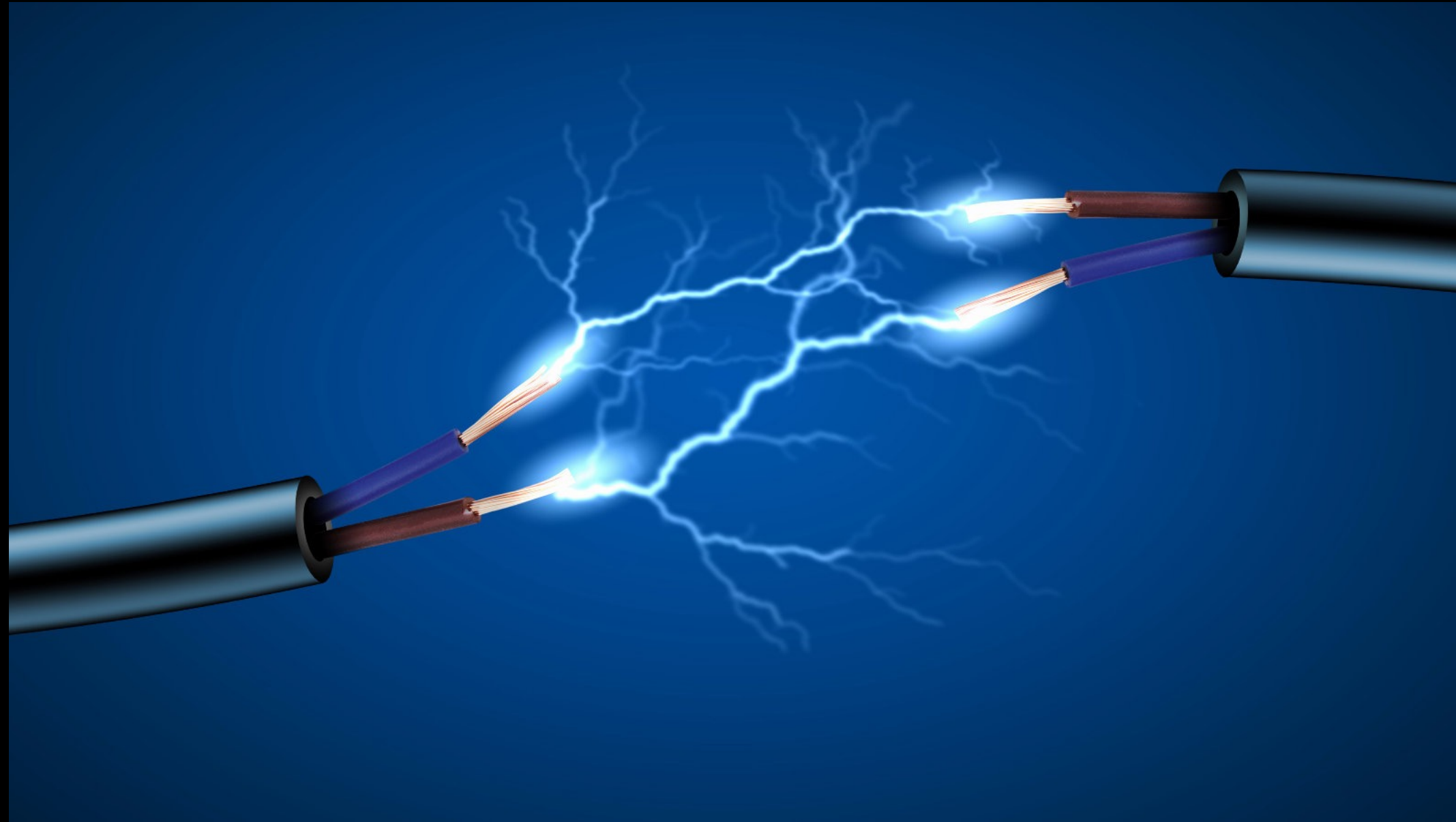
electromagnetism

$$\begin{aligned} \nabla \cdot \mathbf{E} &= 0, & \nabla \times \mathbf{E} + \frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t} &= 0 \\ \nabla \cdot \mathbf{B} &= 0, & \nabla \times \mathbf{B} - \mu_0 \epsilon_0 \frac{\partial \mathbf{E}}{\partial t} &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

Maxwell's equations



Unification



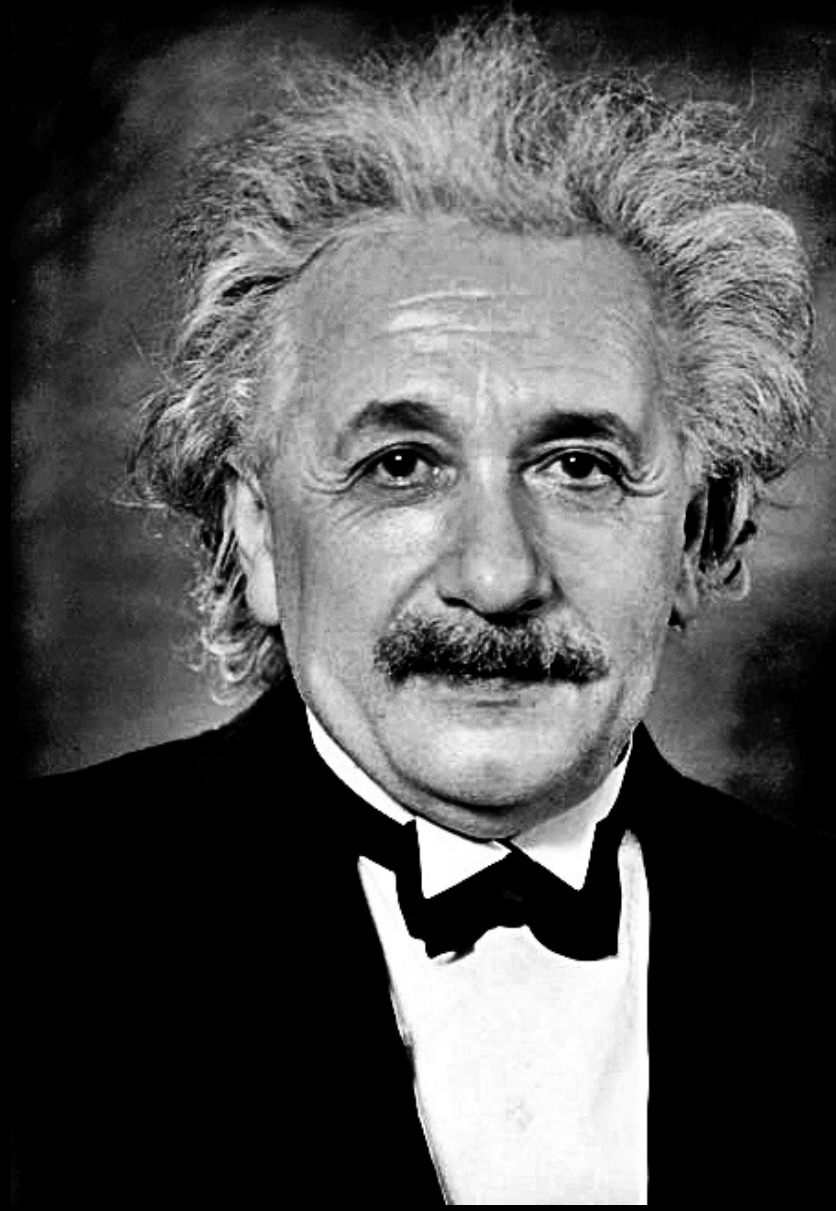
Paul Nylander, bugman123.com

electromagnetism

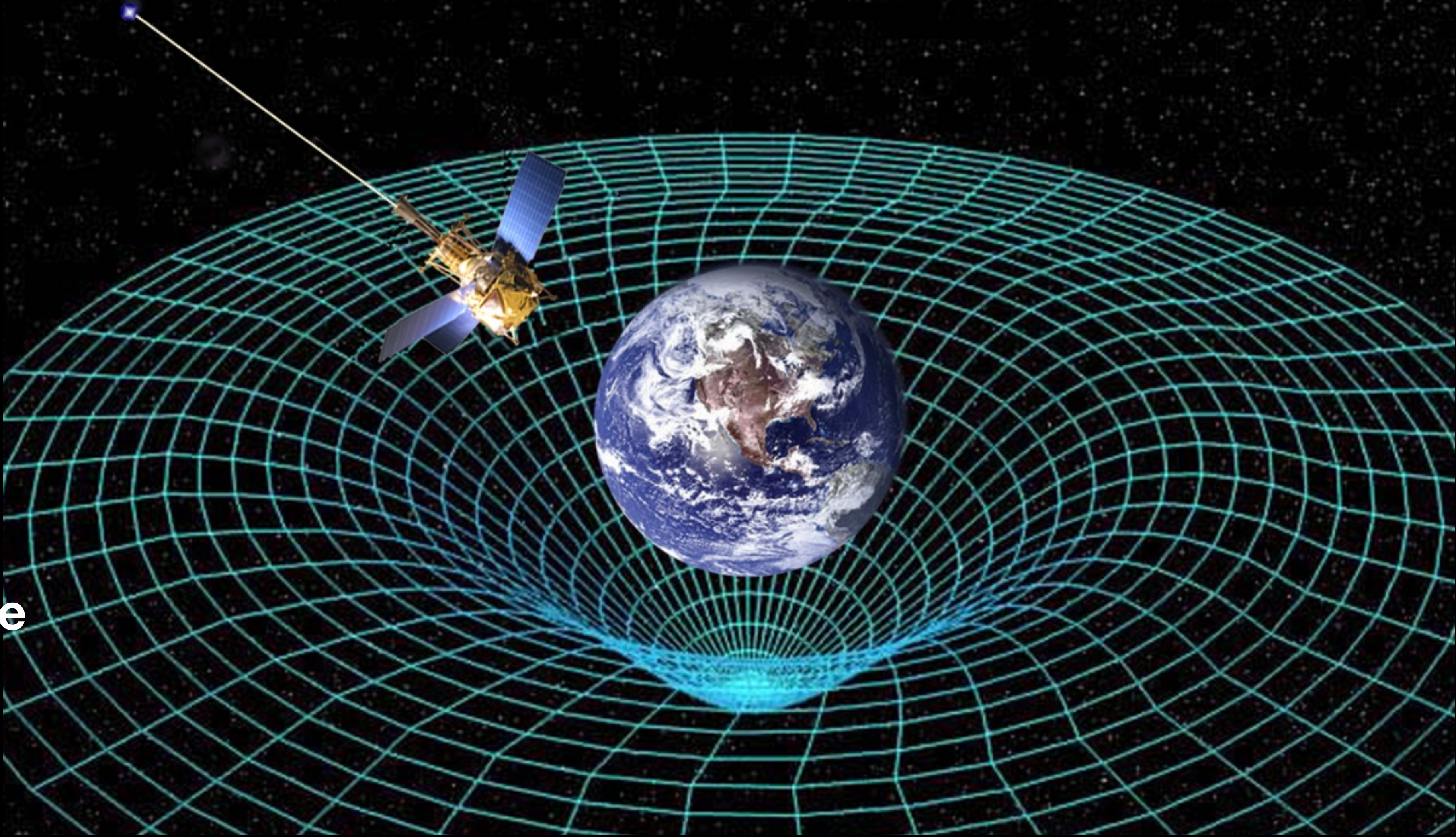
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Electric-magnetic duality

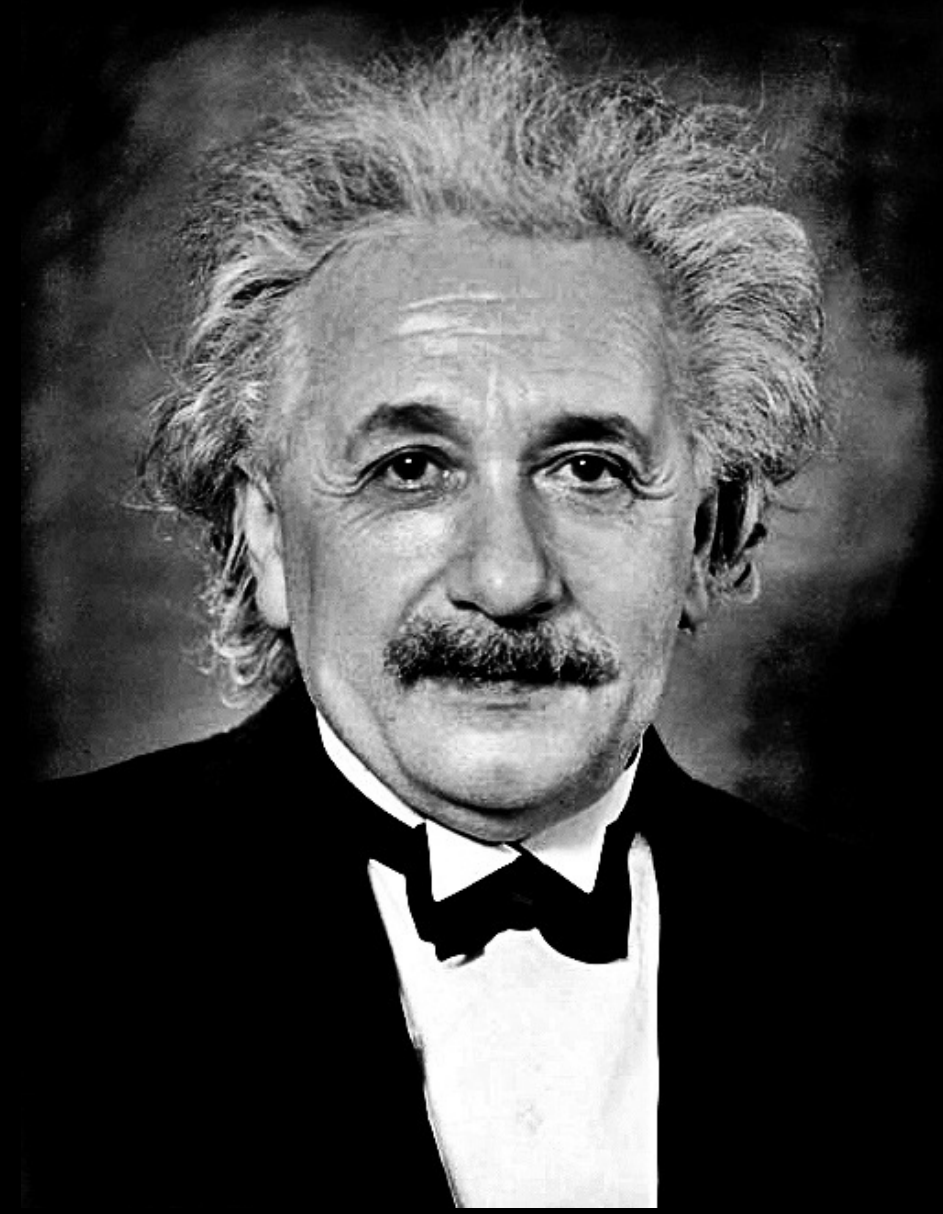




space + time = spacetime



**gravity:
mass curves spacetime**

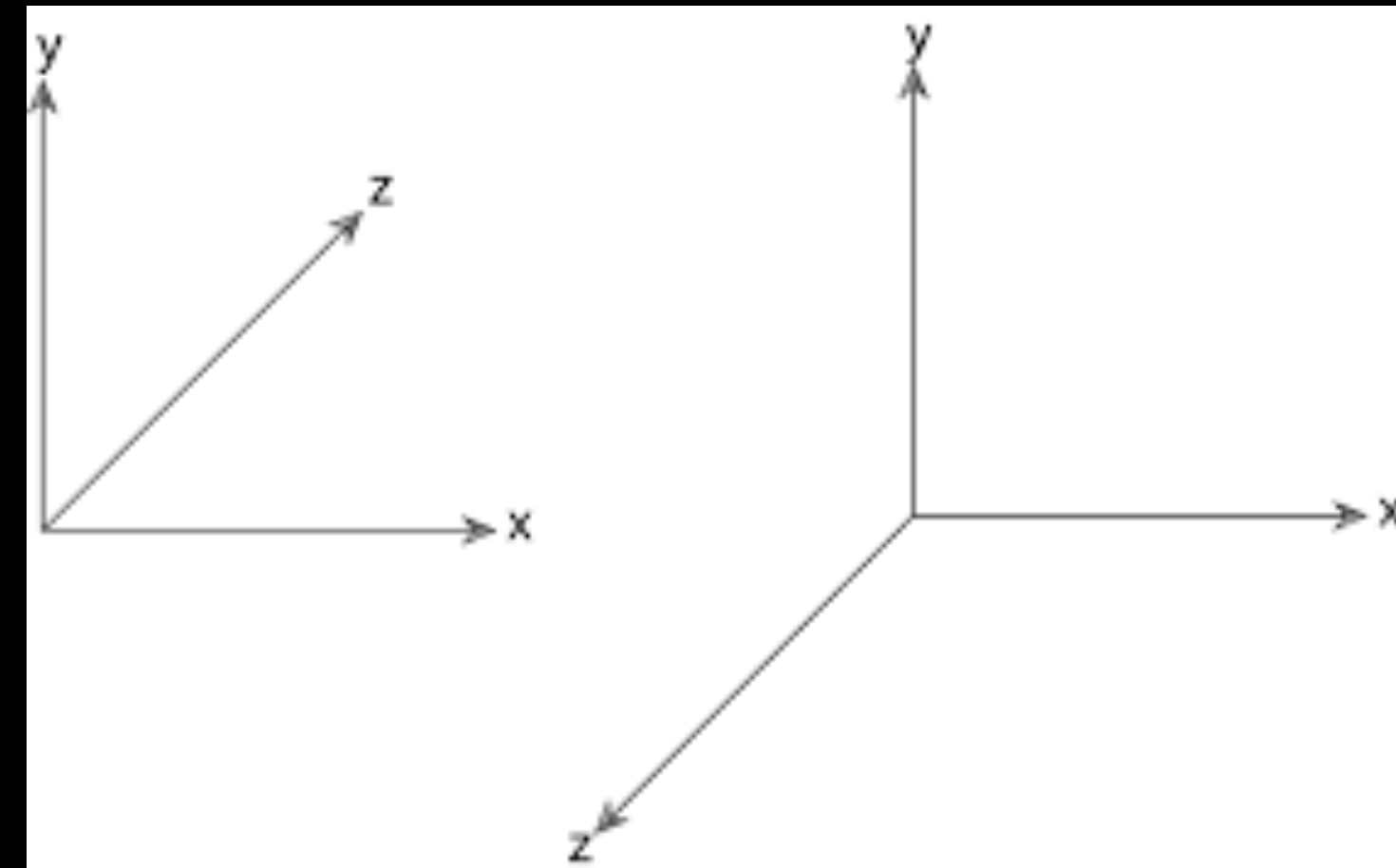


Einstein's general theory of relativity connected differential geometry and physics

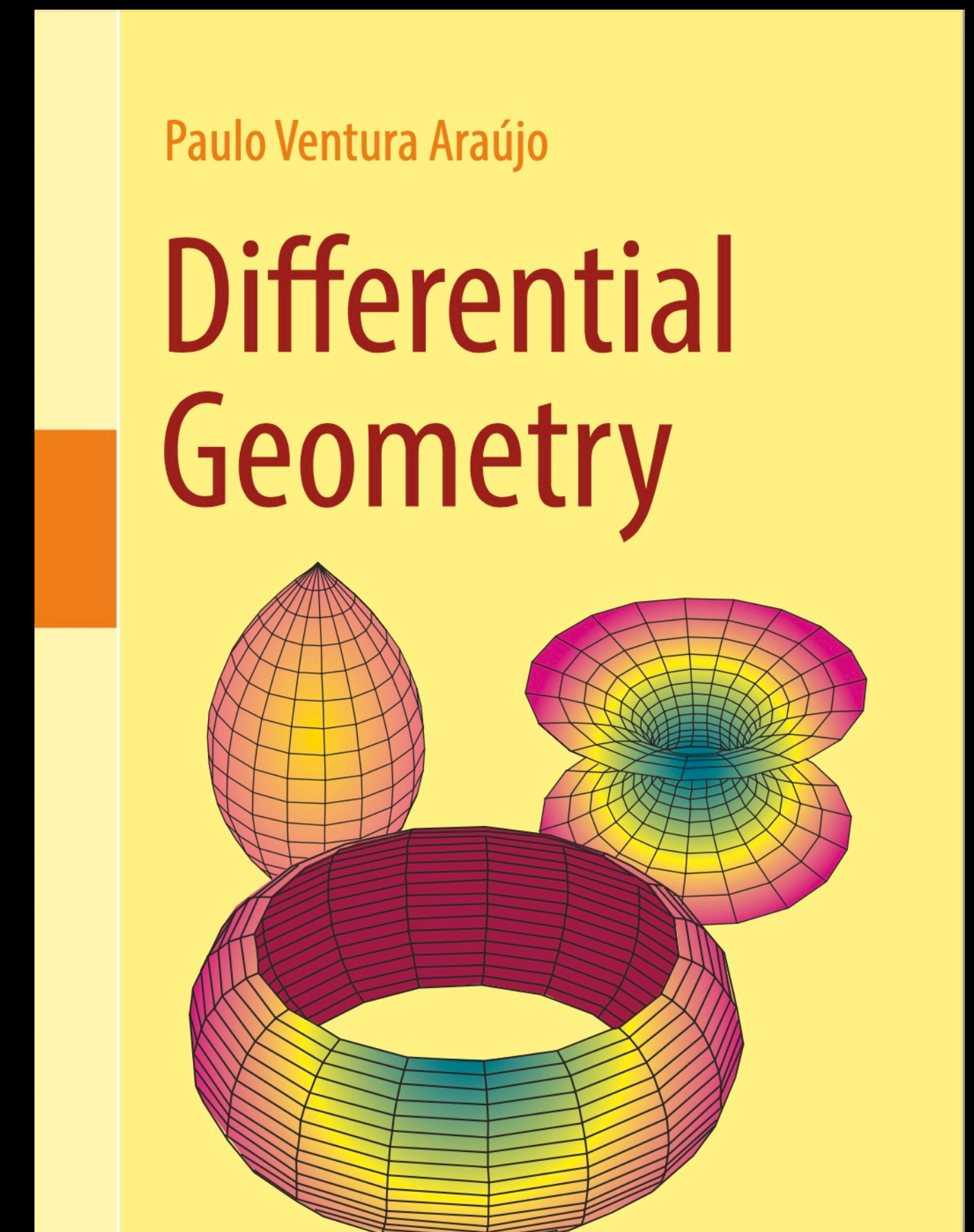
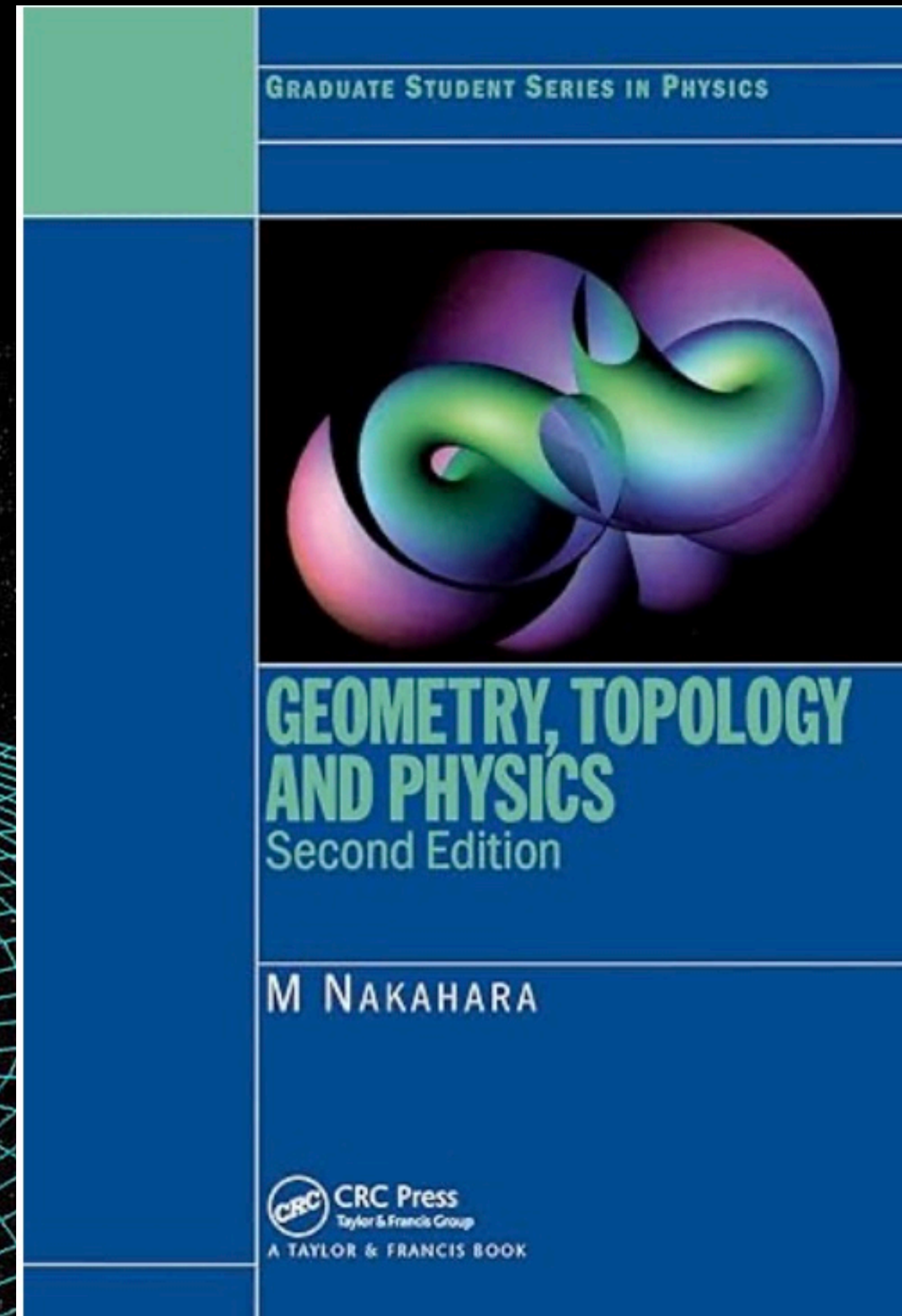
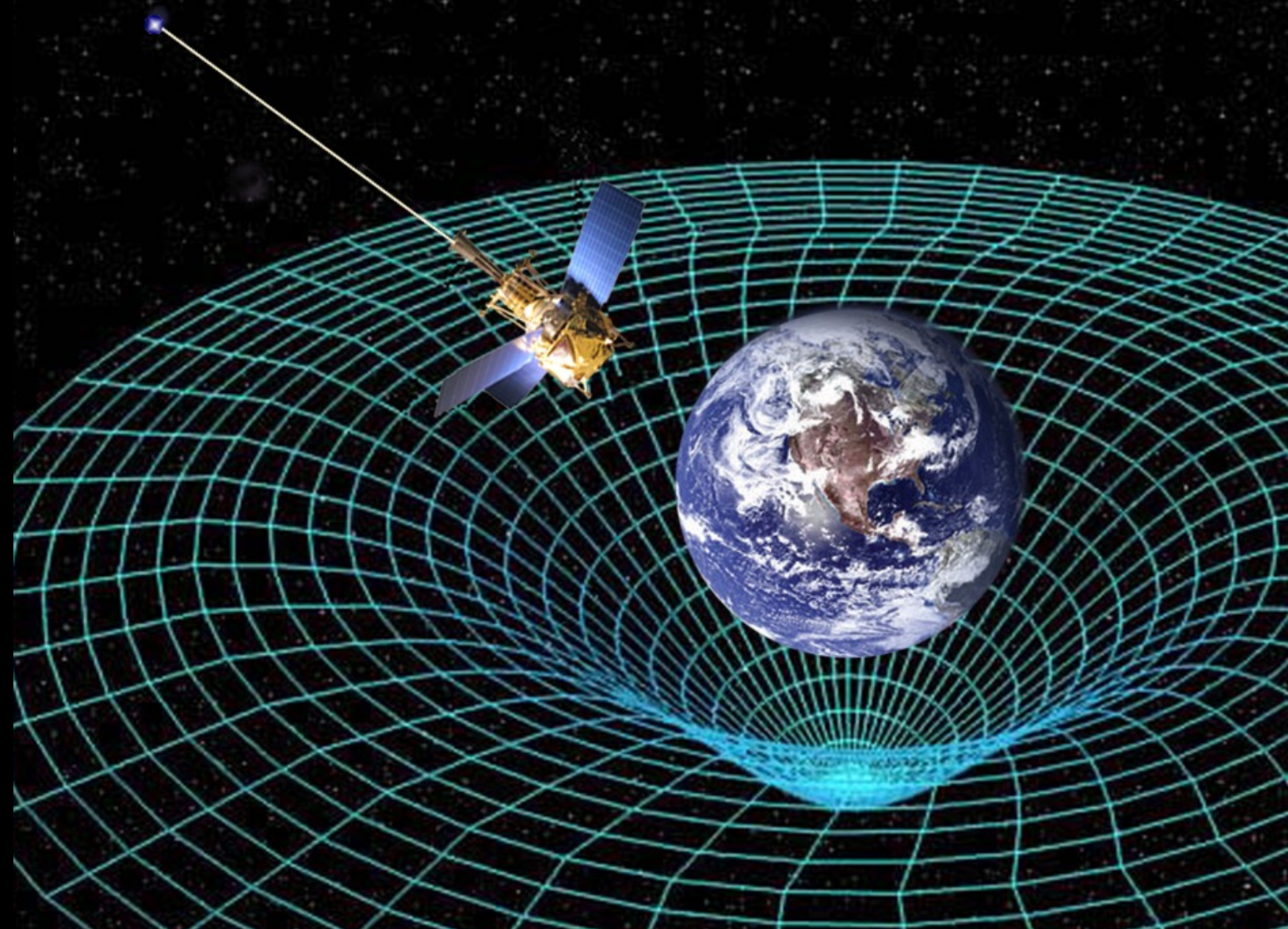
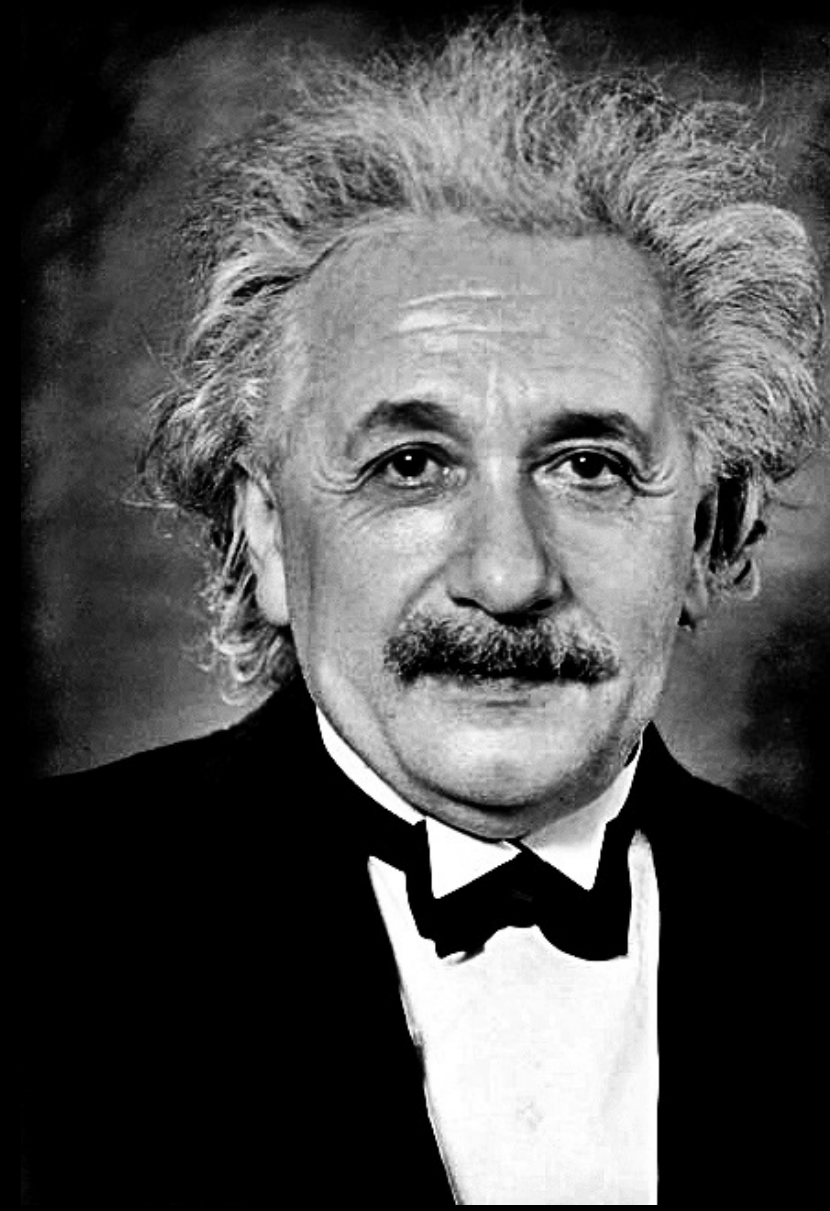
Principle of general covariance:

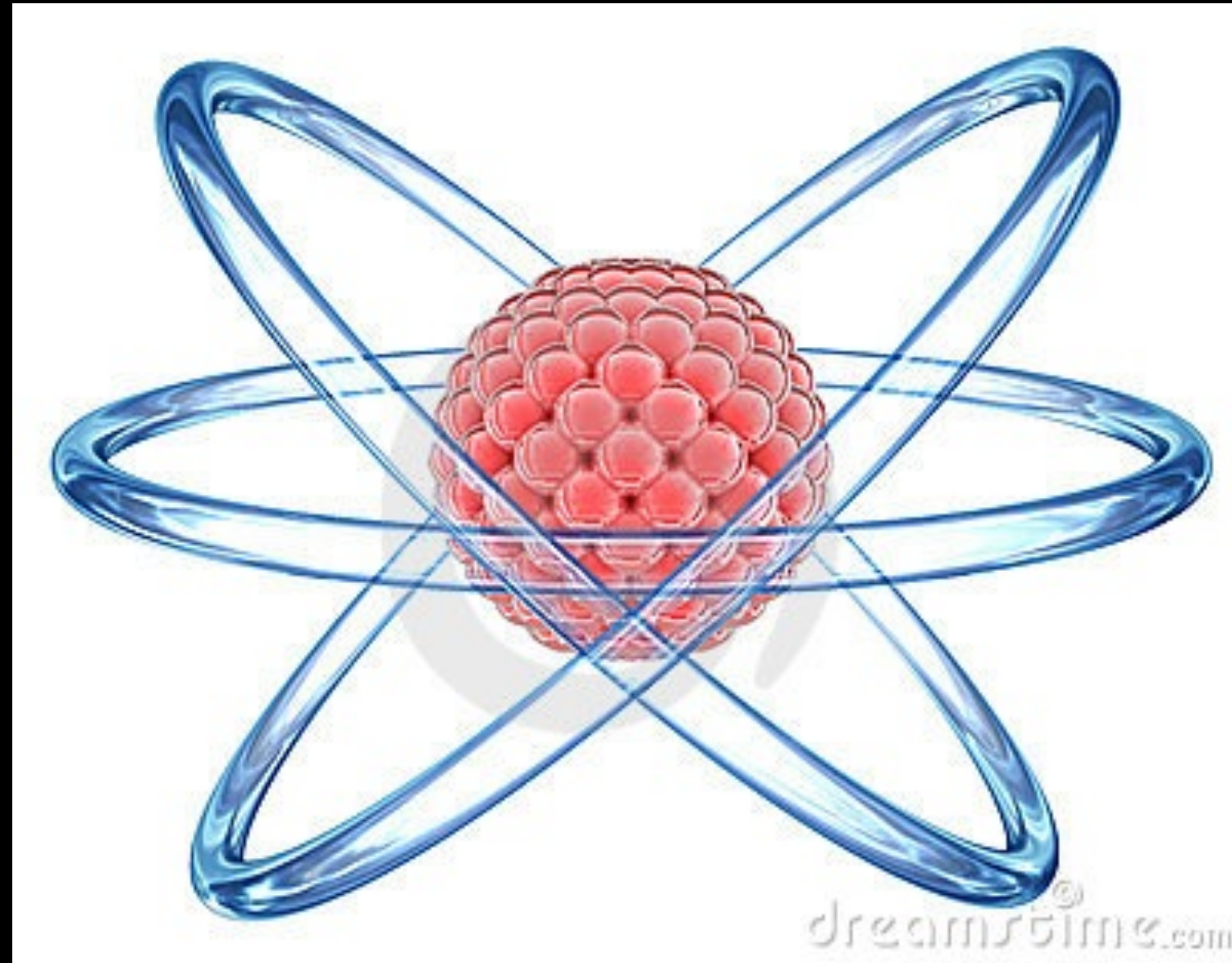
The laws of physics should take the same form independently of which coordinate system we use to represent them

$$R_{\mu\nu}(g) - \frac{1}{2}g_{\mu\nu}R(g) = T_{\mu\nu}(g, F, \dots)$$

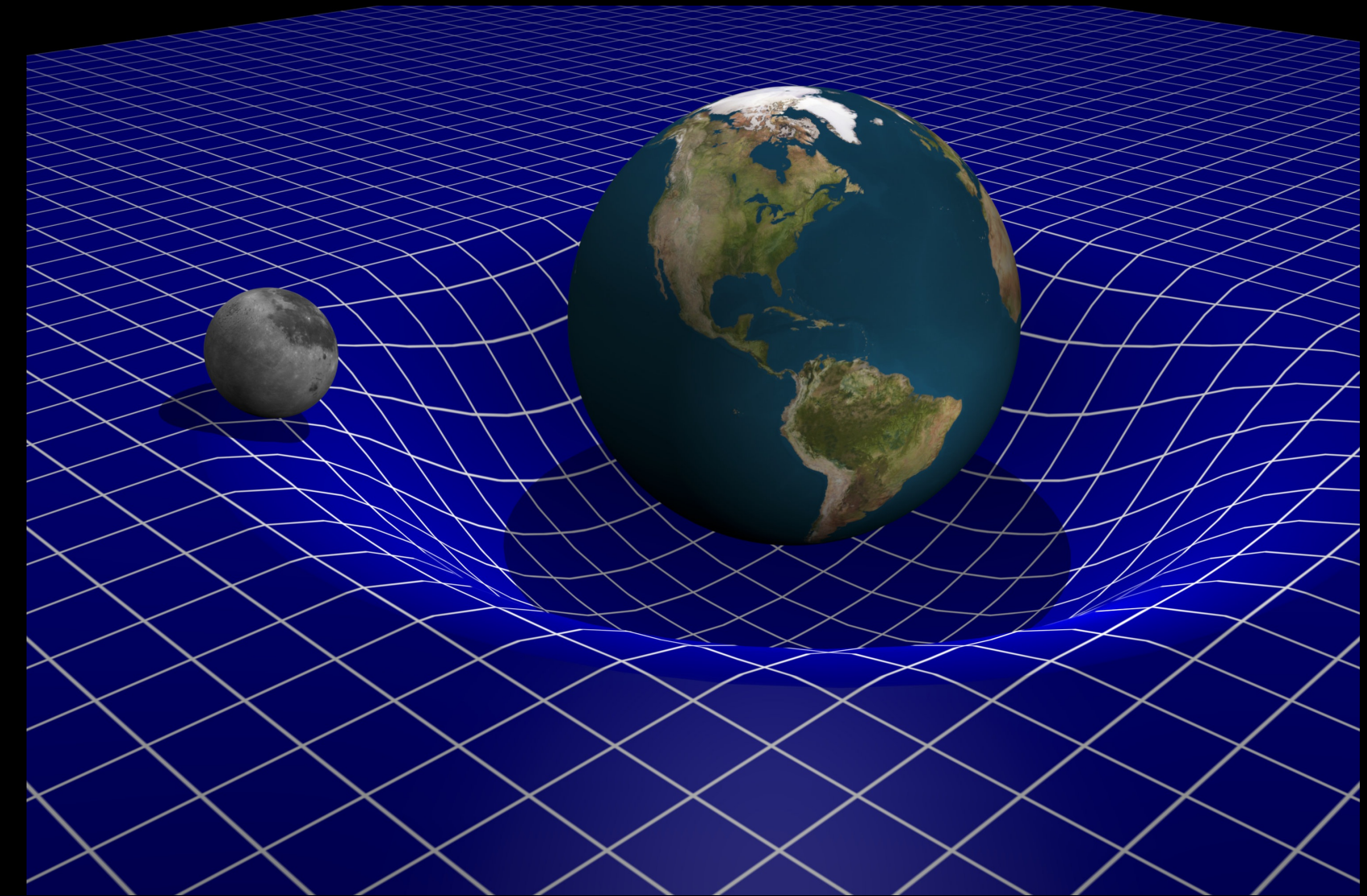


Einstein's general theory of relativity connected differential geometry and physics



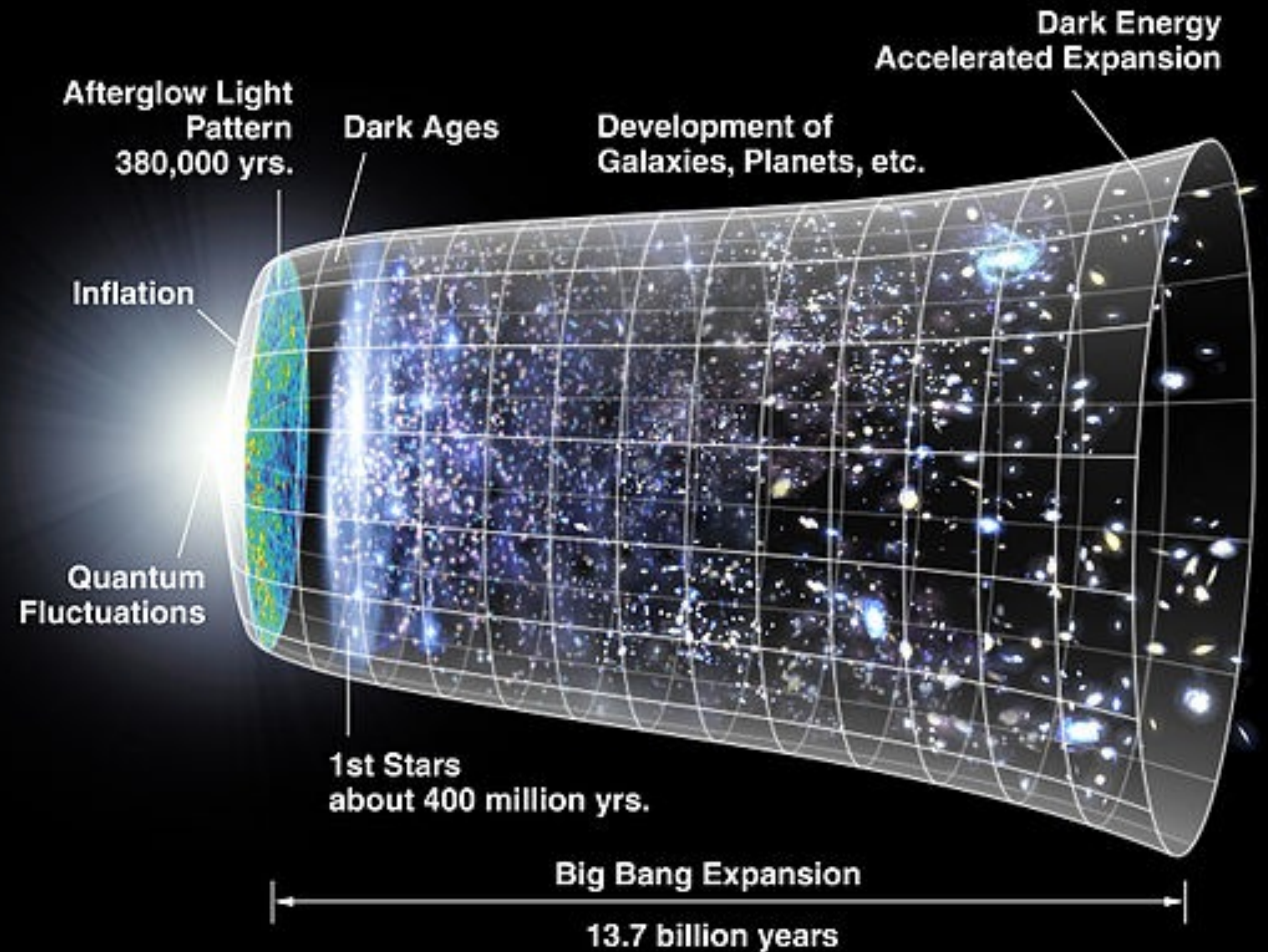


quantum mechanics

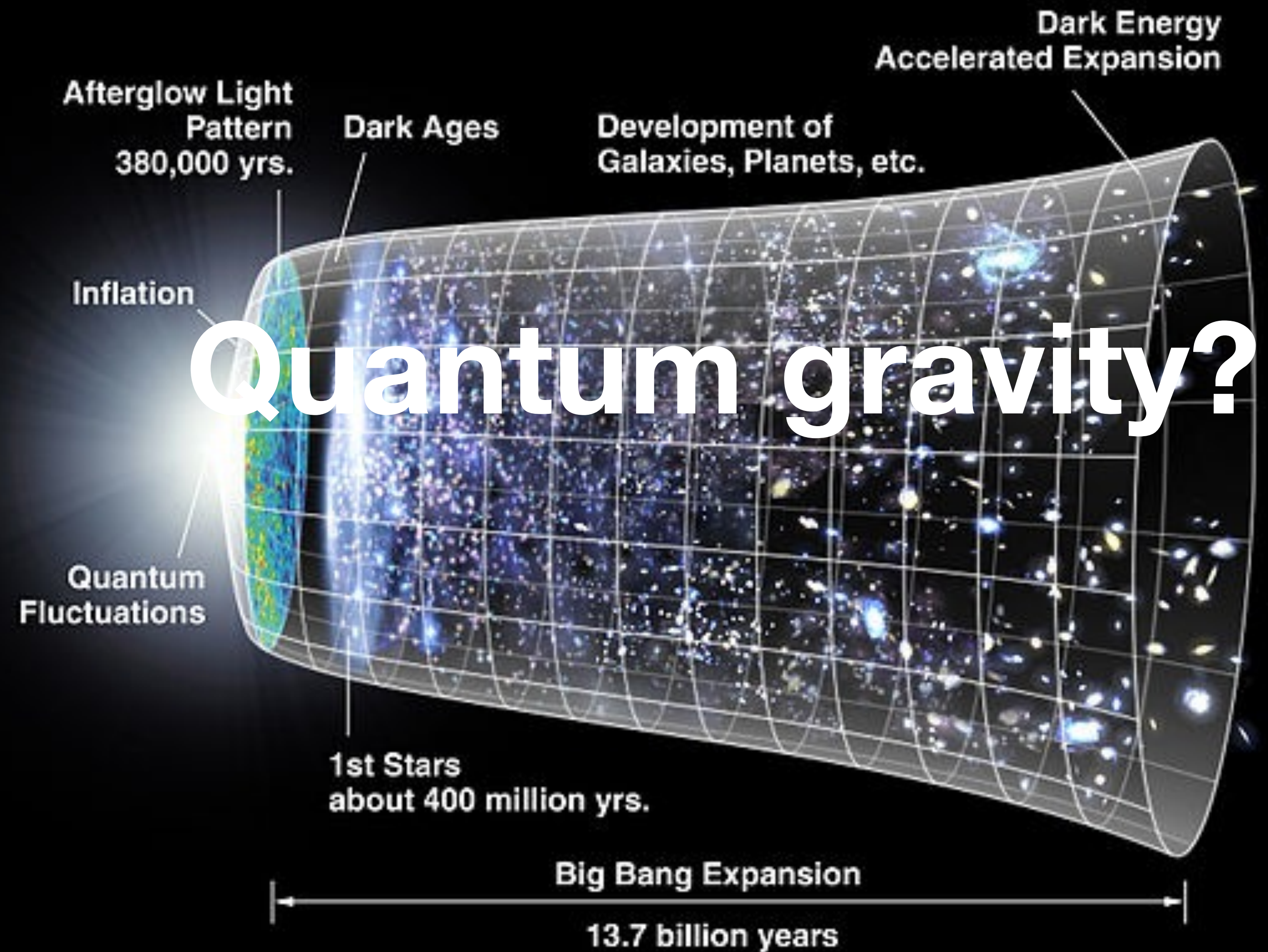


general relativity

There are regions in the universe where we need both **quantum mechanics** and **general relativity**, or rather some **unification** thereof



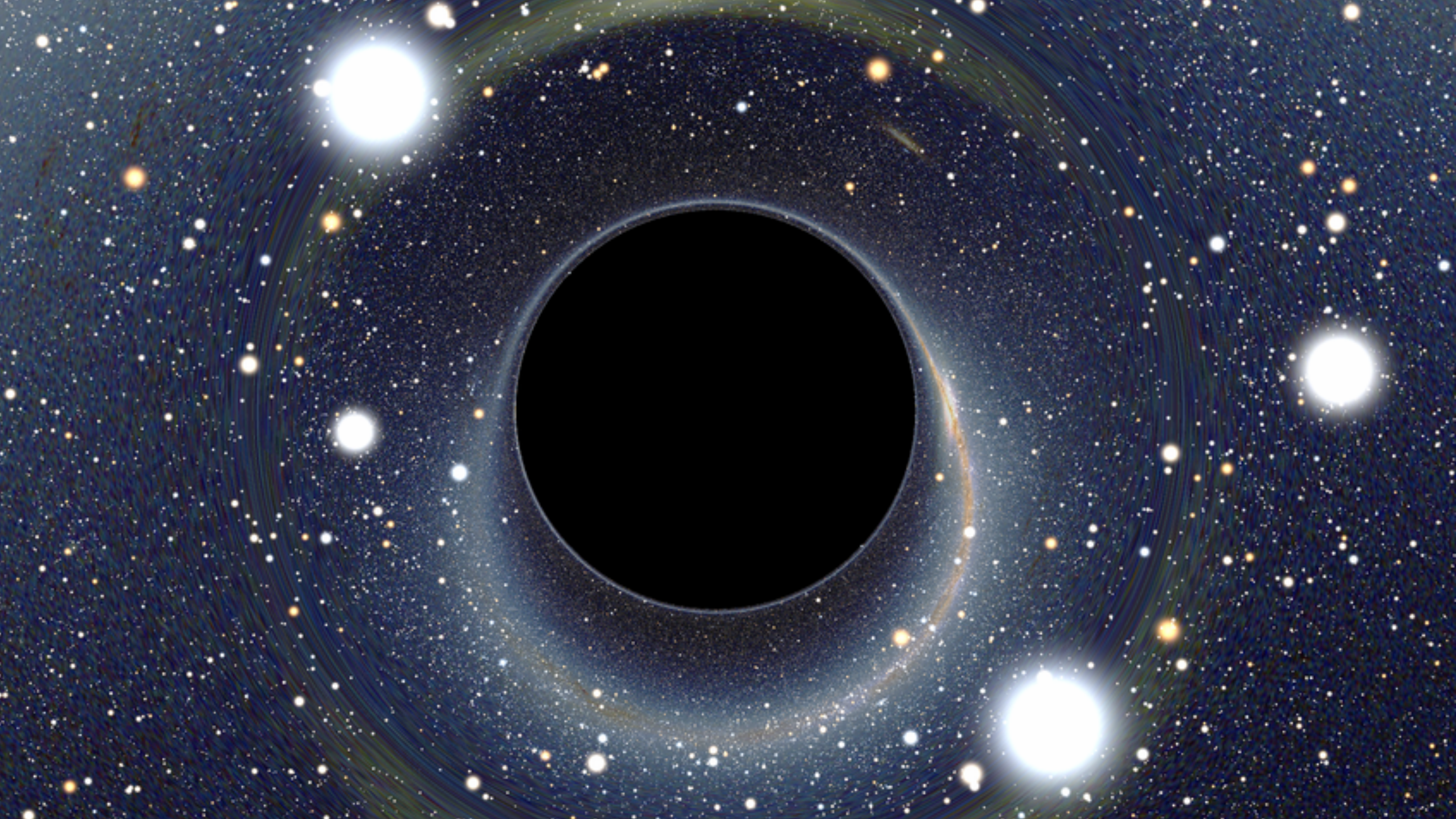
There are regions in the universe where we need both **quantum mechanics** and **general relativity**, or rather some **unification** thereof



The Milky Way

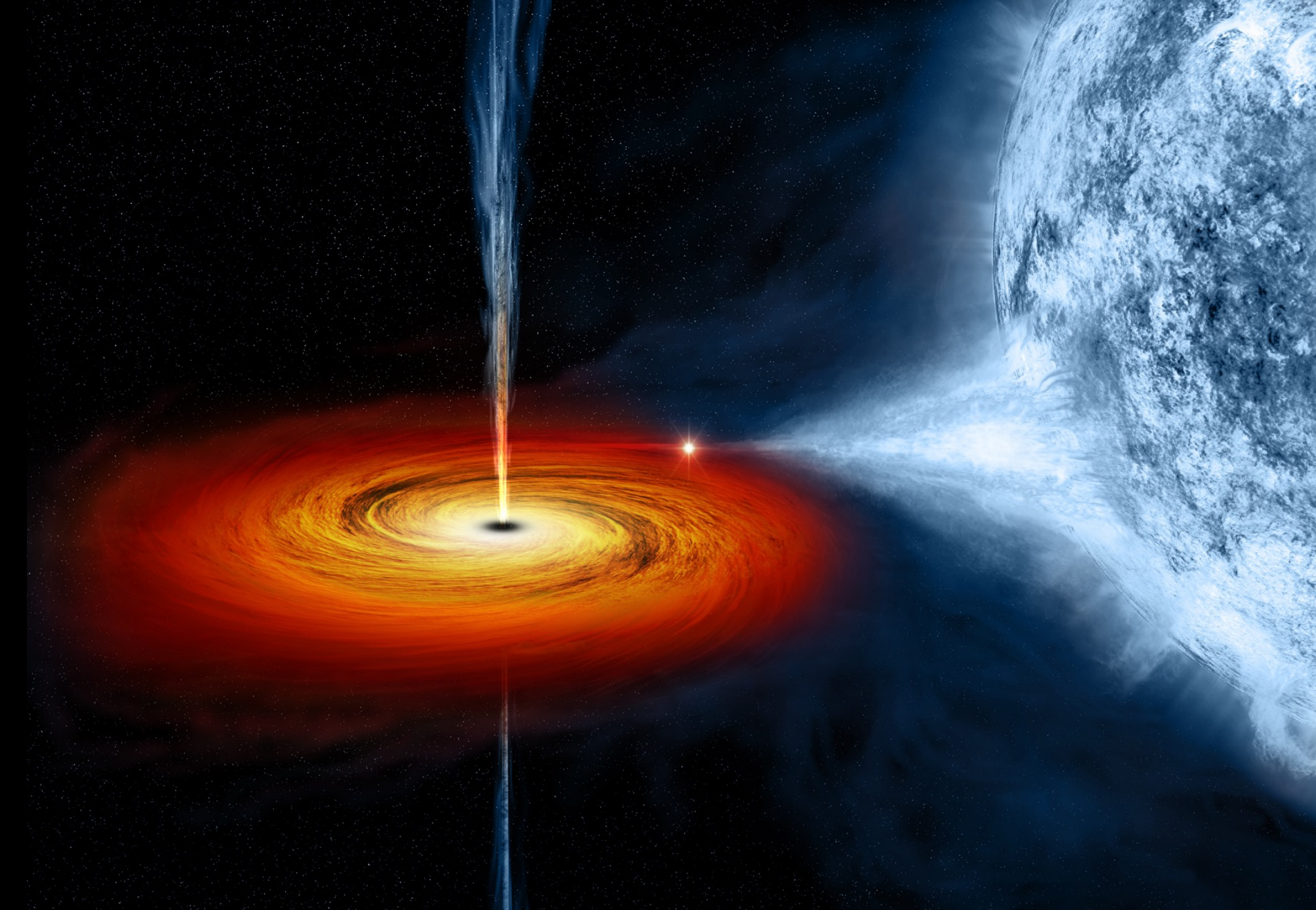
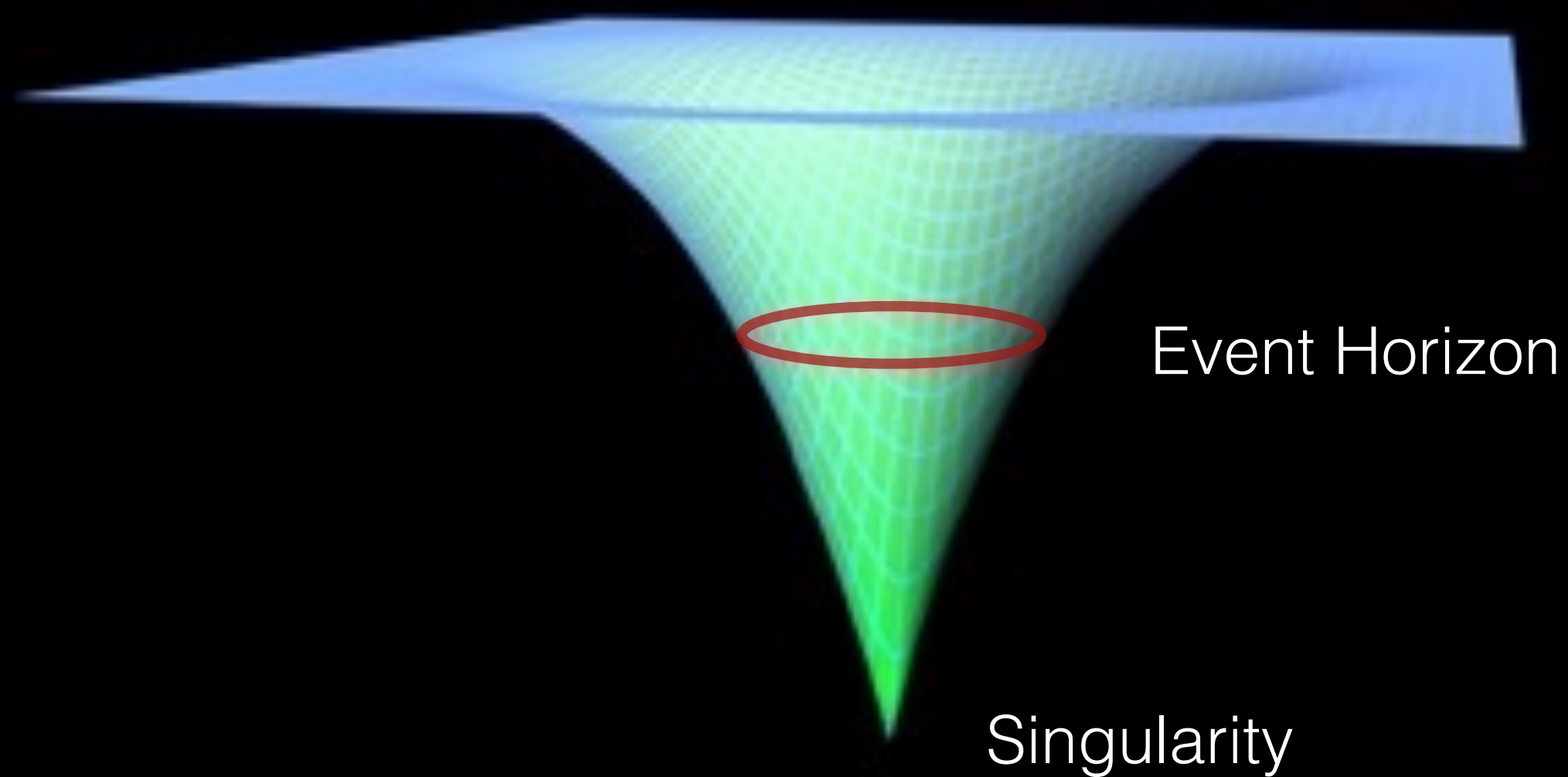
DIGITAL IMAGE OF THE MILKY WAY BY PIKAIA IMAGING (WWW.PIKAIA-IMAGING.CO.UK)





A black hole forms when a sufficiently massive star collapses

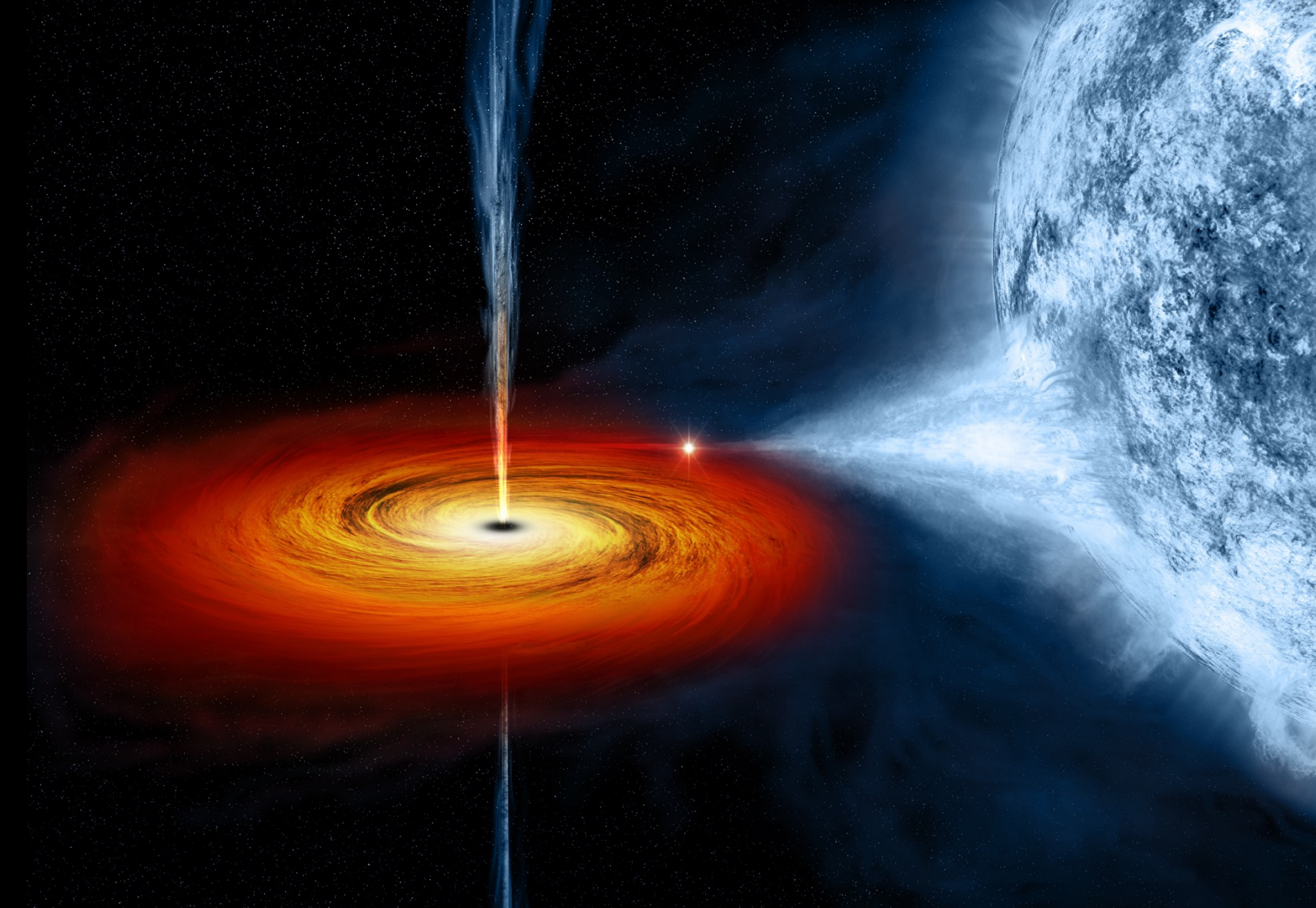
Einstein's equation's break down at the center of a black hole



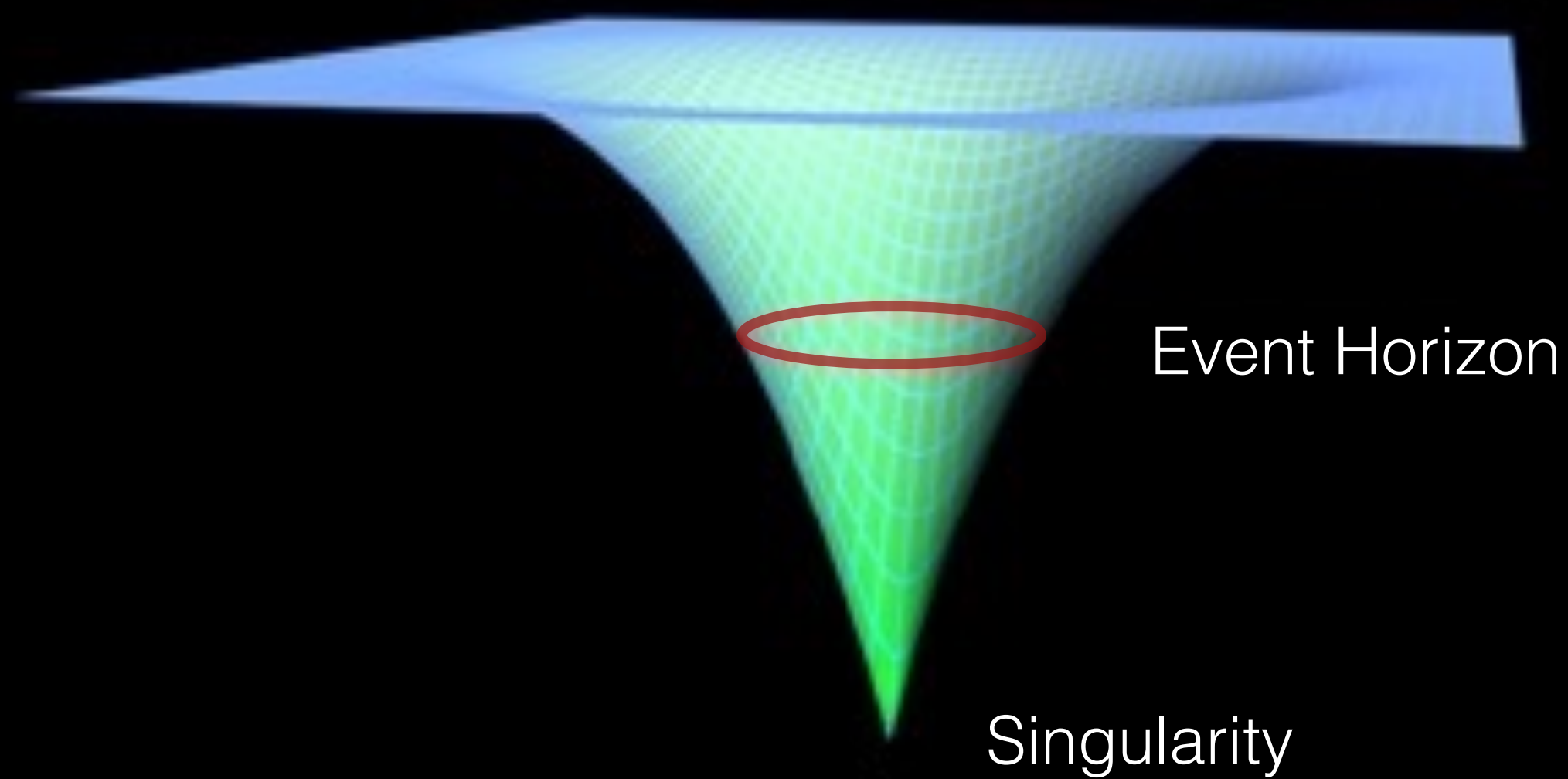
What happens inside the horizon?

Need quantum gravity!

A black hole forms when a sufficiently massive star collapses



Einstein's equation's break down at the center of a black hole

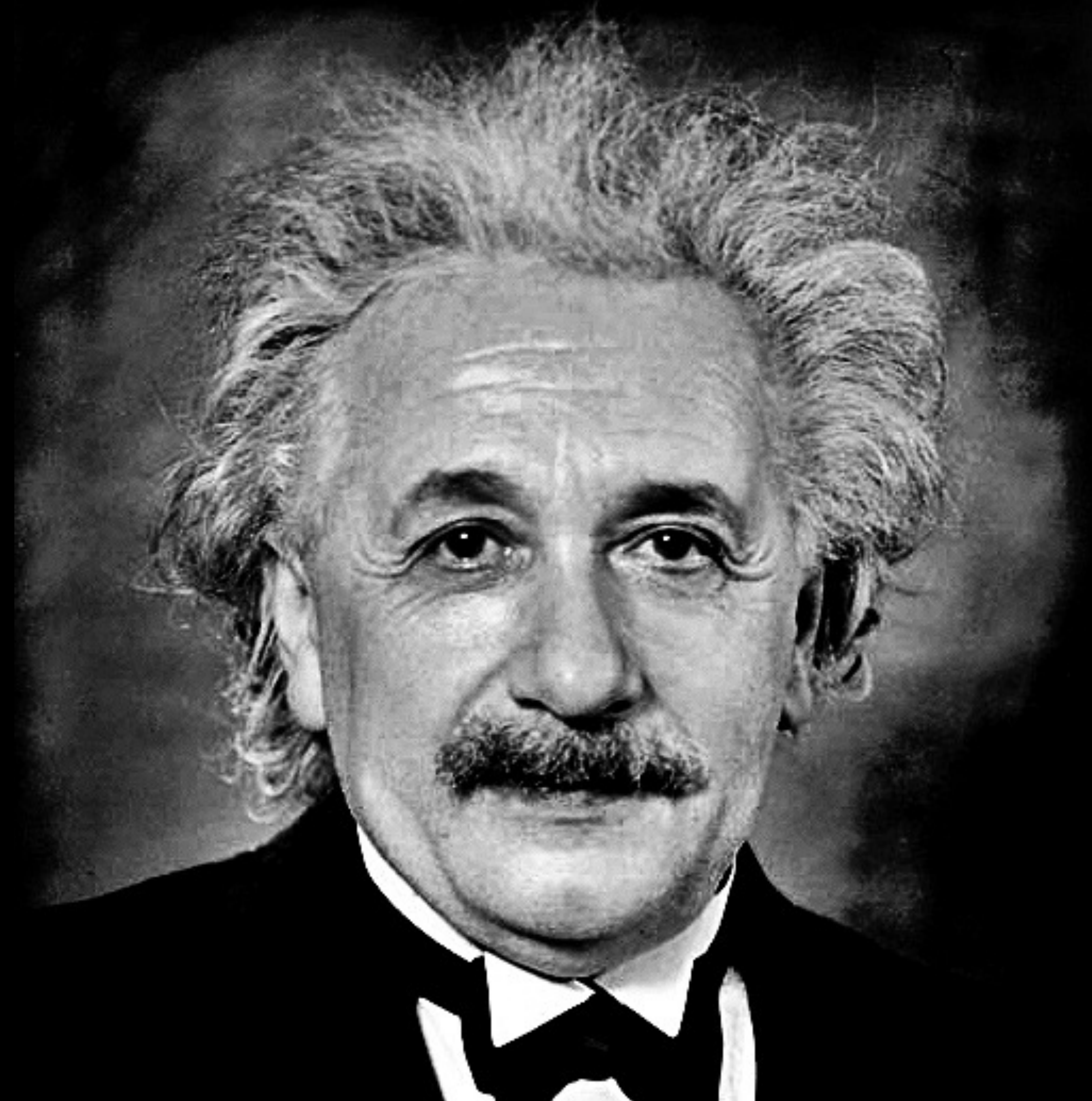


String theory?



How can it be that mathematics, being after all a product of human thought which is independent of experience, is so admirably appropriate to the objects of reality?

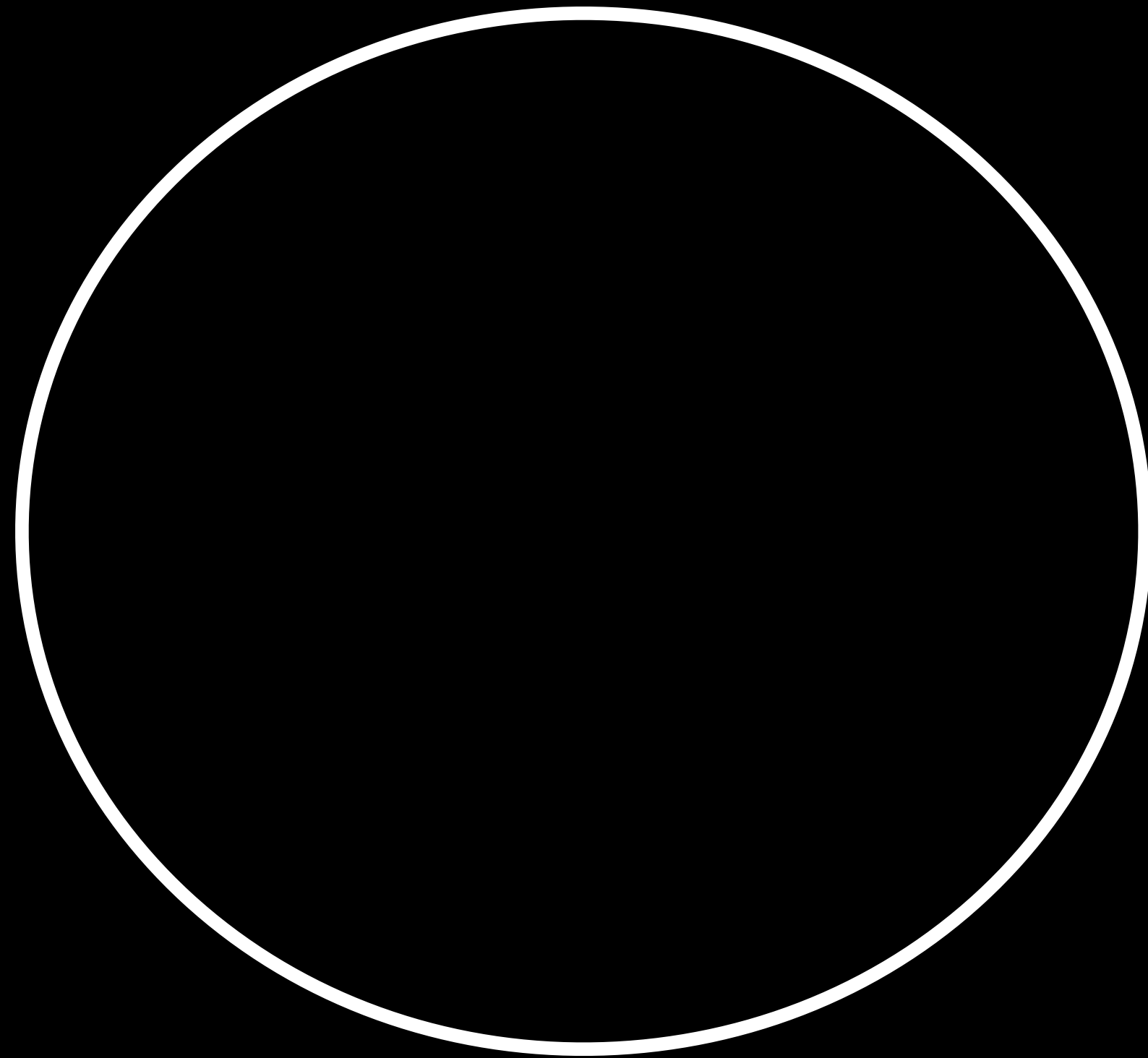
- A. Einstein



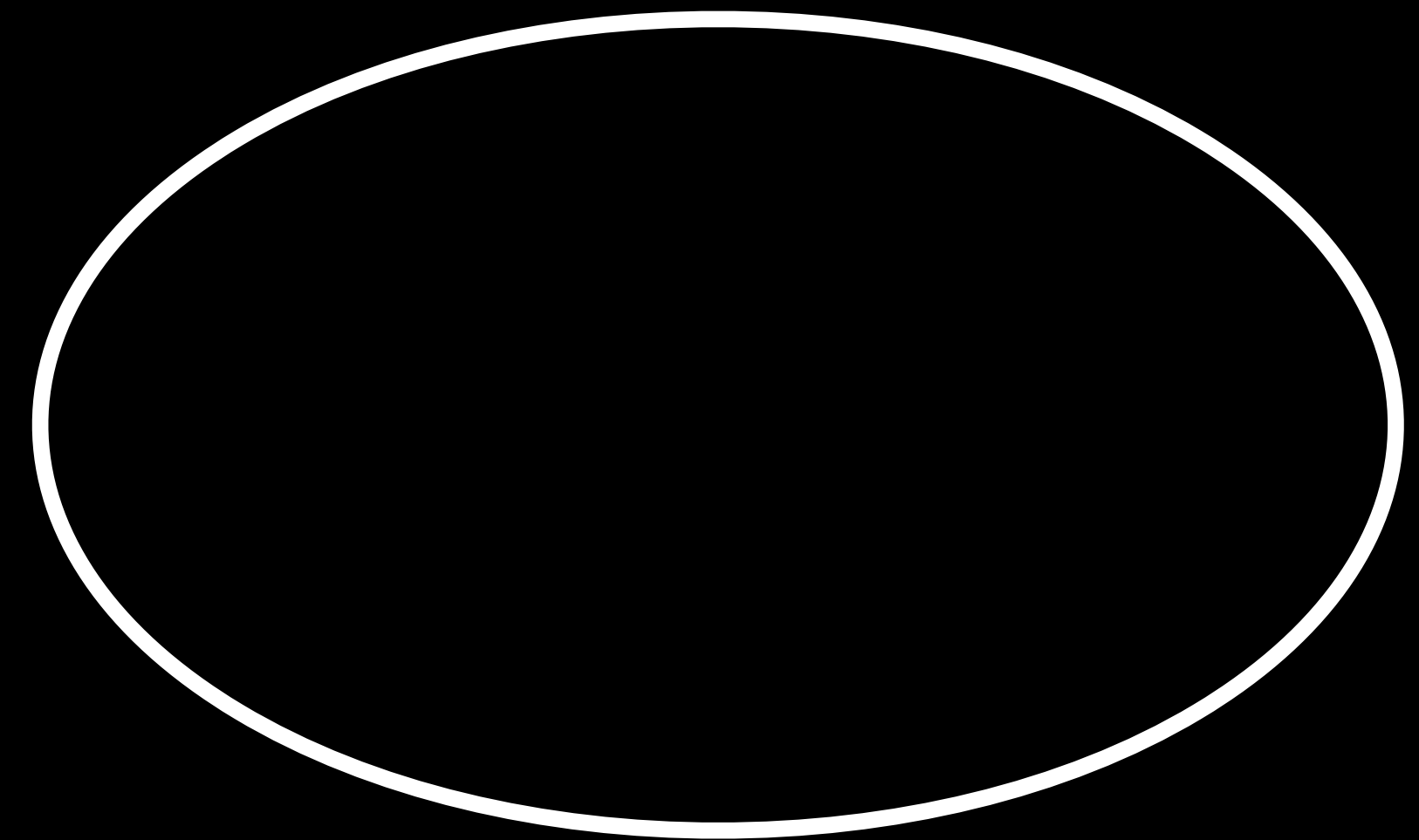
The study of **symmetries** is foundational for the intimate connection between mathematics and physics



What do we mean by symmetries?

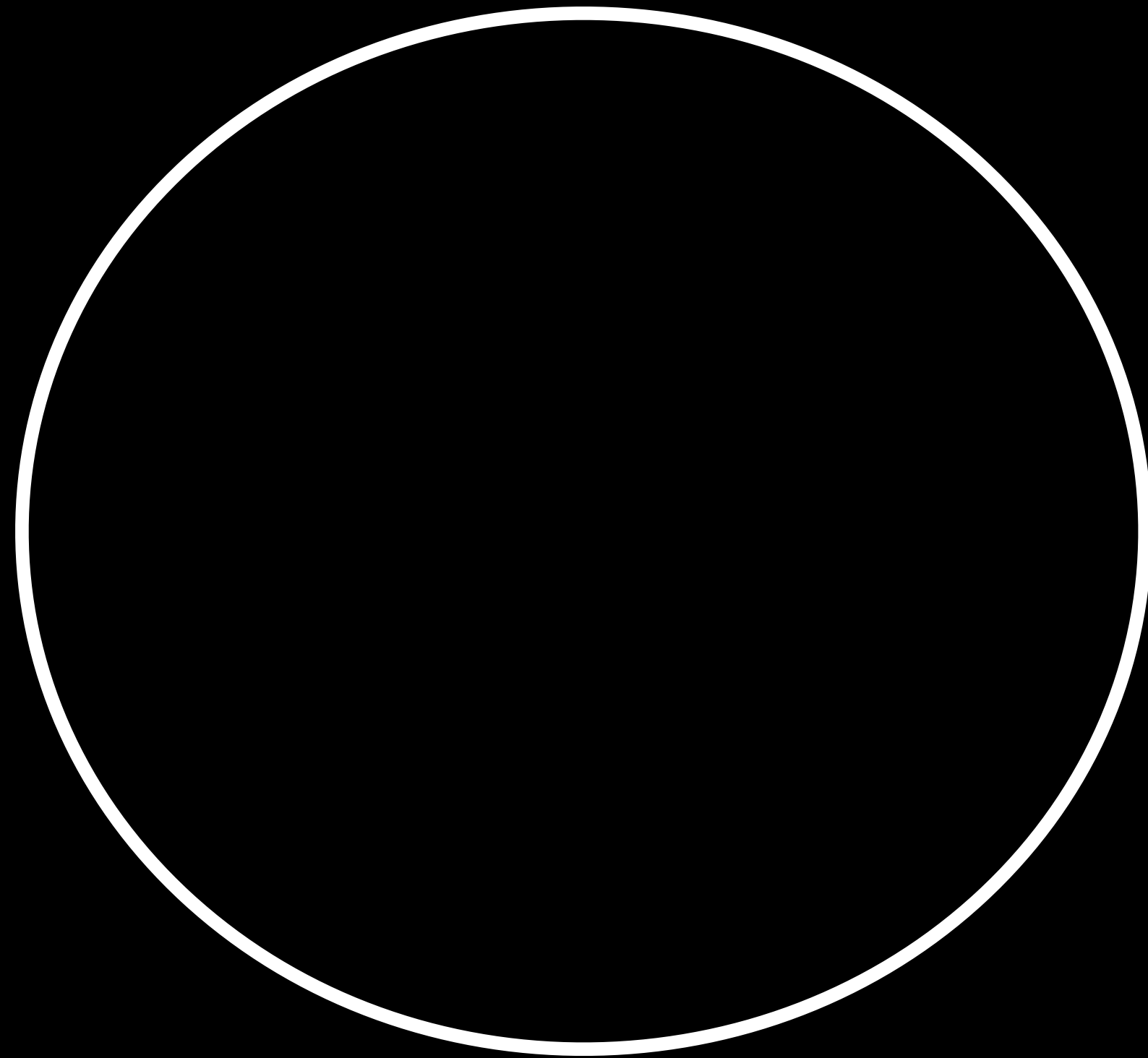


infinite rotational symmetry

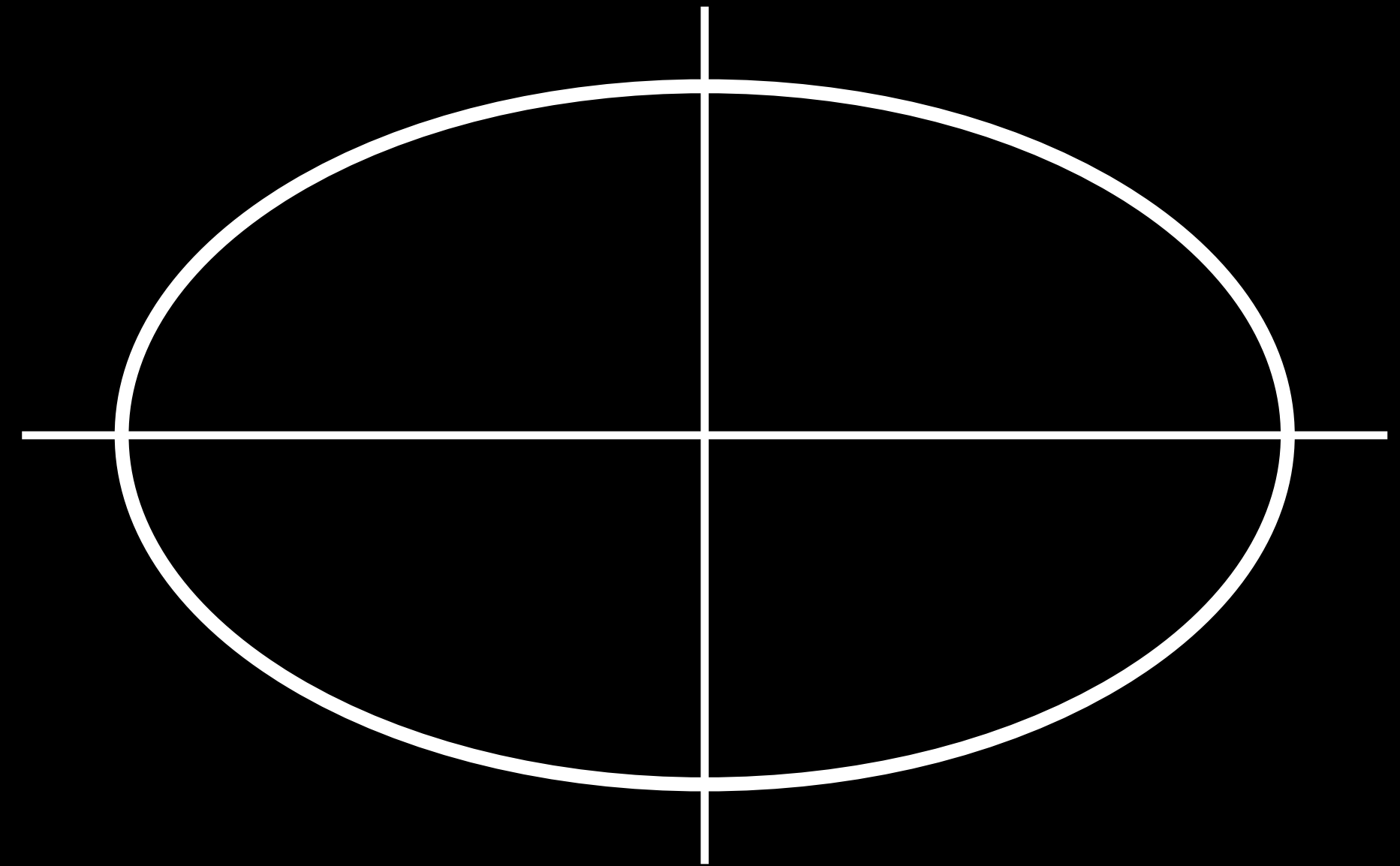


finite reflection symmetry

What do we mean by symmetries?



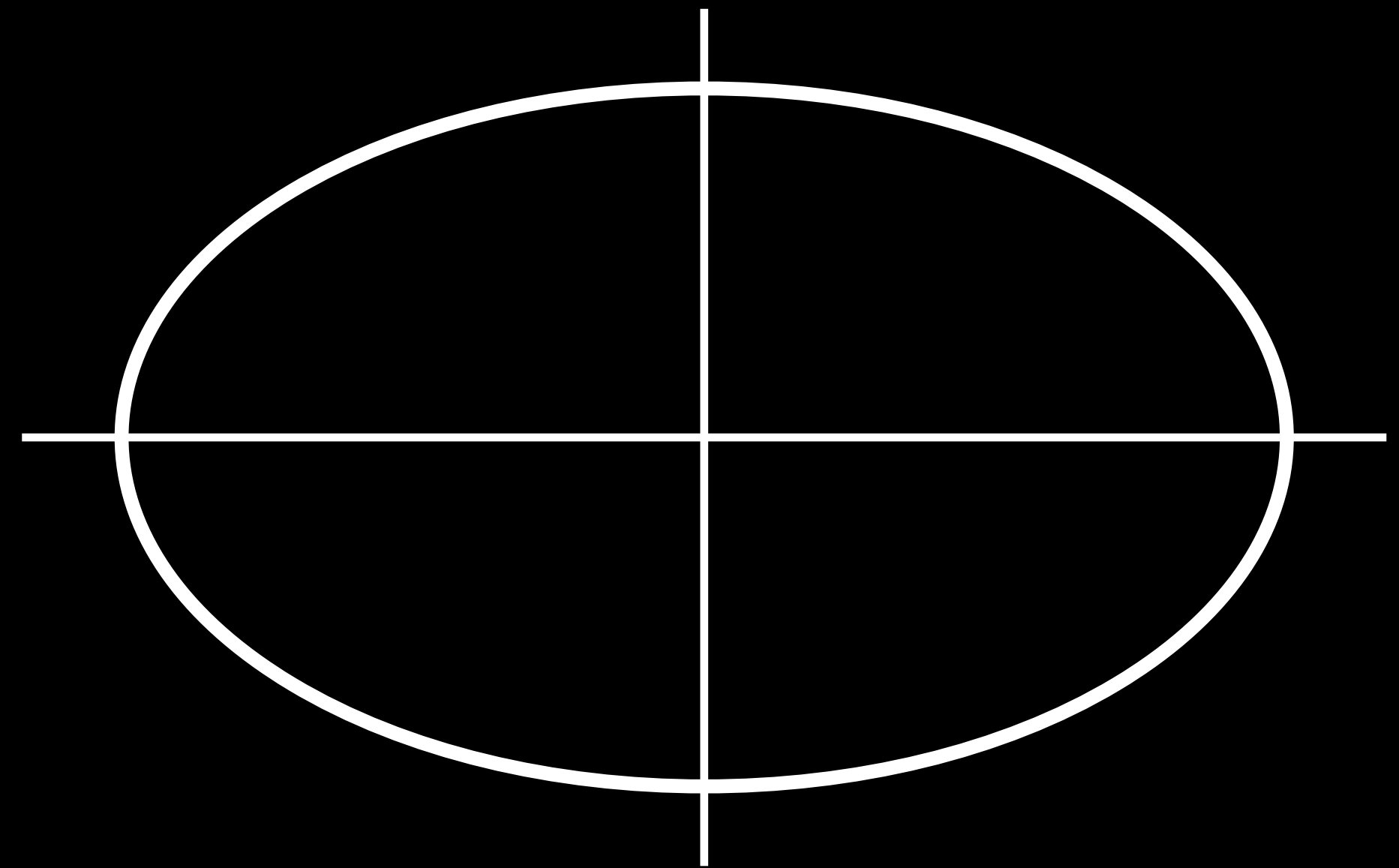
infinite rotational symmetry



finite reflection symmetry

What do we mean by symmetries?

Symmetry transformations
form a mathematical object
called a **group**



finite reflection symmetry

Finite simple groups

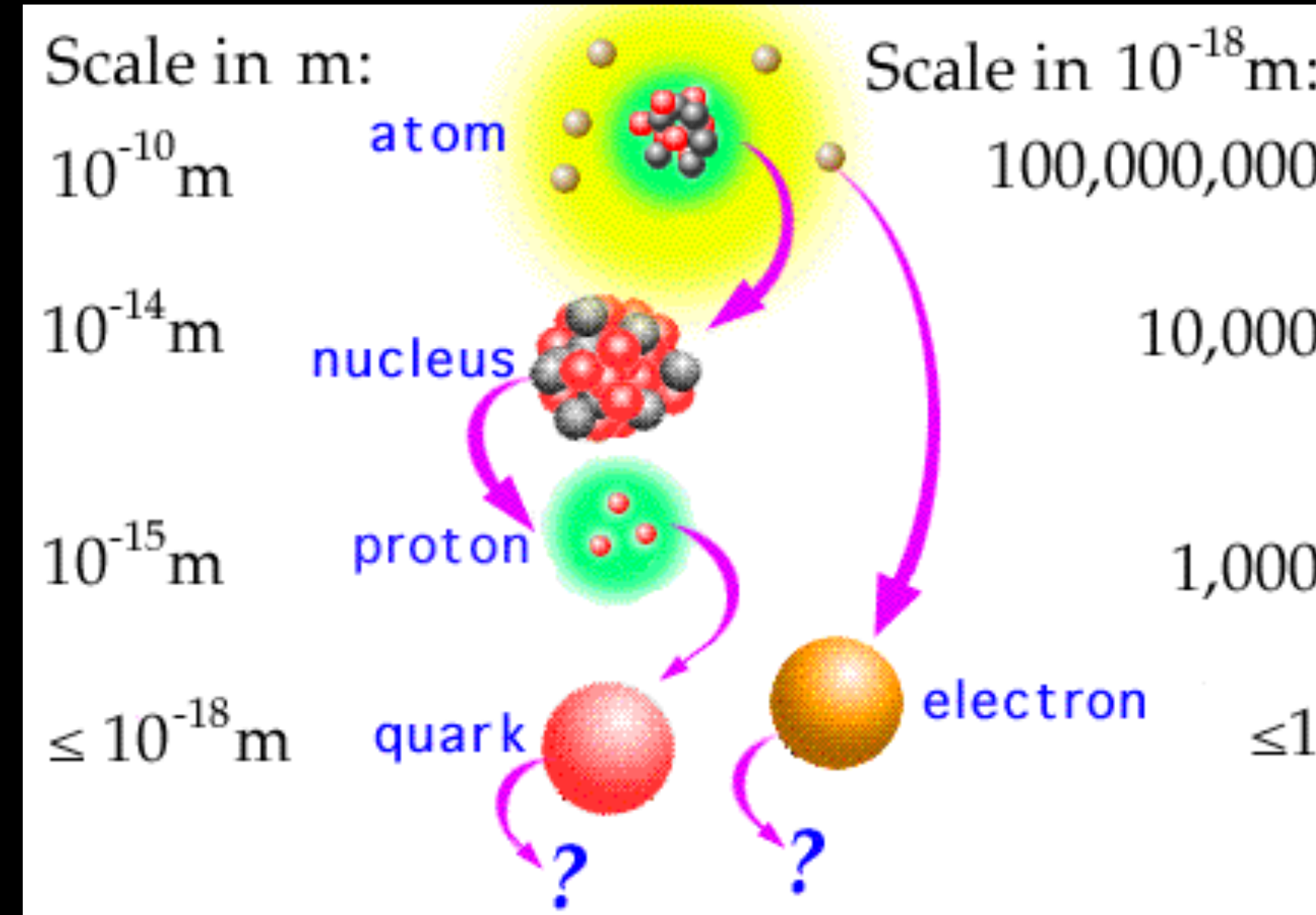
Finite groups that cannot be divided into smaller pieces are called **simple**

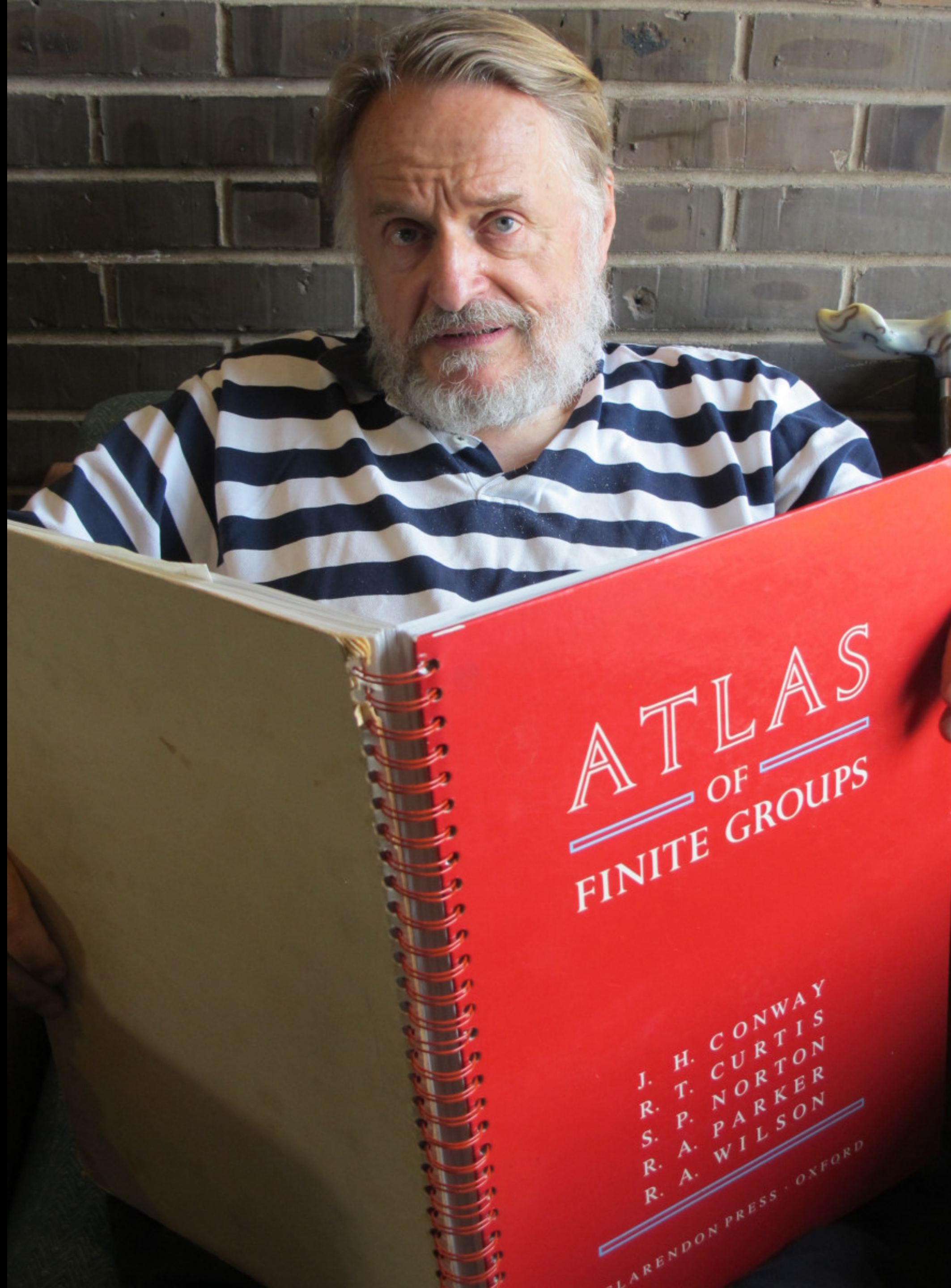


They are like **building blocks of symmetries**

Prime numbers

2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13,
17, 19, 23, 29, 31,
37, 41, 43, 47, 53,
59, 61, 67, 71, 73,
79, 83, 89, 97





The **classification** of finite simple groups is one of the most extensive projects in mathematics

Complete proof consists of:

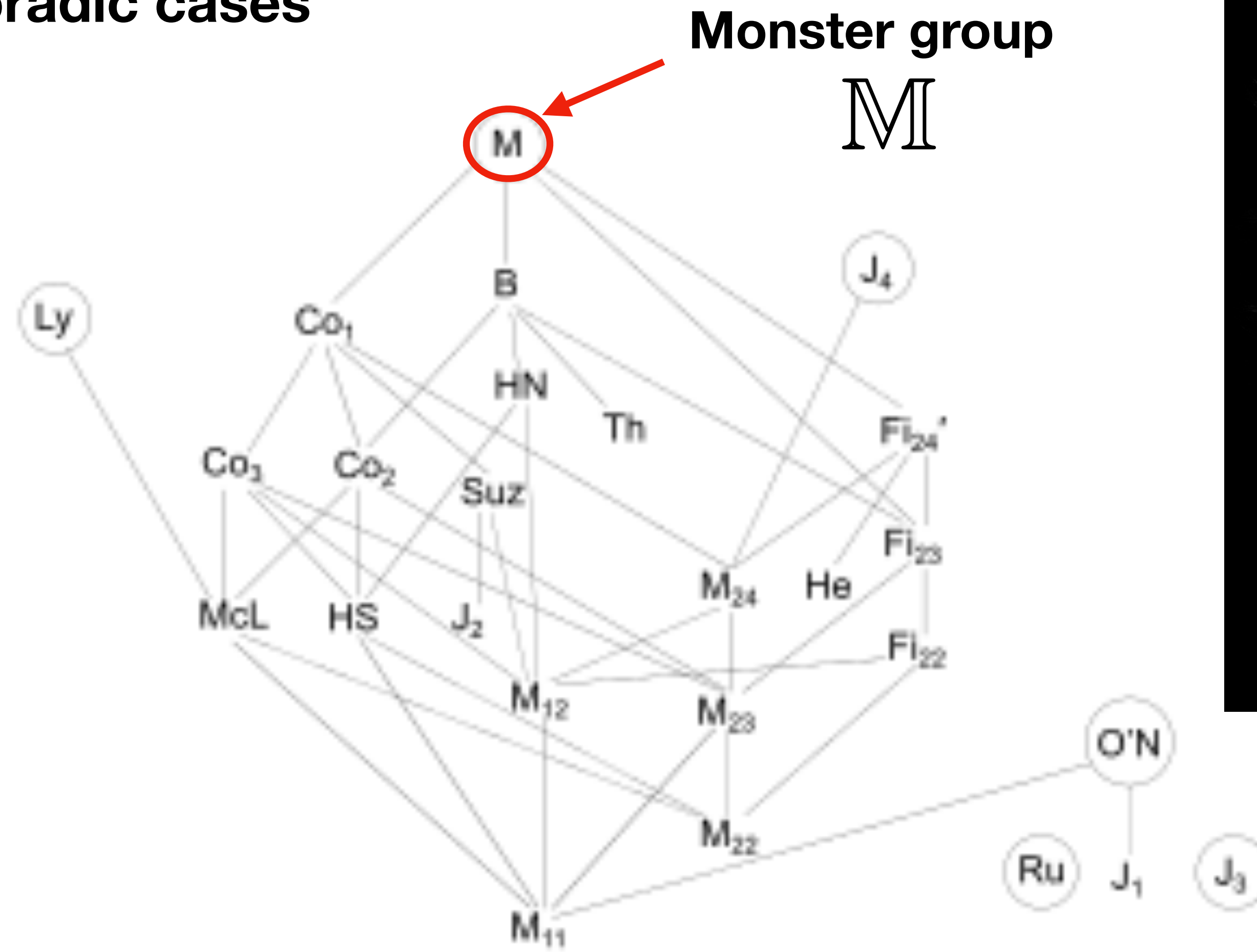
10 000+ pages

100+ journals

100+ mathematicians

Classification

- ➔ **Several infinite families:** cyclic, alternating, Lie type
- ➔ **26 sporadic cases**





In 1978 **John McKay** was taking a break from the classification program of finite groups and was doing some recreational reading in number theory.

He then stumbled upon the following series expansion:

$$J(q) = \frac{1}{q} + 196884q + 21493760q^2 + 864299970q^3 + 20245856256q^4 + \dots$$

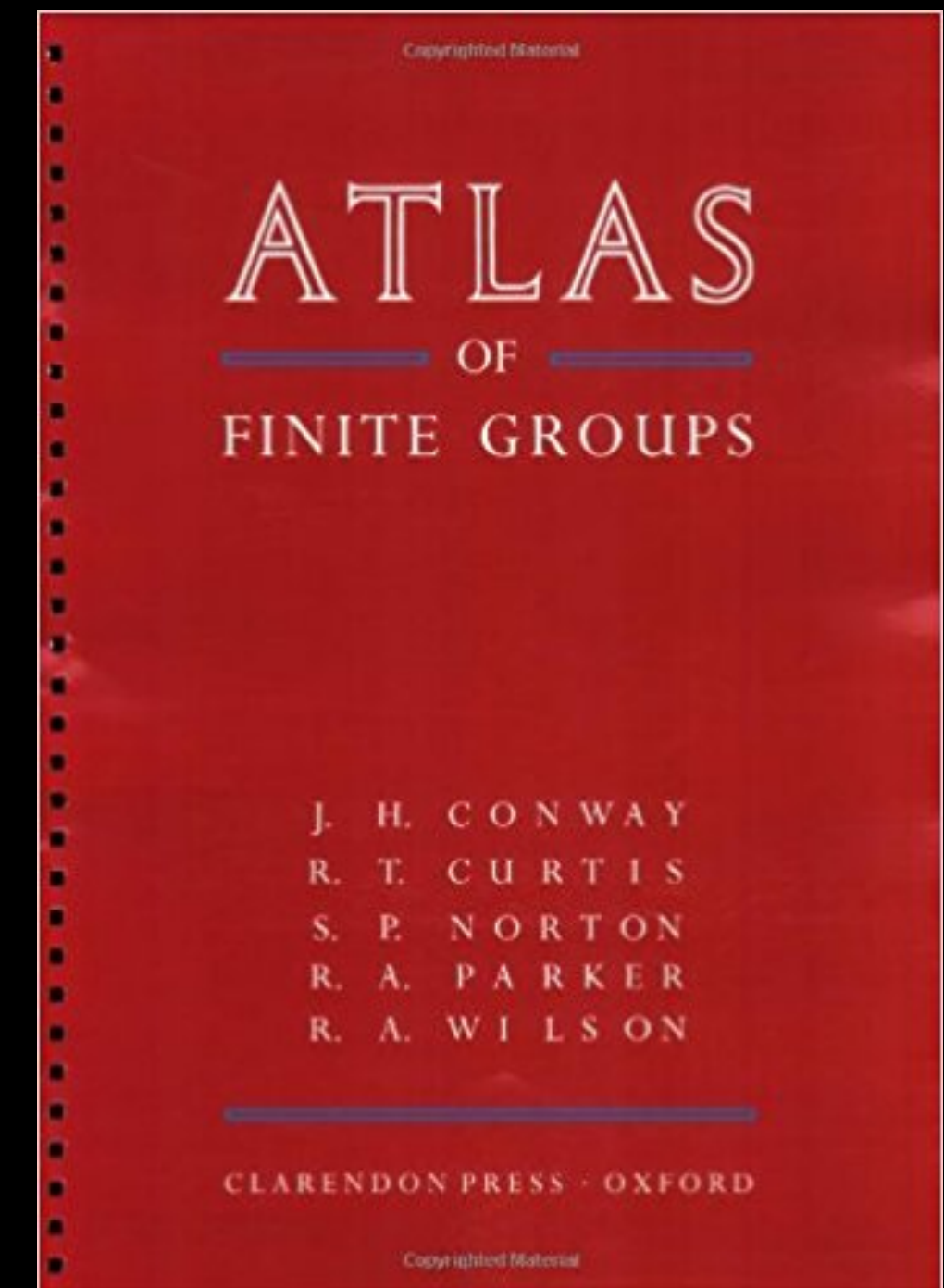


In 1978 **John McKay** was taking a break from the classification program of finite groups and was doing some recreational reading in number theory.

He then stumbled upon the following series expansion:

$$J(q) = \frac{1}{q} + 196884q + 21493760q^2 + 864299970q^3 + 20245856256q^4 + \dots$$

Being a group theorist he immediately opened up the Atlas



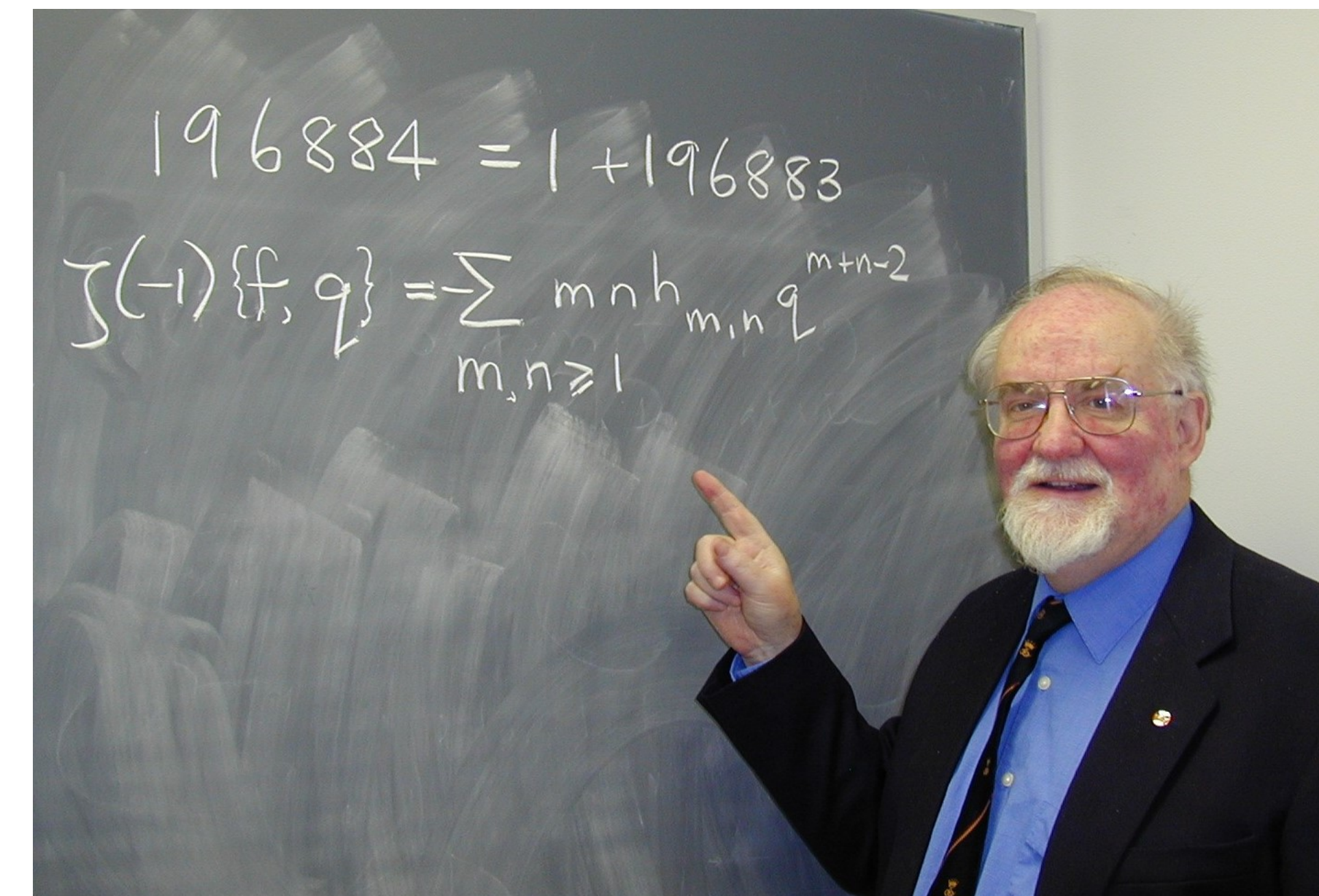
	ind	1A	2A	2B	3A
X ₁	+	1	1	1	1
X ₂	+	196883	4371	275	782
X ₃	+	21296876	91884	-2324	7889
X ₄	+	842609326	1139374	12974	55912
X ₅	+	18538750076	8507516	123004	249458
X ₆	+	19360062527	9362495	-58305	297482
X ₇	+	293553734298	53981850	98970	1055310
X ₈	+	3879214937598	337044990	-690690	4751823
X ₉	+	36173193327999	1354188159	2864511	12616074
X ₁₀	+	125510727015275	3215883115	1219435	24688454
X ₁₁	+	190292345709543	2814161895	10249191	17144568
X ₁₂	+	222879856734249	3864186921	-7196631	26057022
X ₁₃	+	1044868466775133	9223504989	-15756195	47292301
X ₁₄	+	1109944460516150	9697078070	26155830	40851749
X ₁₅	+	2374124840062976	22509162496	4100096	110509112
X ₁₆	o	8980616927734375	-2720265625	39414375	1603525

$$J(\tau) = \frac{1}{q} + 196884q + 21493760q^2 + 864299970q^3 + 20245856256q^4 + \dots$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 1 \\ 196883 \end{array}$$

$$196884 = 1 + 196883$$

McKay's equation



	ind	1A	2A	2B	3A
X ₁	+	1	1	1	1
X ₂	+	196883	4371	275	782
X ₃	+	21296876	91884	-2324	7889
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X ₁₄	+	1109944460516150	9697078070	26155830	40851749
X ₁₅	+	2374124840062976	22509162496	4100096	110509112
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$$J(\tau) = \frac{1}{q} + 196884q + 21493760q^2 + 864299970q^3 + 20245856256q^4 + \dots$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 1 \\ 196883 \\ 21296876 \end{array}$$

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$$196884 = 1 + 196883 \quad \text{McKay's equation}$$

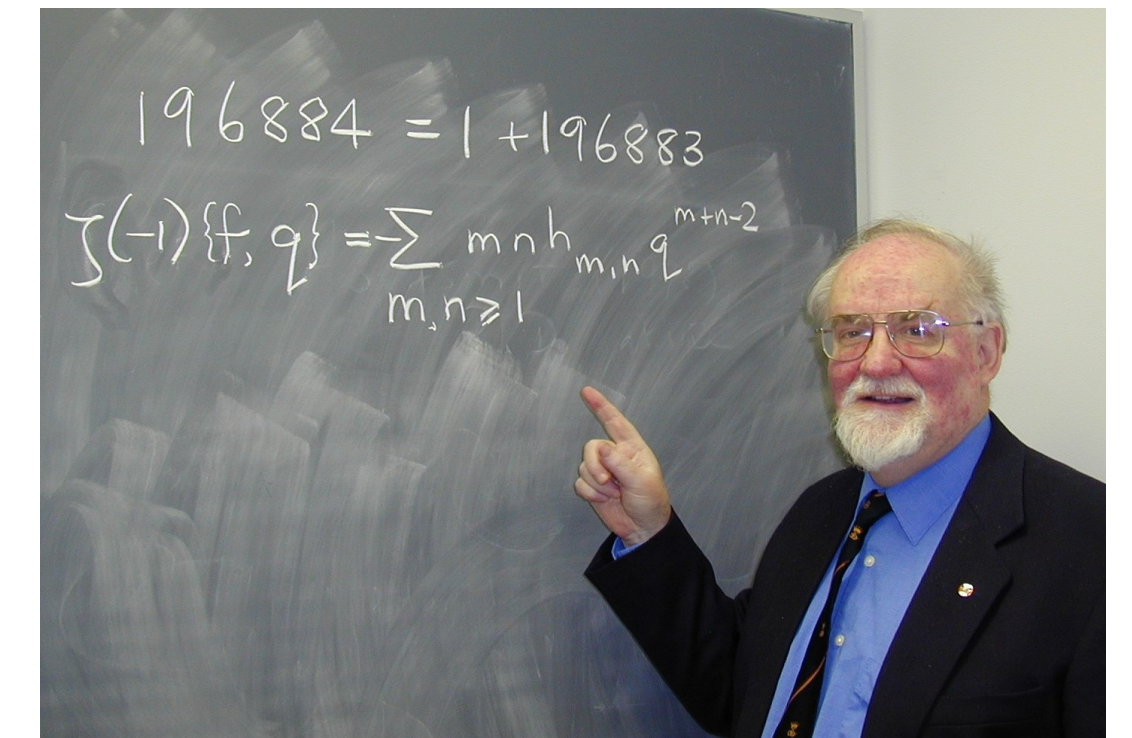
$$21493760 = 1 + 196883 + 21296876 \quad \text{Thompson's equation}$$

$$J(\tau) = \frac{1}{q} + 196884q + 21493760q^2 + 864299970q^3 + 20245856256q^4 + \dots$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 1 \\ 196883 \\ 21296876 \end{array}$$

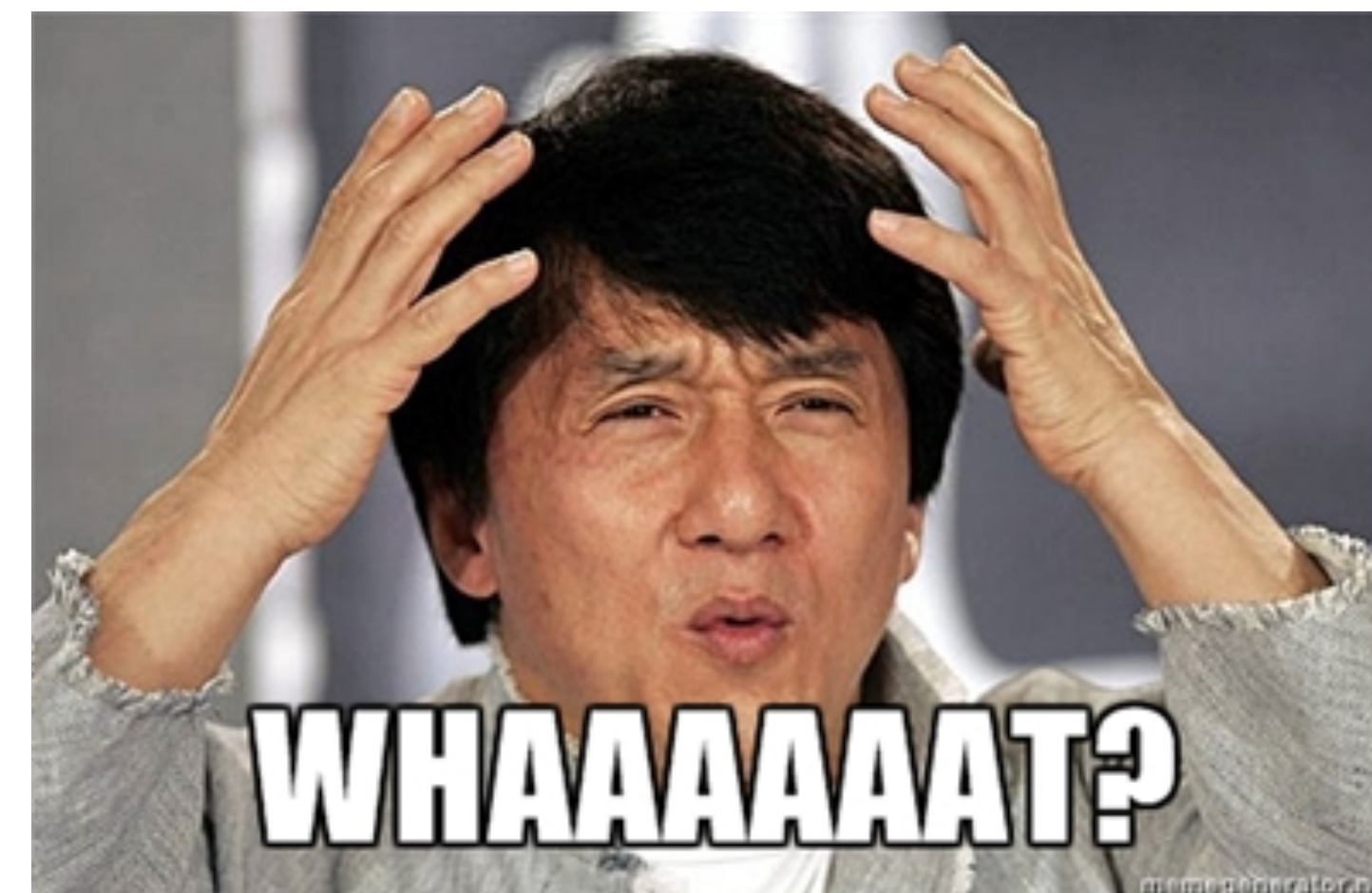
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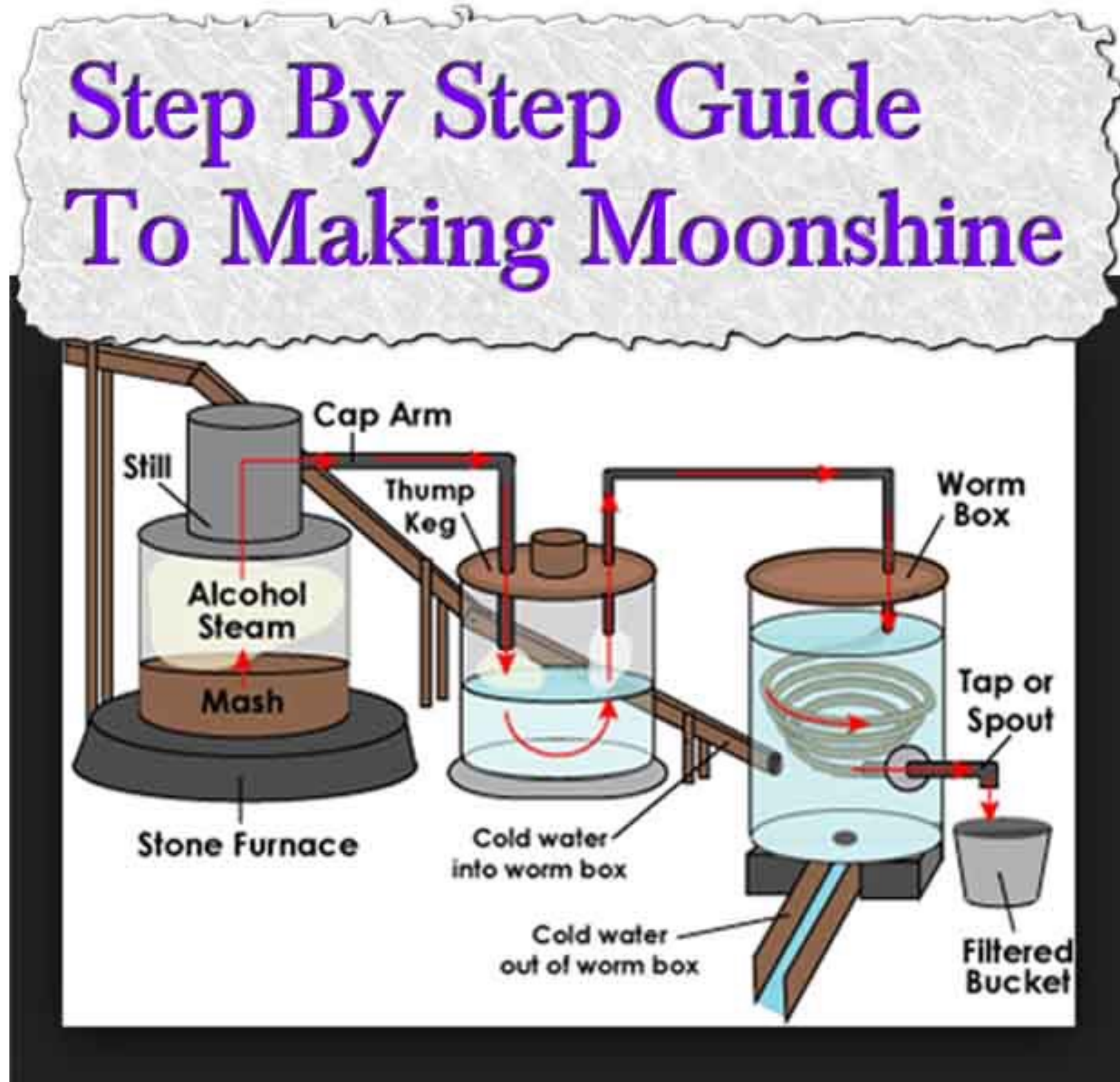
$$21493760 = 1 + 196883 + 21296876 \quad \text{Thompson's equation}$$

What does this really mean?



“The stuff we were getting was not supported by logical argument. It had the feeling of mysterious moonbeams lighting up dancing Irish leprechauns. Moonshine can also refer to illicitly distilled spirits, and it seemed almost illicit to be working on this stuff.”

- John Conway



Monster group

M



????

Modular function

$J(\tau)$

Monster group

M

Enter physics!



2d conformal field theory
(vertex operator algebra)

[Frenkel, Lepowsky,
Meurman]

Modular function

$J(\tau)$

Monster group

M



Borcherds

Fields medal in 1998



2d conformal field theory
(vertex operator algebra)

[Frenkel, Lepowsky,
Meurman]

Modular function

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Monster group

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Borcherds

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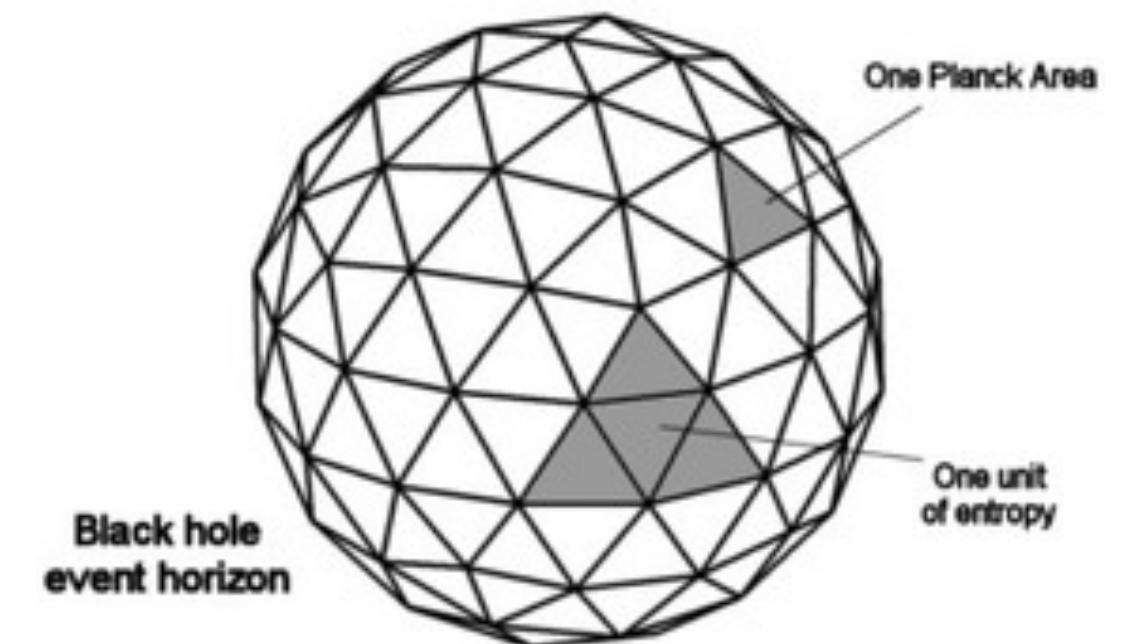


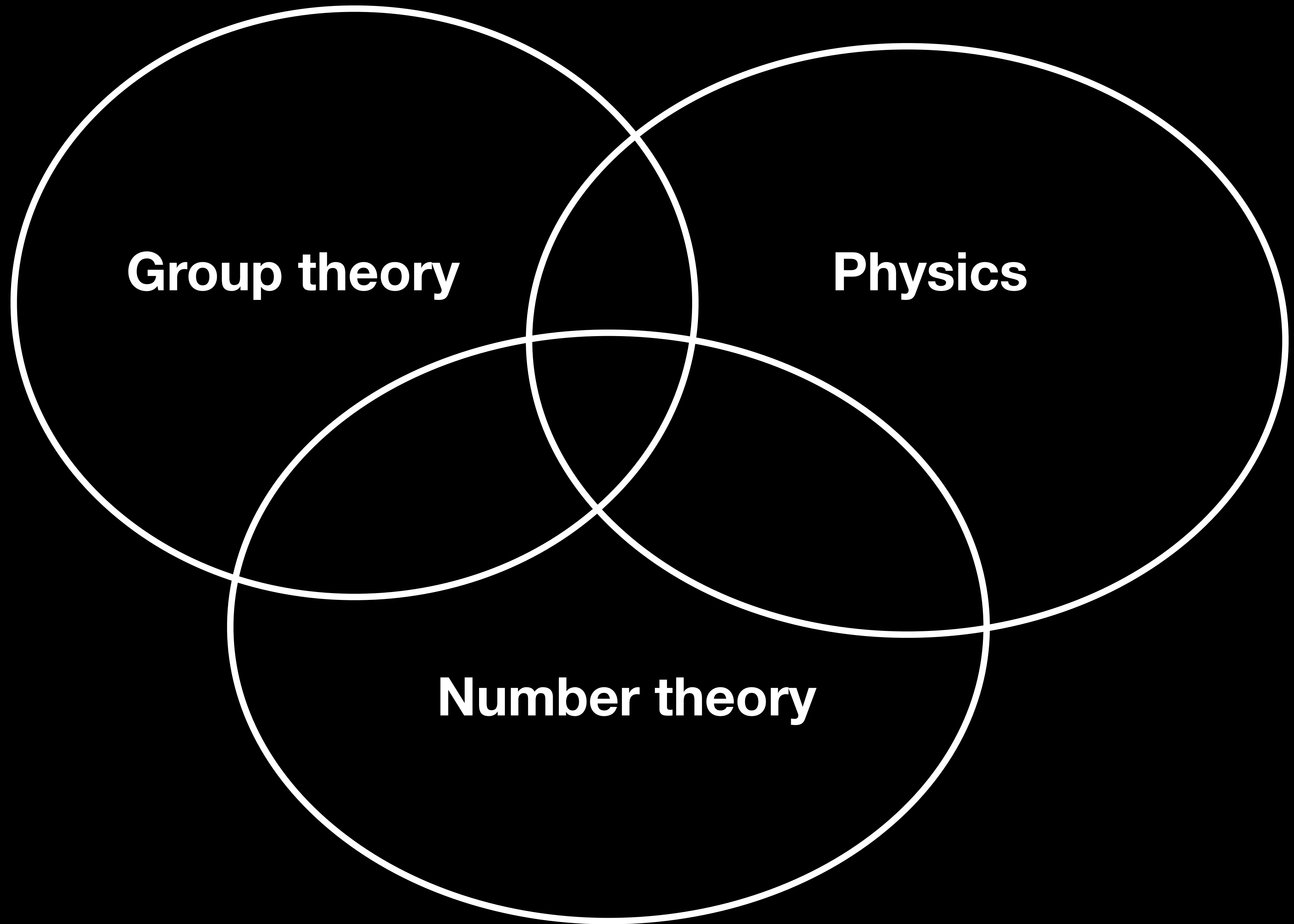
2d conformal field theory (vertex operator algebra)

[Frenkel, Lepowsky,
Meurman]

Modular function

$J(\tau)$





Group theory

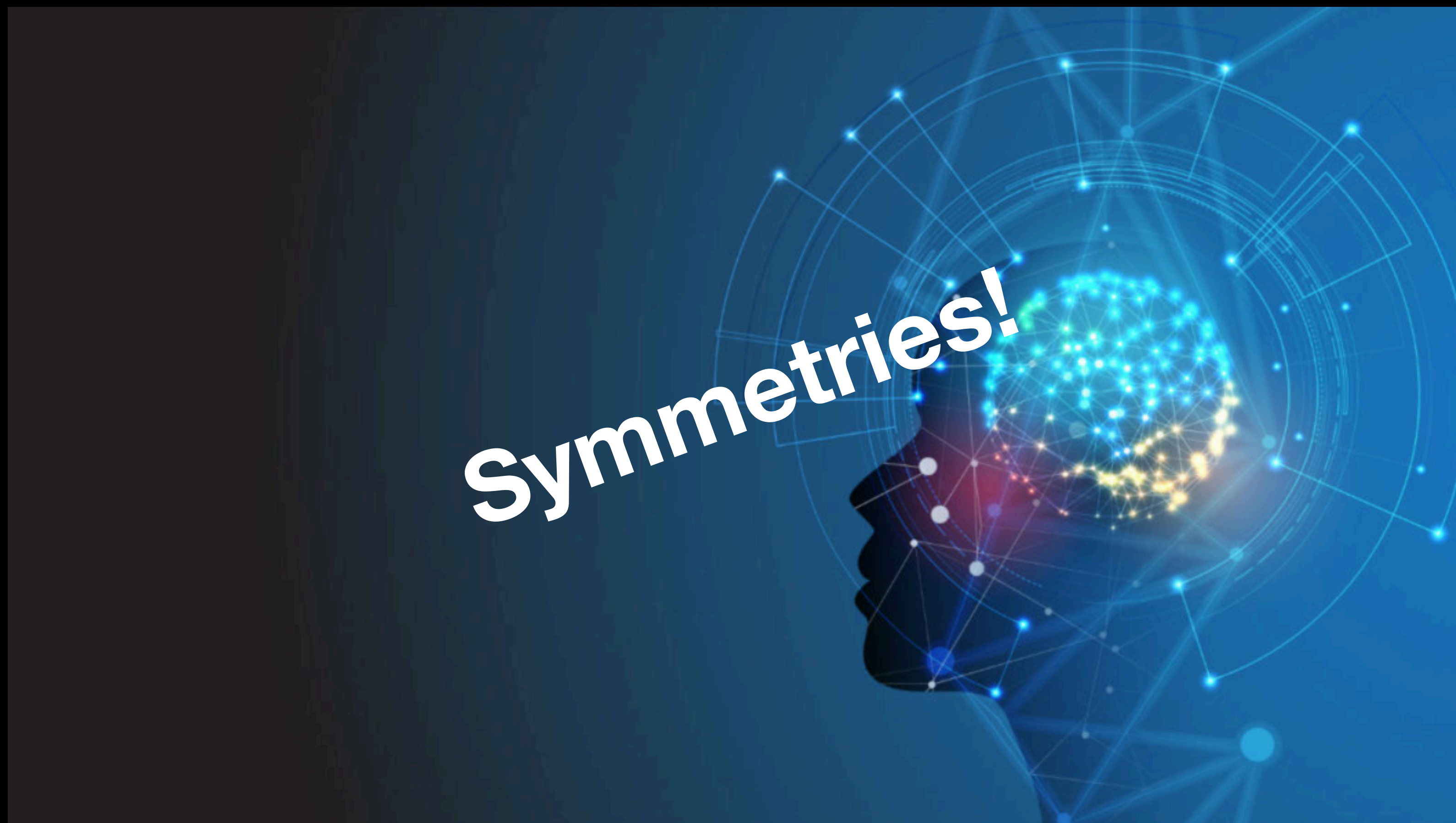
Physics

Number theory

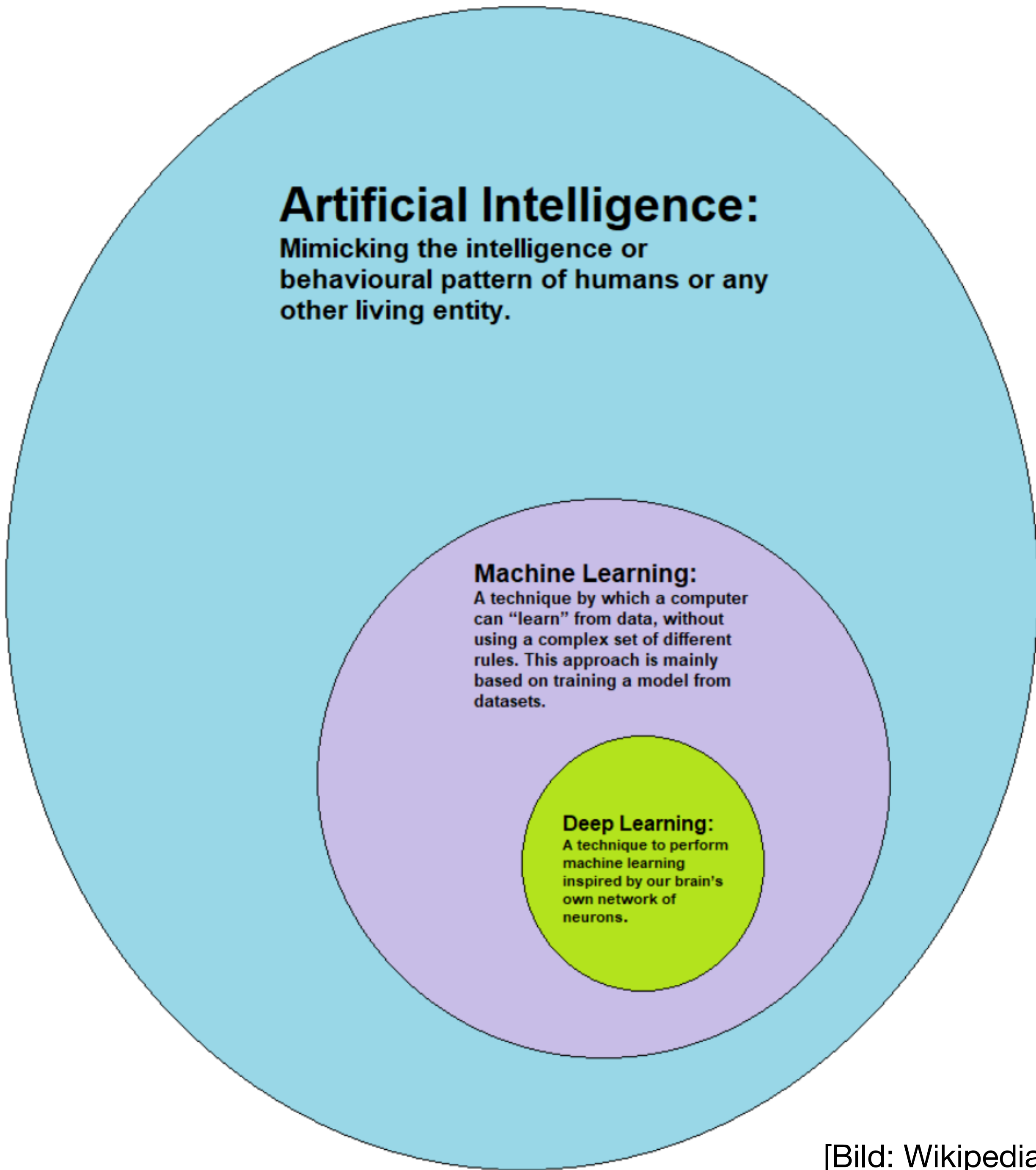
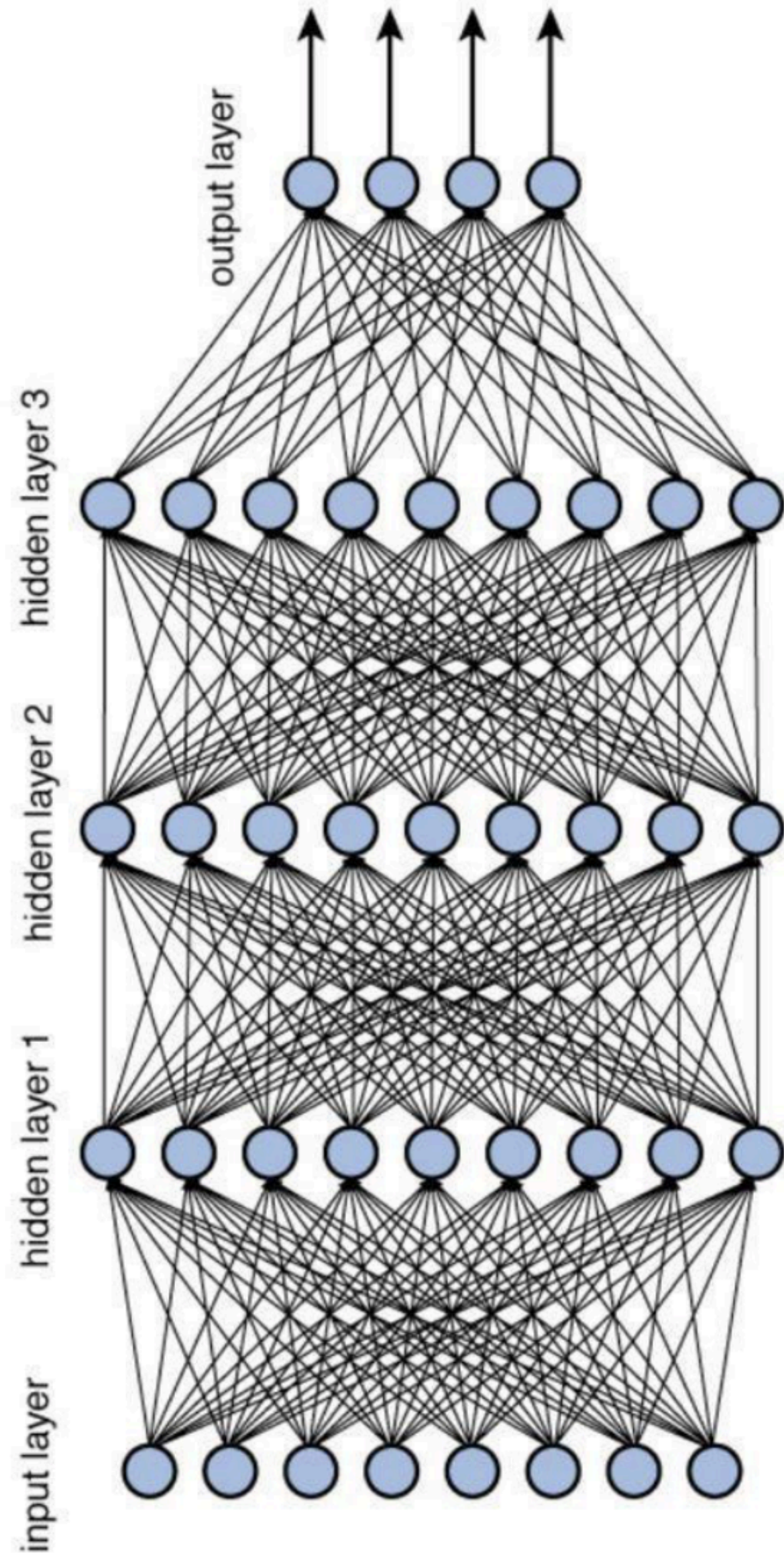
What does all this have to do with AI?

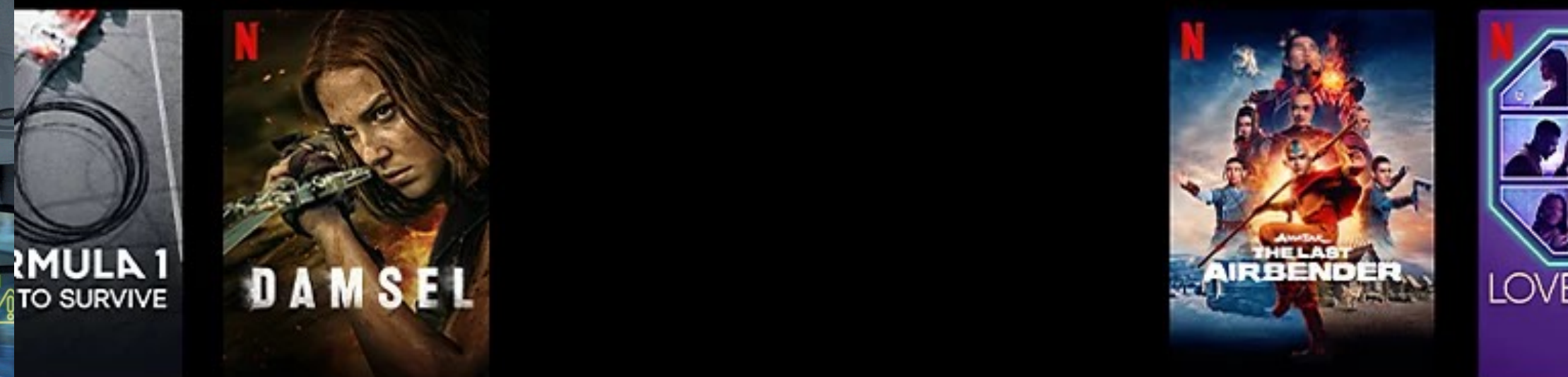


What does all this have to do with AI?



Deep Neural Network







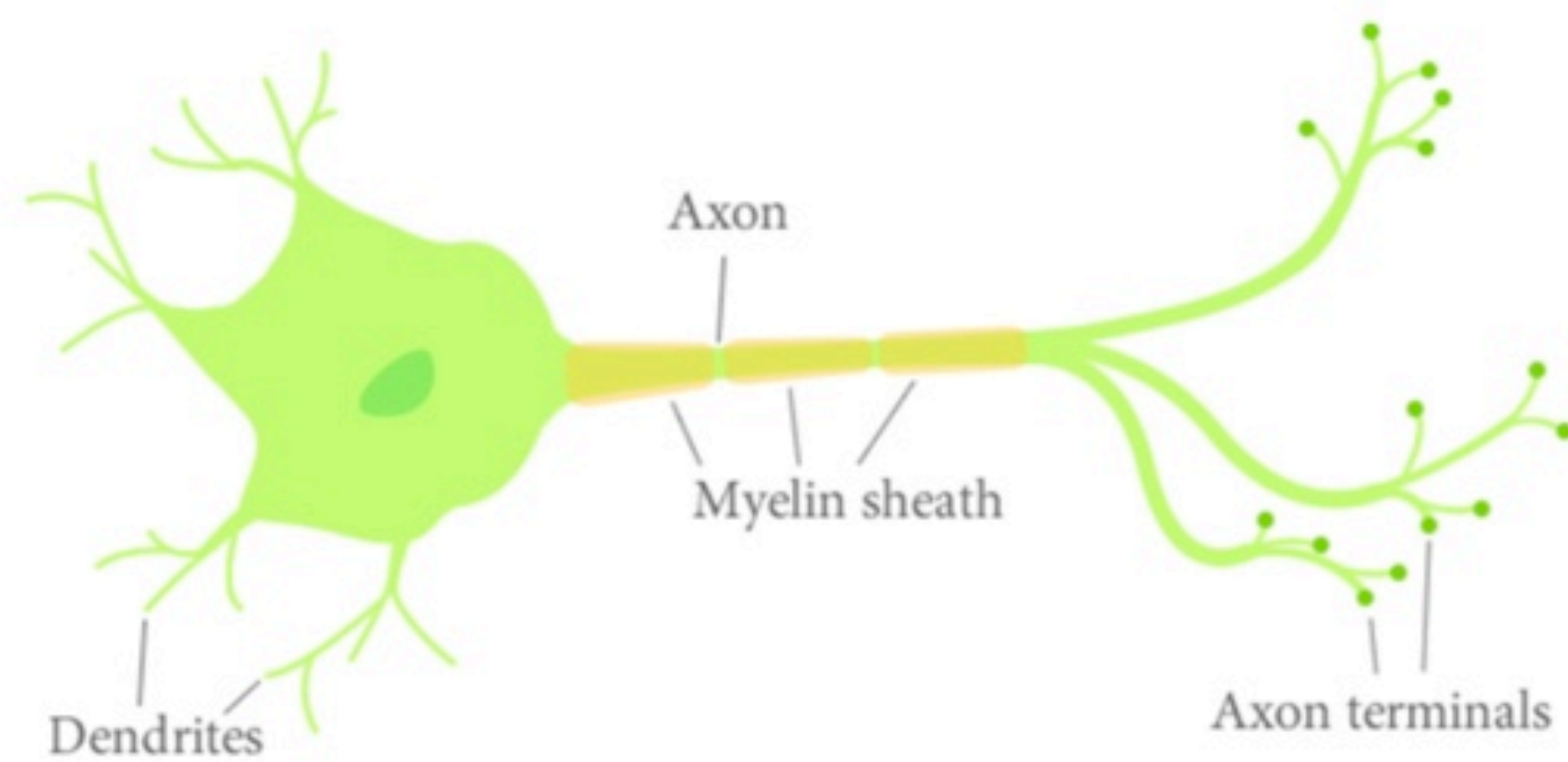




[Pic from thispersondoesnotexist.com]



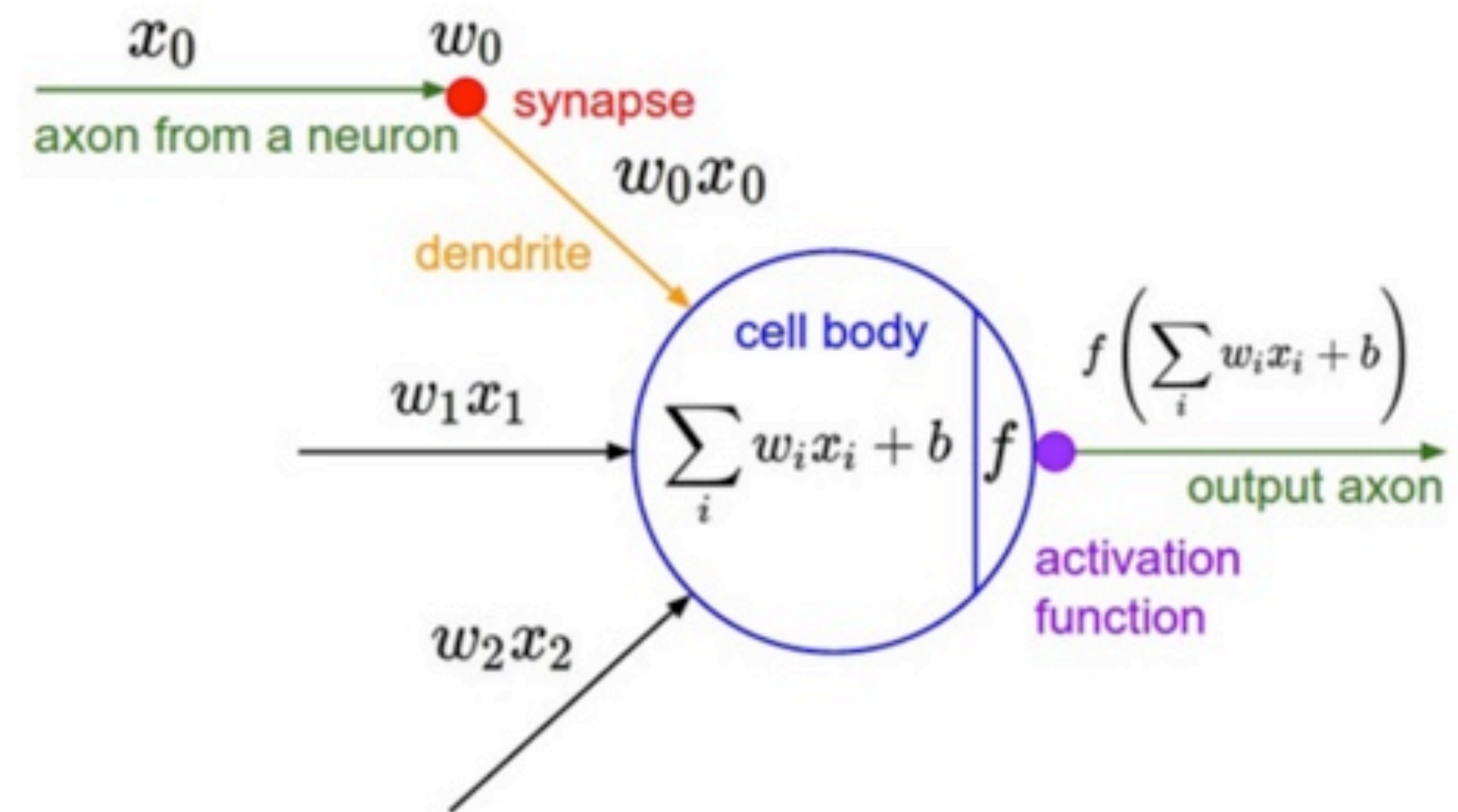
Real Neuron



Artificial Neuron

Artificial neuron:

1. Input layer
2. Hidden layers
3. Output layer





Artificial neuron:

1. Input layer
2. Hidden layers
3. Output layer

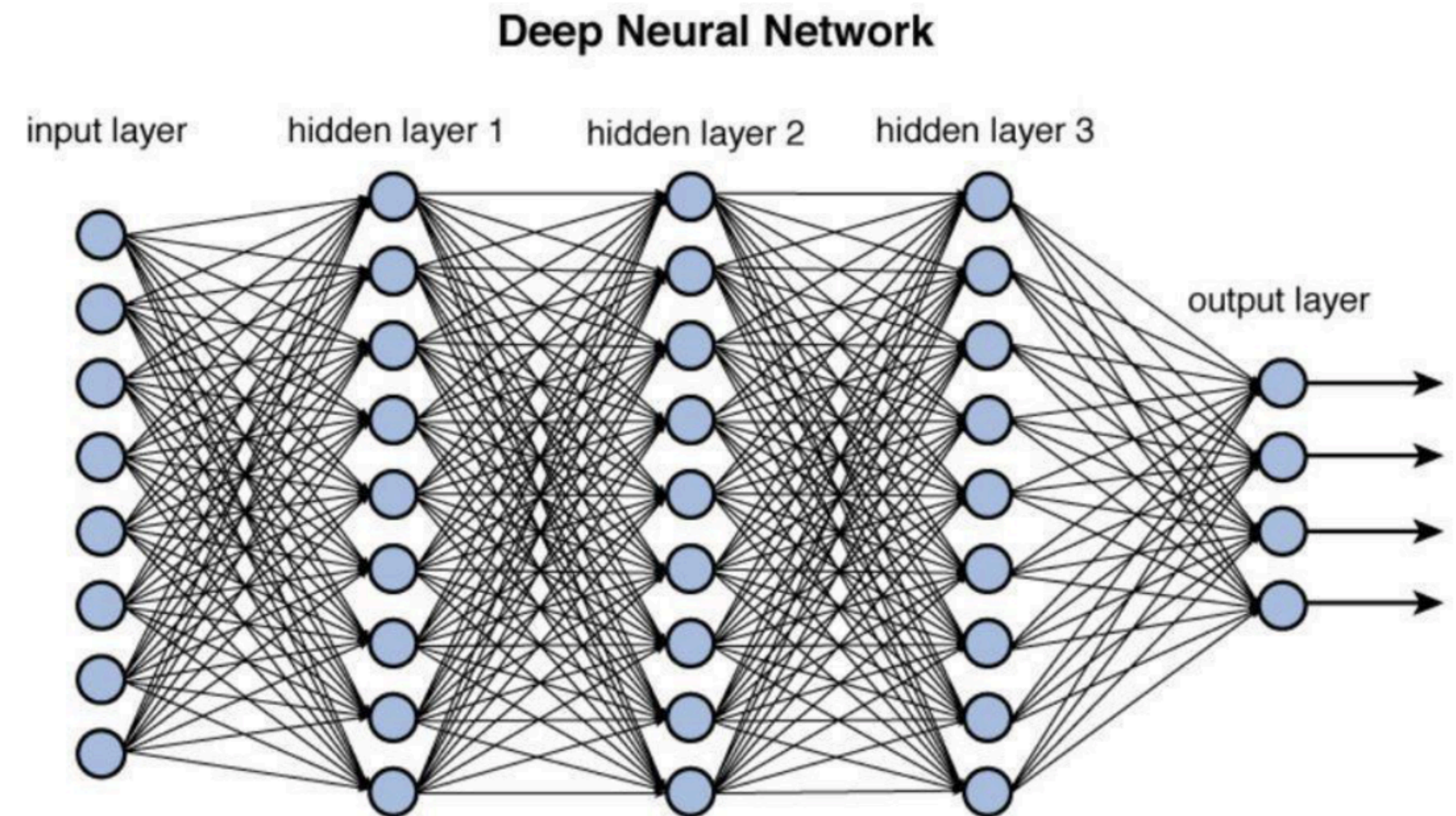


Image classification

Image classification

“skateboard”



“ribs”



“boxing gloves”



Fruits



'Tools



Toys



chatGPT's
proposal

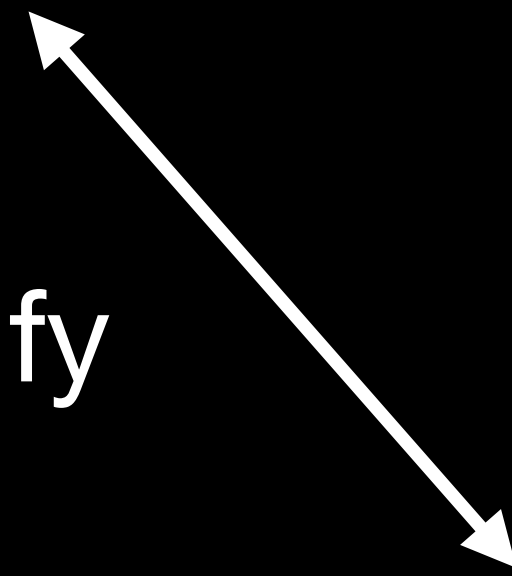
Reflection symmetry



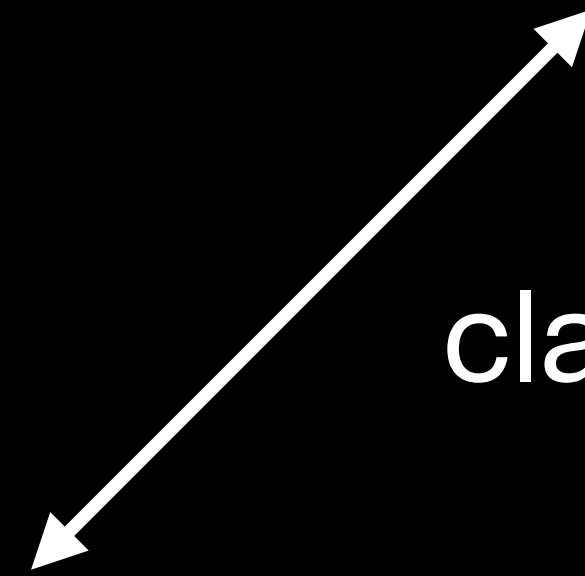
reflect



classify



classify



“boxing glove”

Reflection symmetry



reflect



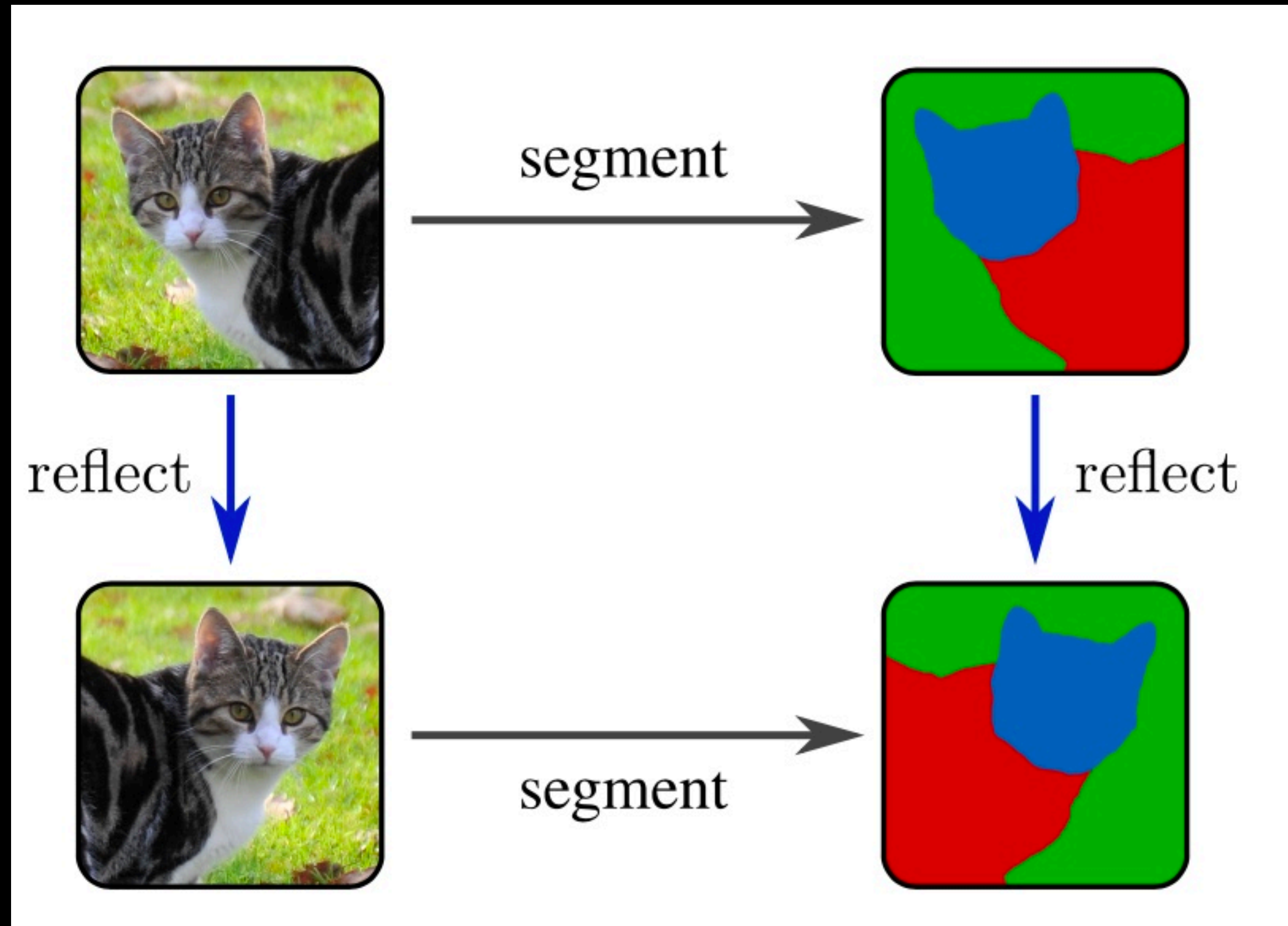
classify

classify

“boxing glove”

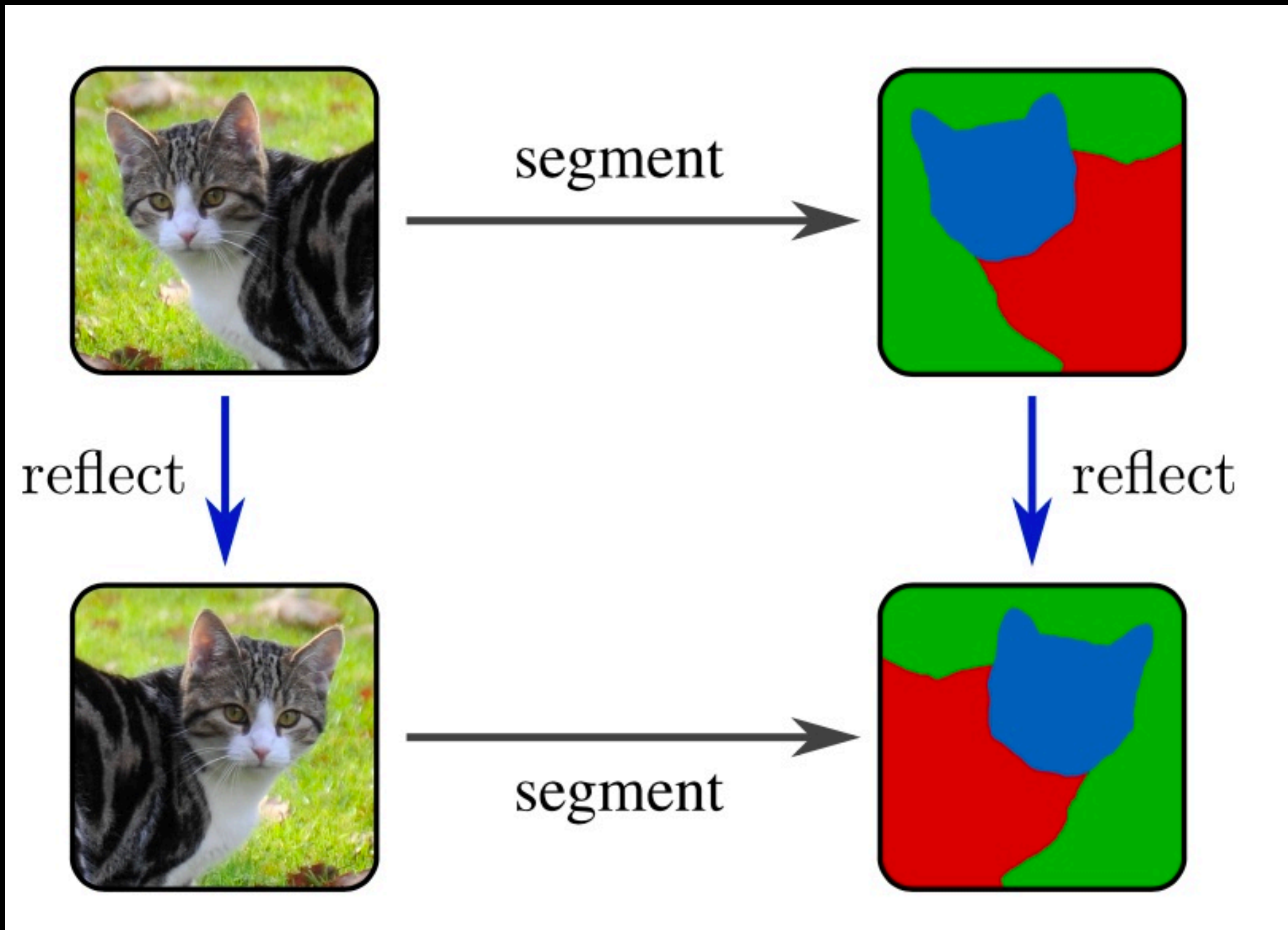
Invariance:
The output is *unchanged*
when we change the input

Segmentation



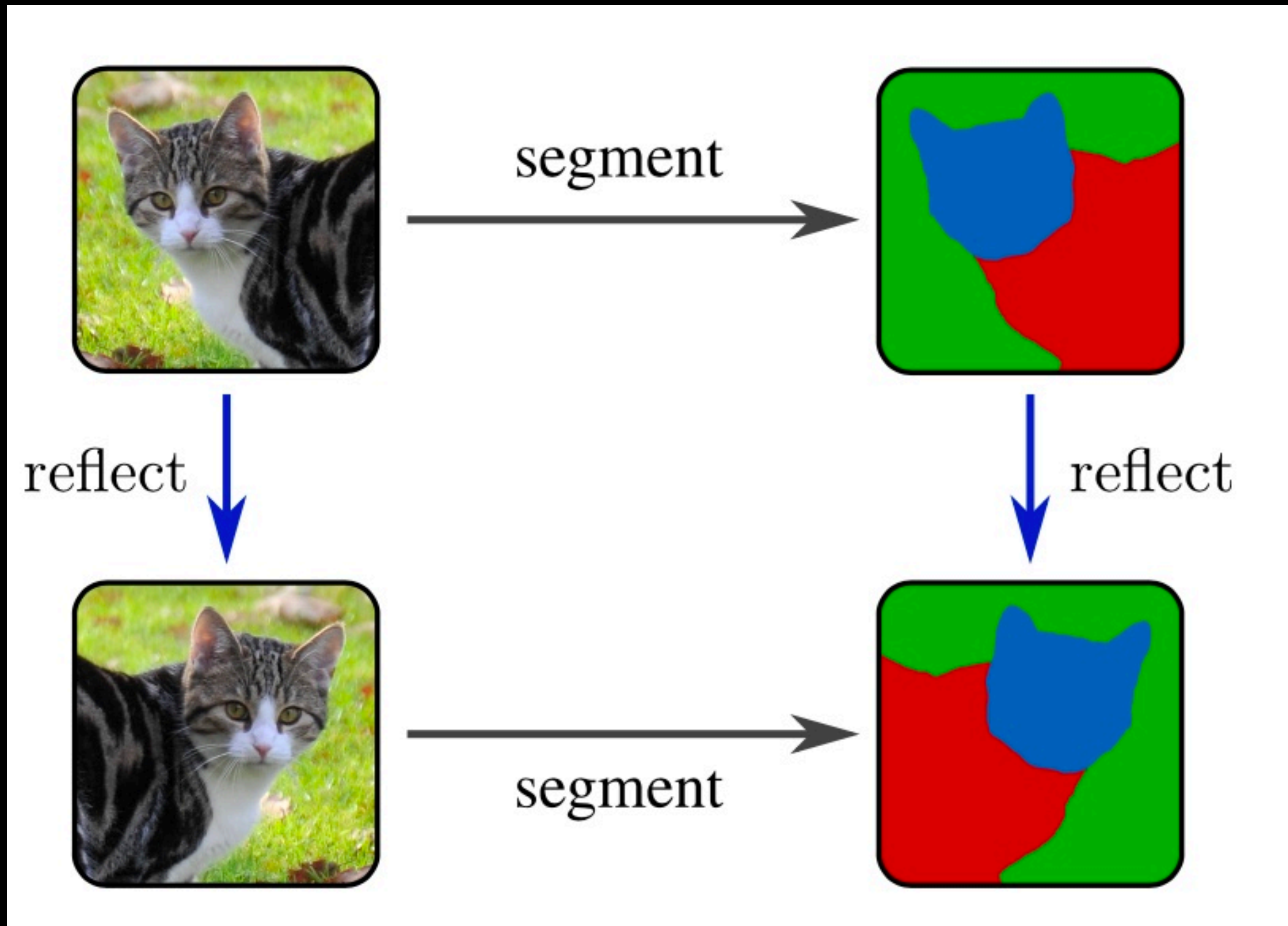
[Image from: Weiler, Forré, Verlinde, Welling (2023)]

Segmentation

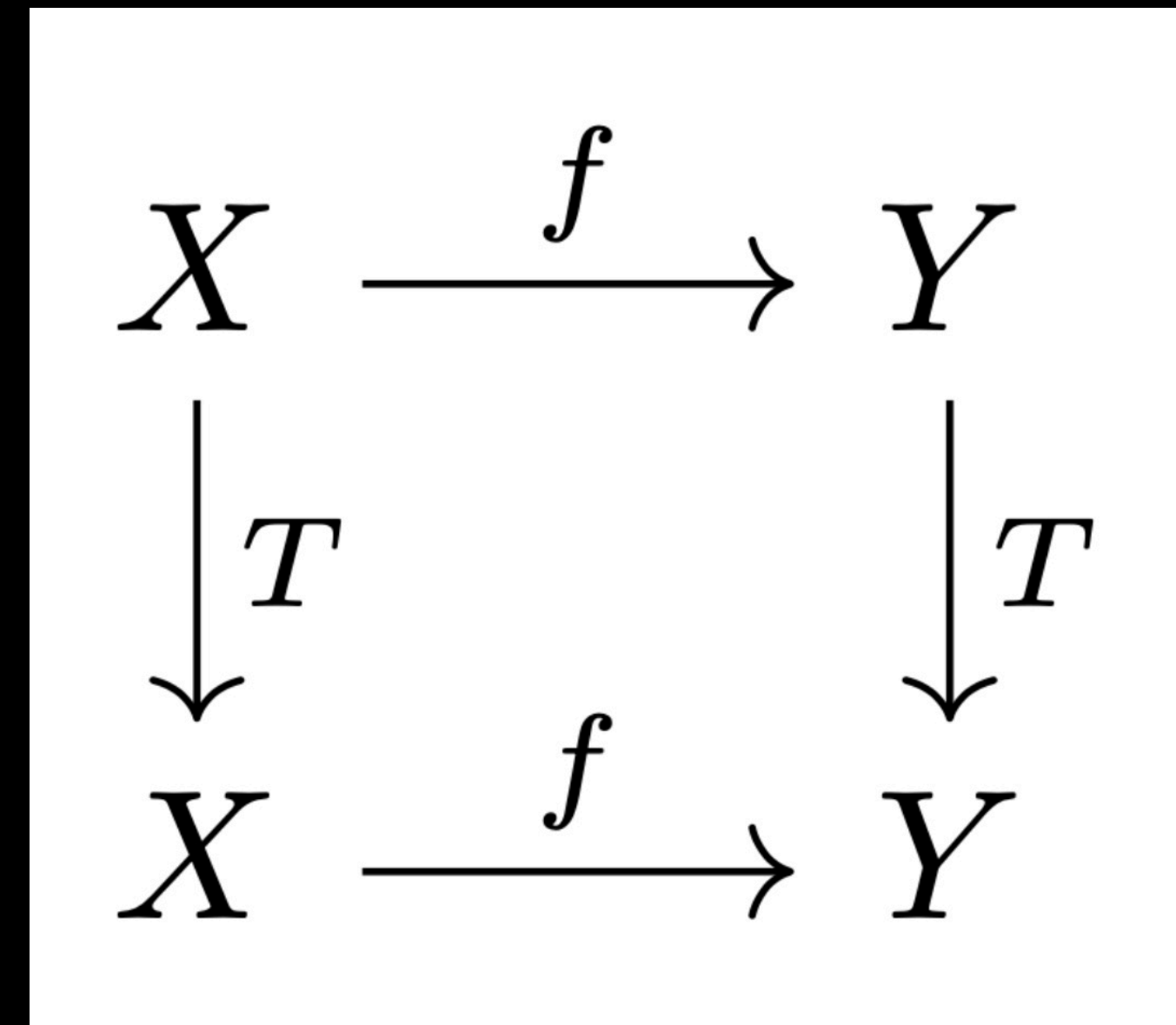


Equivariance:
The output *transforms*
according to the
transformation of the input

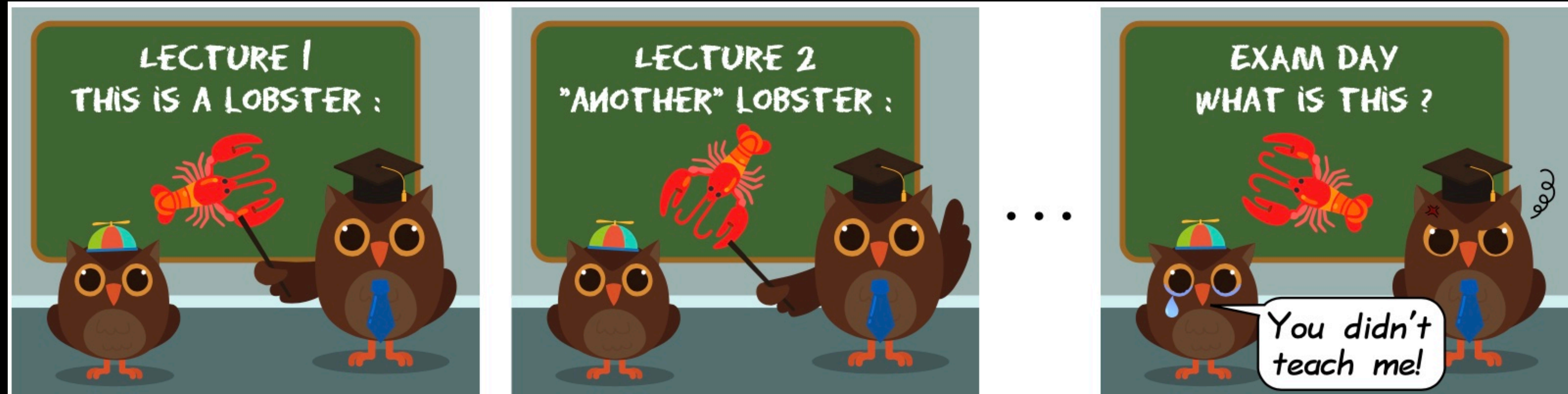
Segmentation

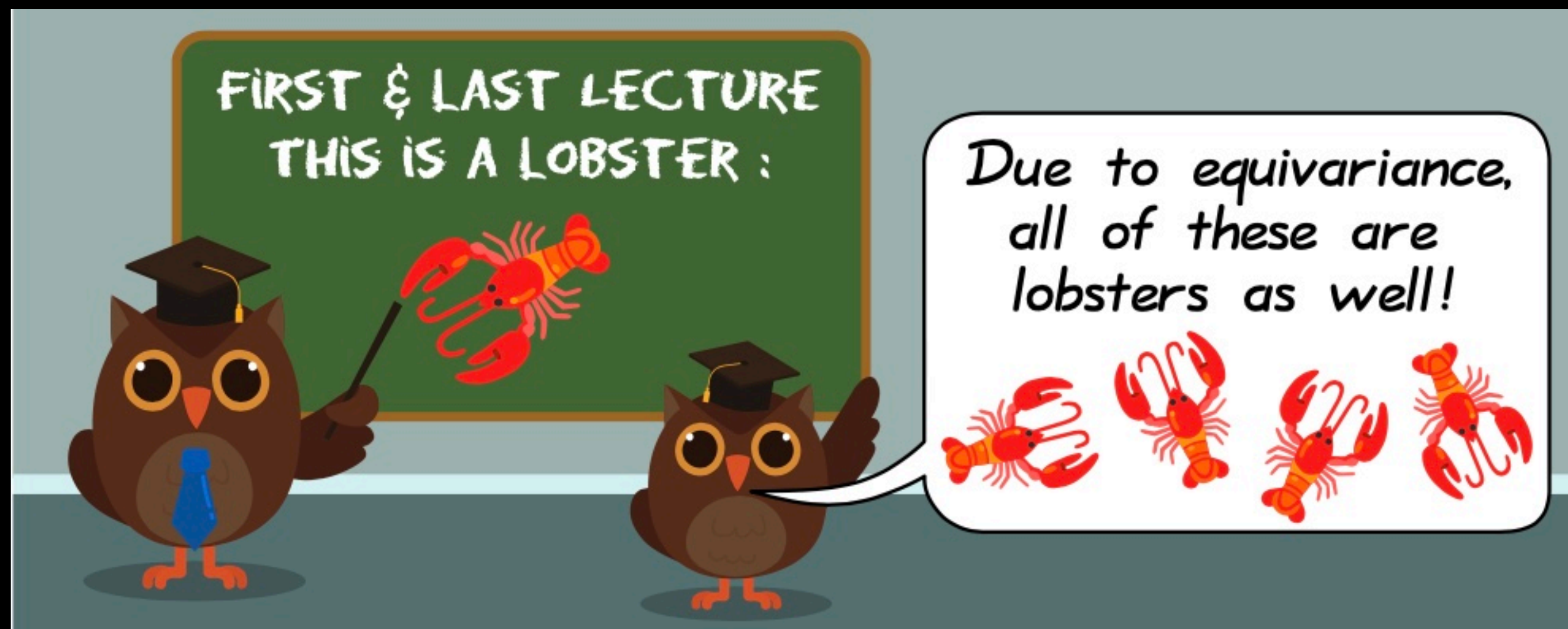
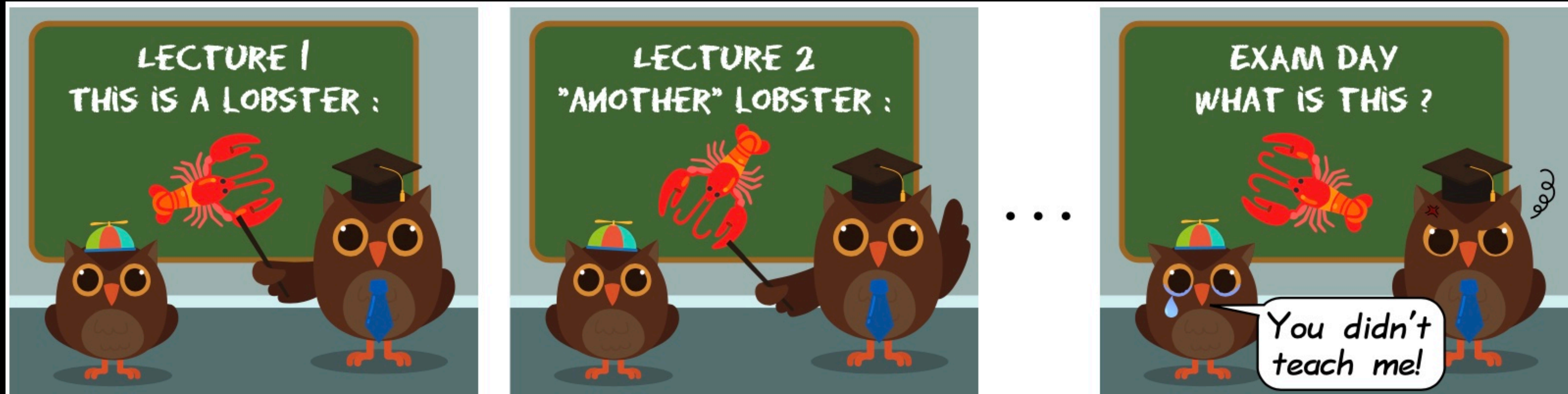


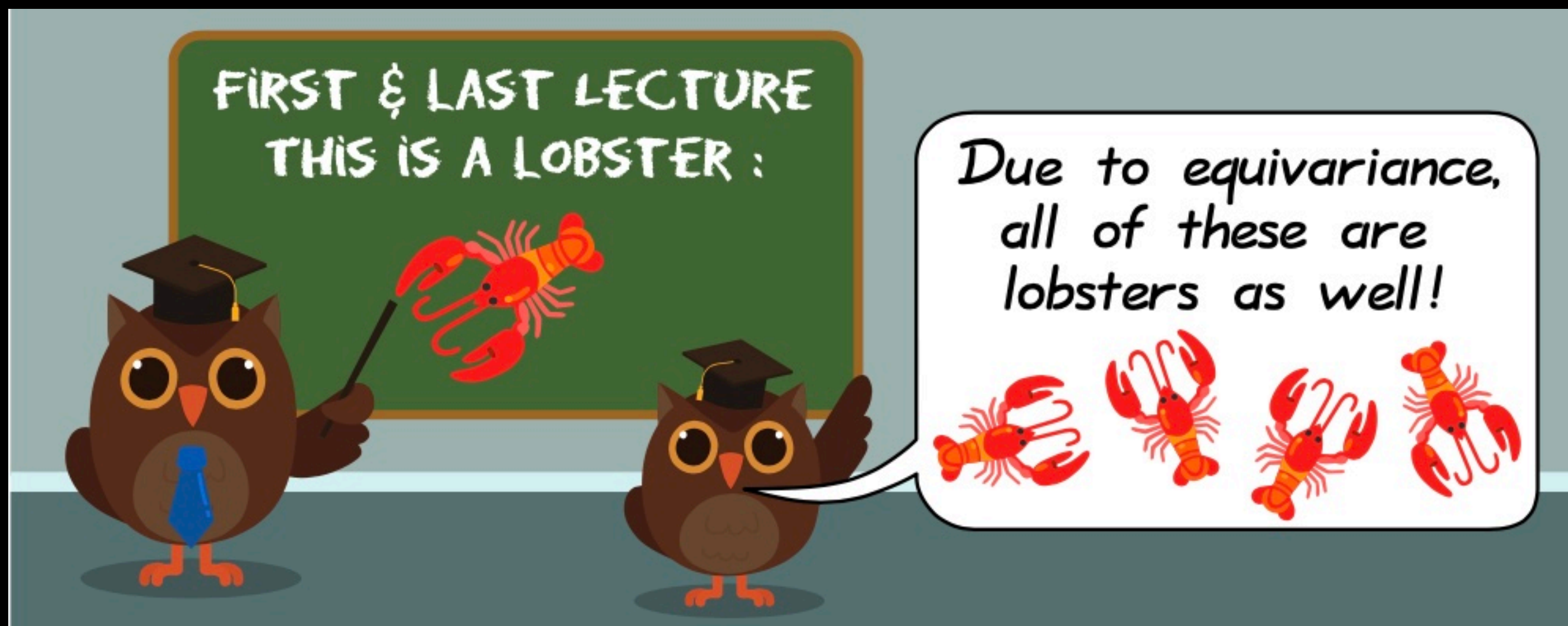
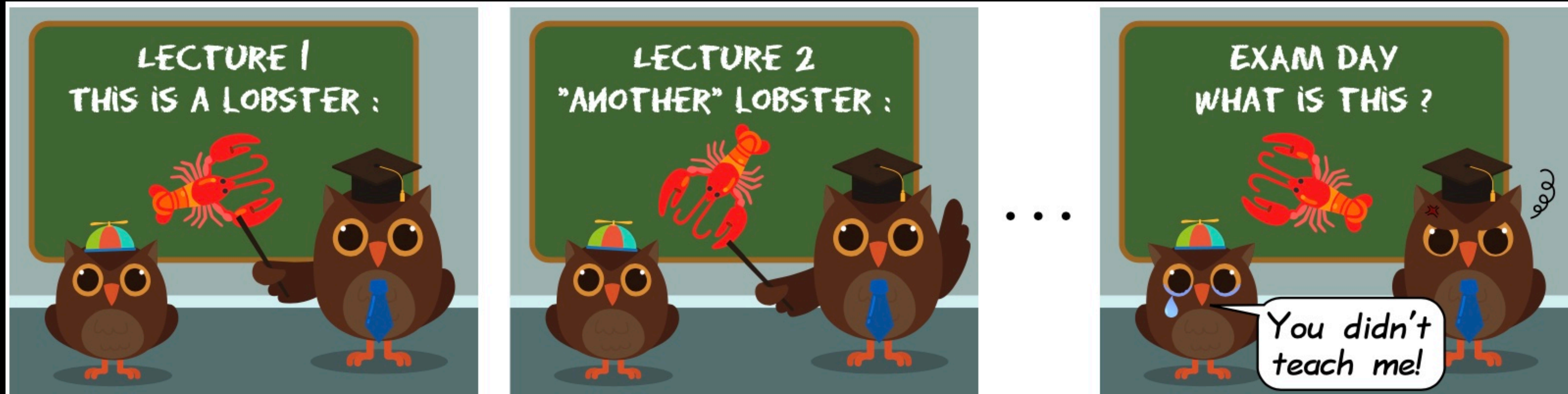
commutative
diagram



$$f(Tx) = Tf(x)$$

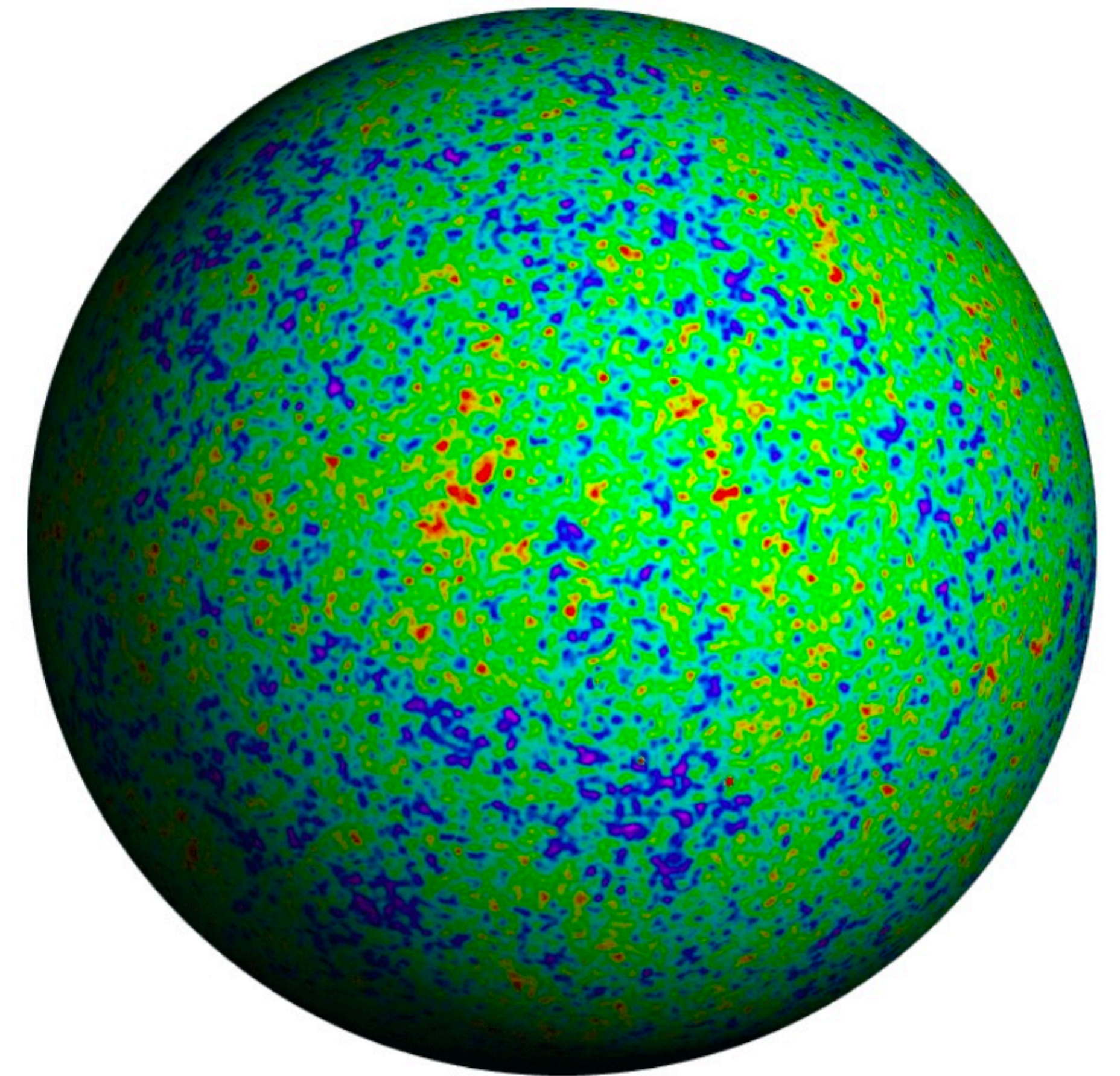
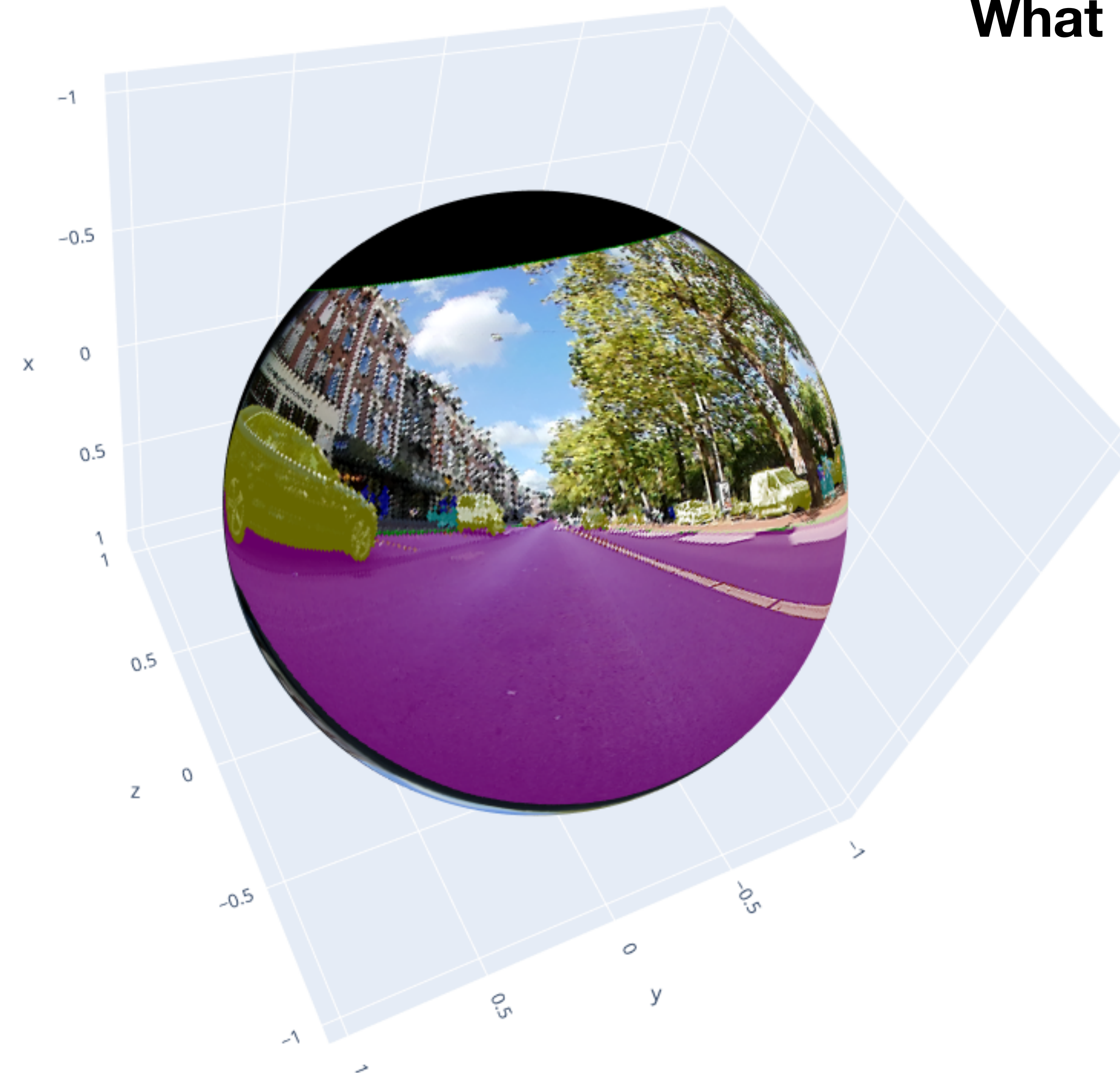






Design neural networks
that have **intrinsic symmetries**
(equivariance)

What if the input data is curved?



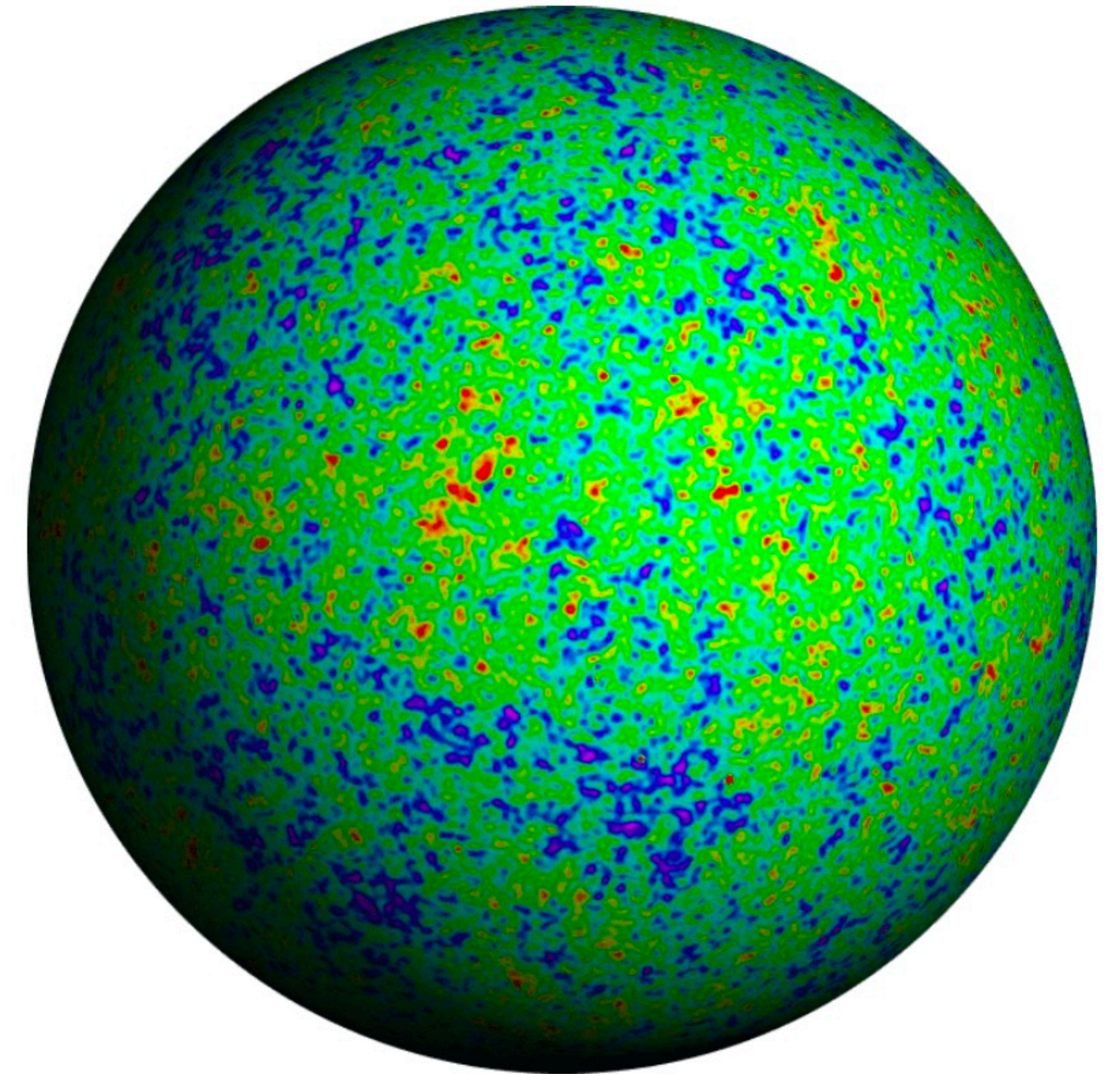
Cosmic microwave background radiation

[Image from the Woodscape dataset, projected onto a sphere]

What if the input data is curved?

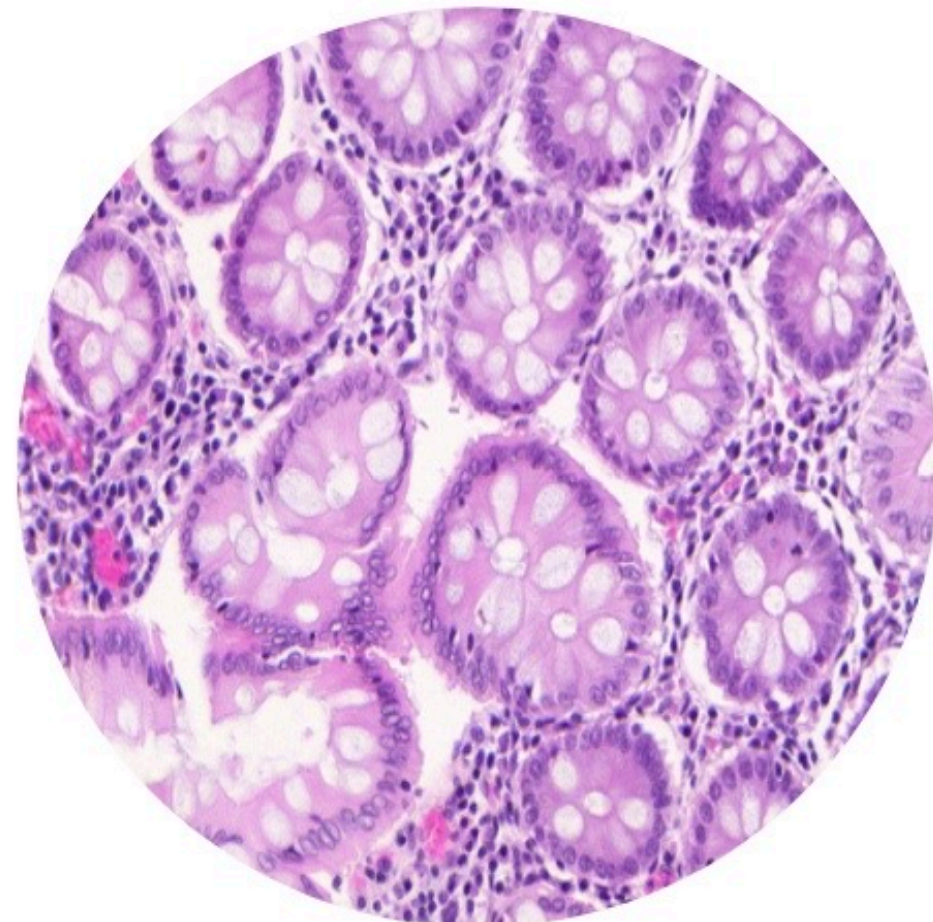
Want an AI with intrinsic

ROTATIONAL SYMMETRY

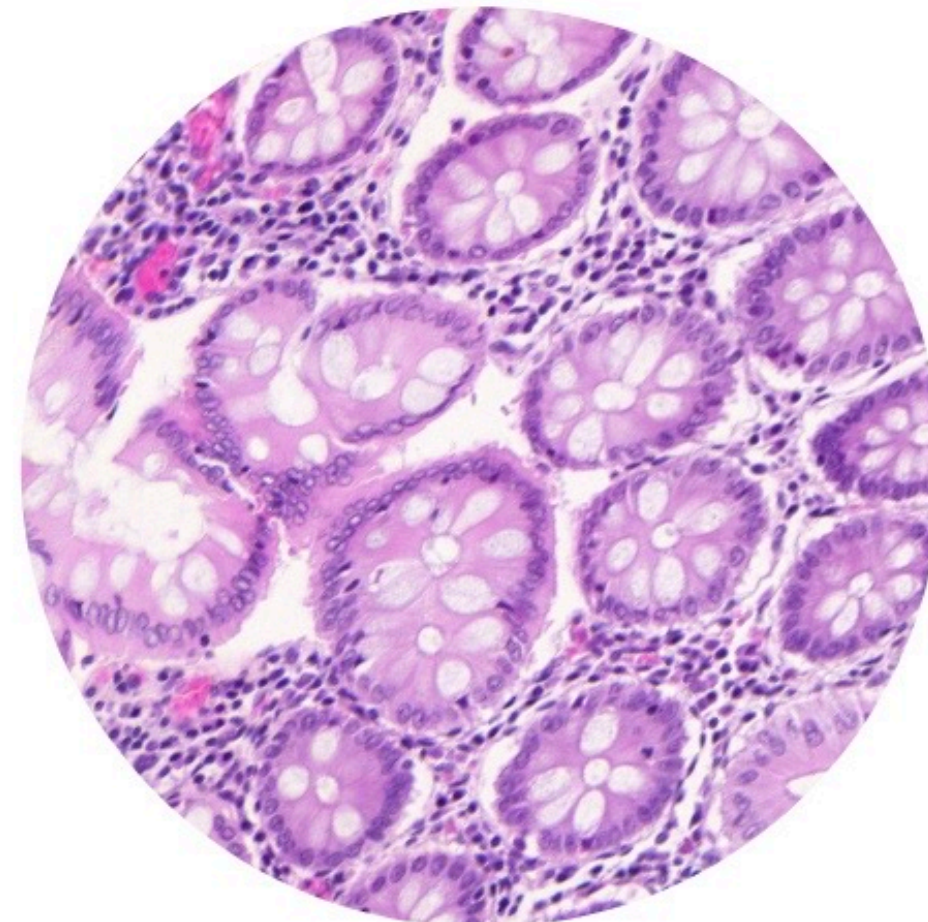


Cosmic microwave background radiation

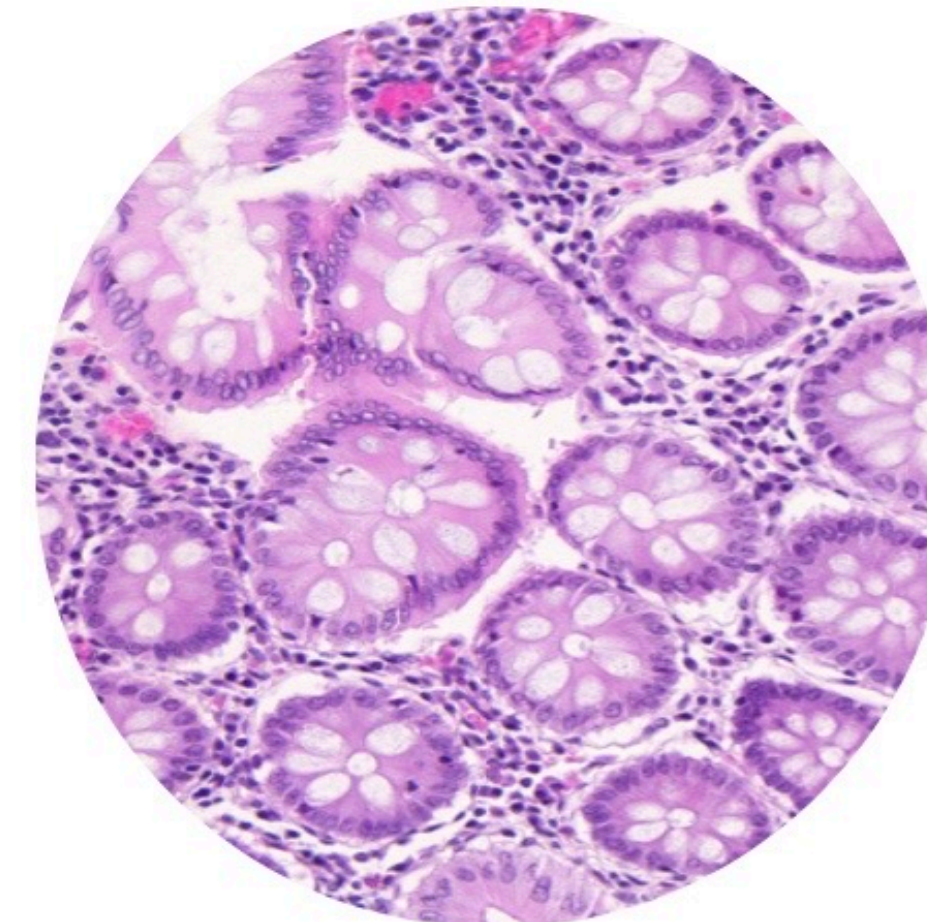
Medical images - tumors



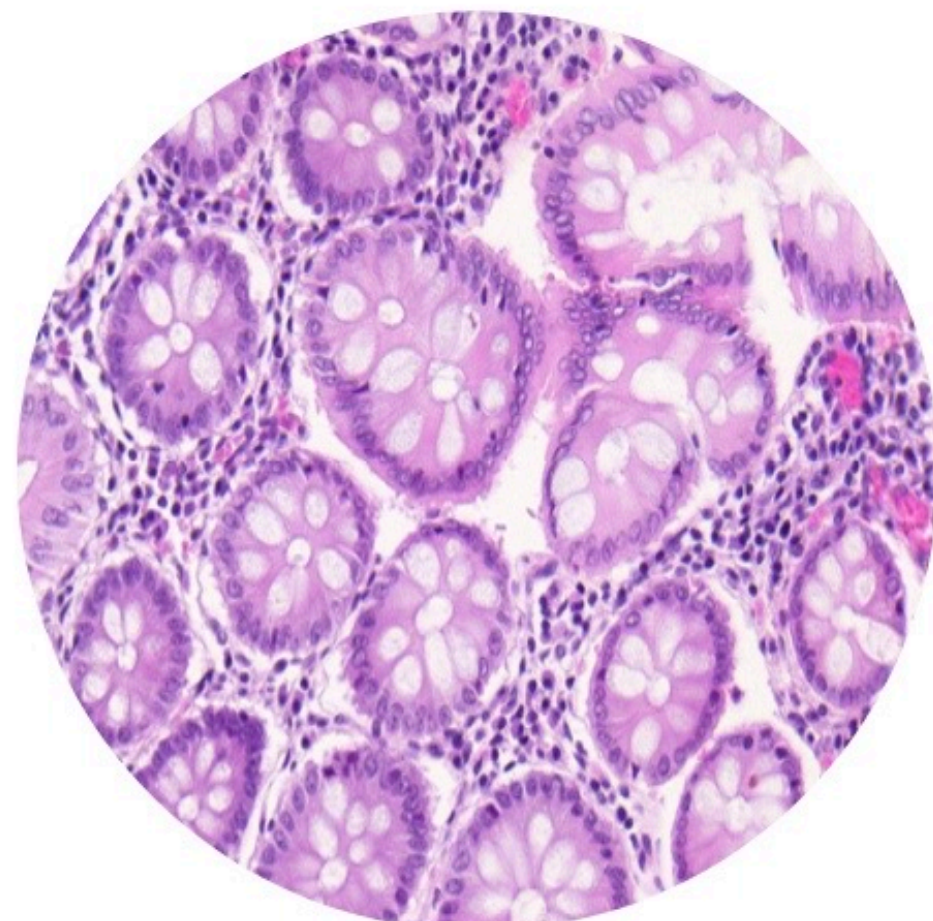
Original



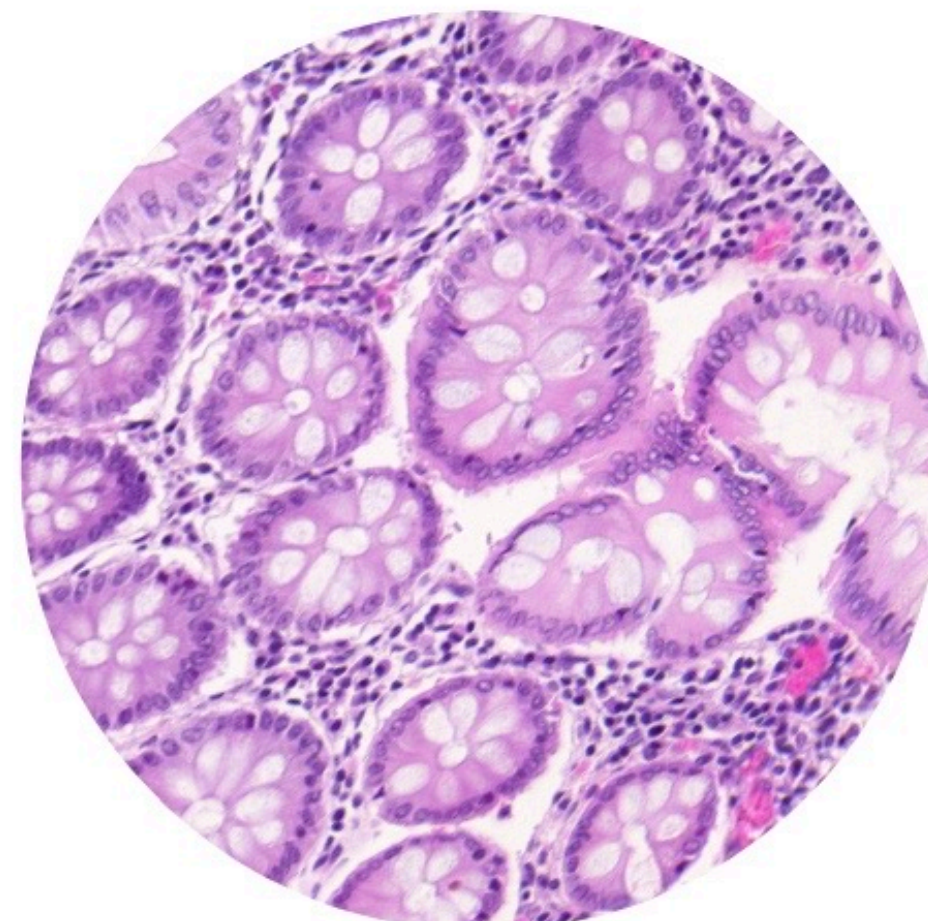
45° rotation



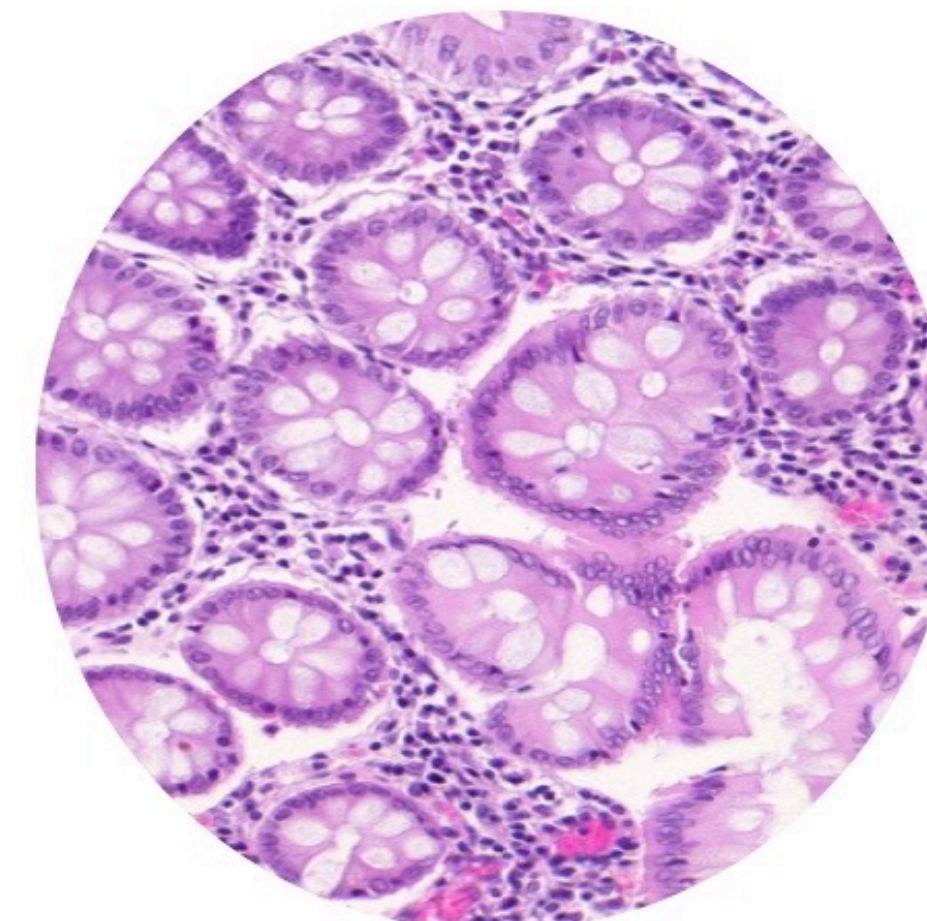
90° rotation



180° rotation



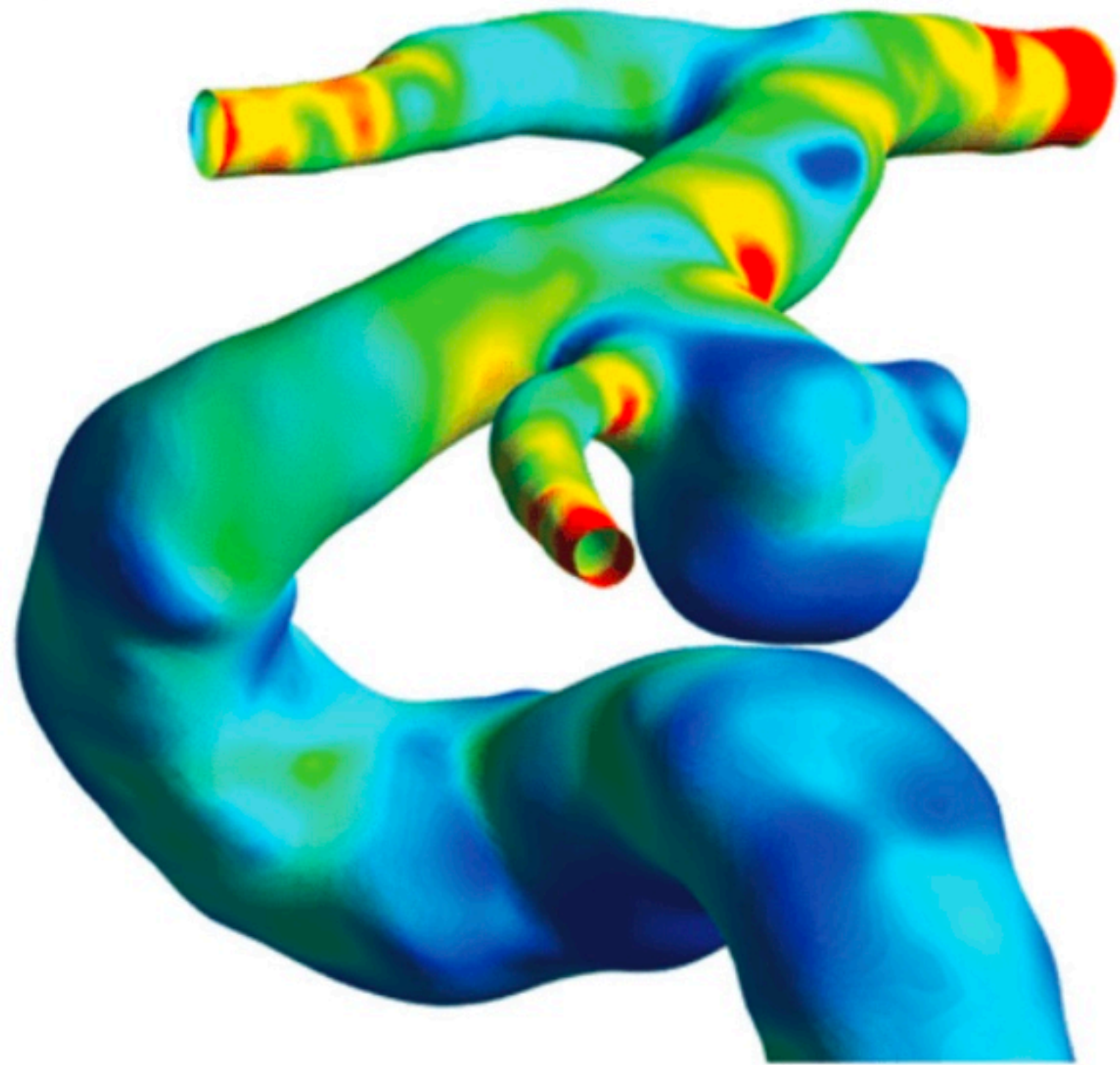
225° rotation



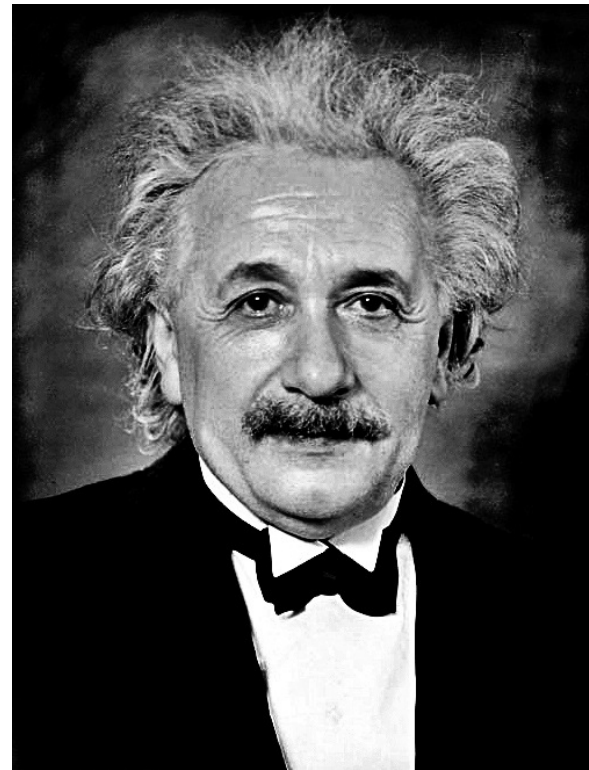
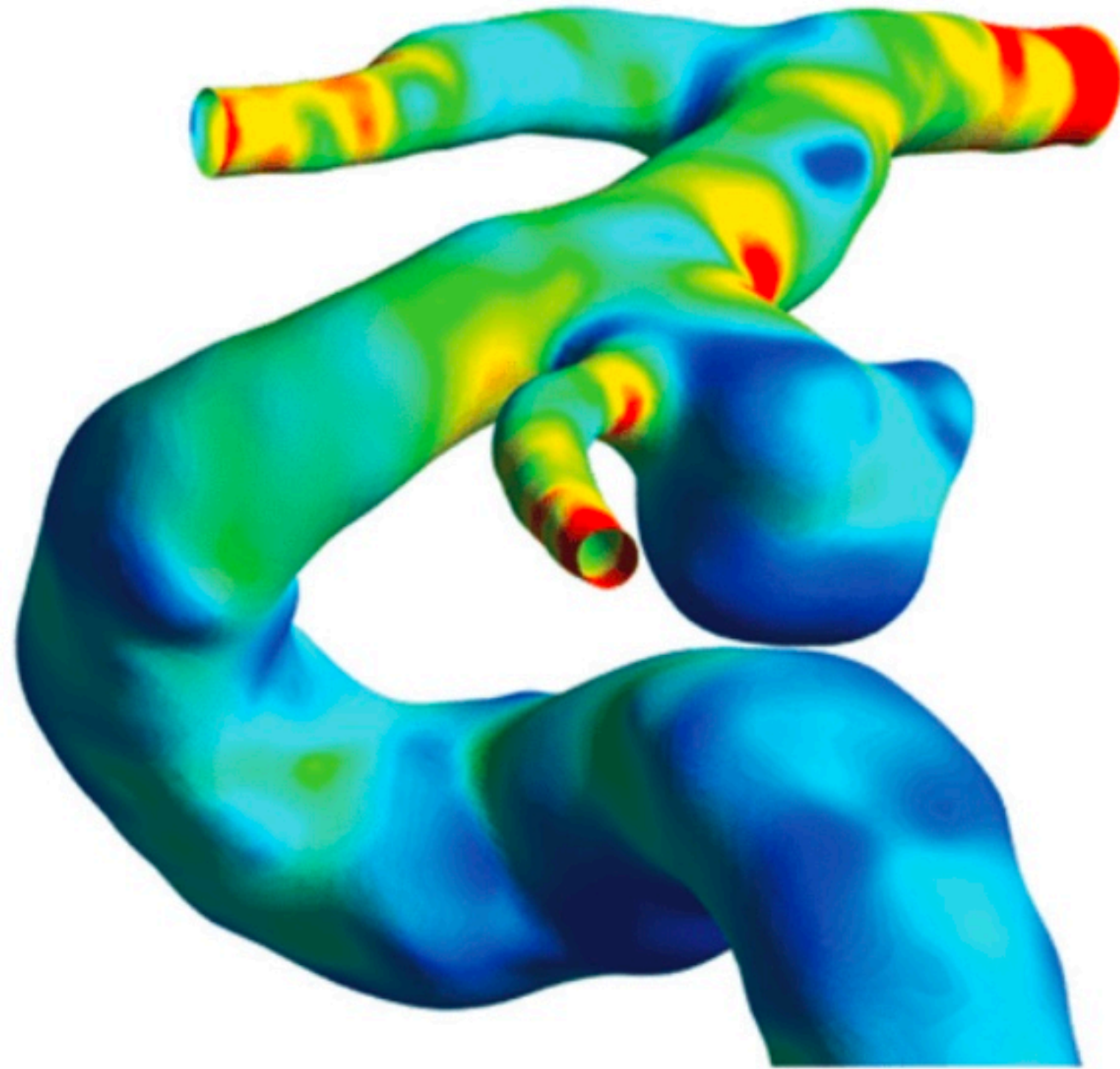
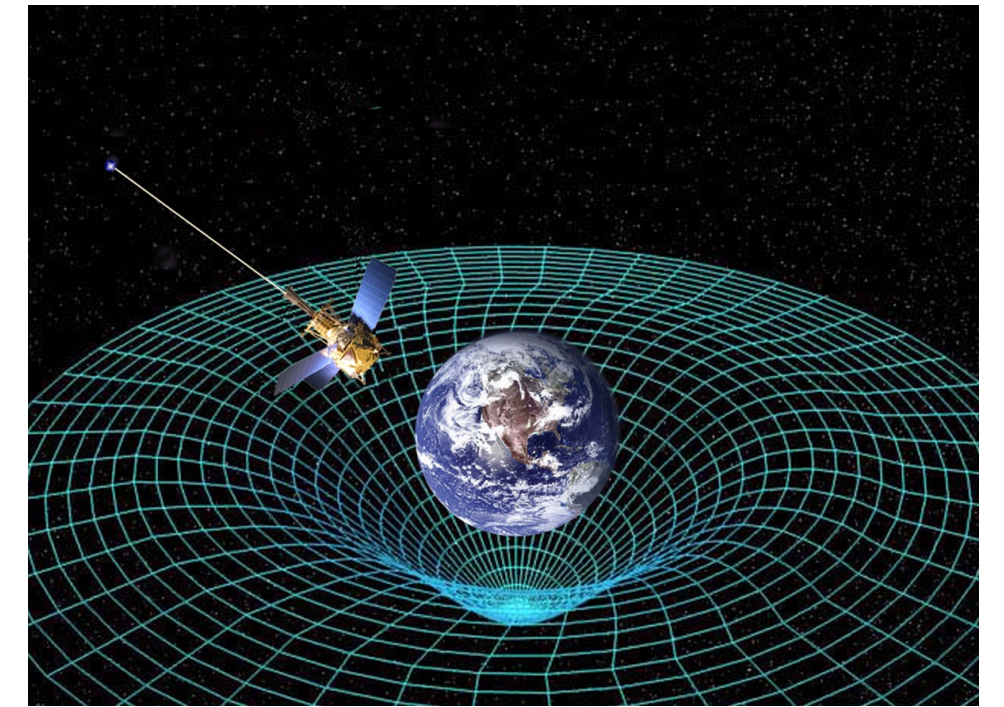
270° rotation

[Pic from Graham, Epstein, Rajpoot, 2020]

Geometric deep learning



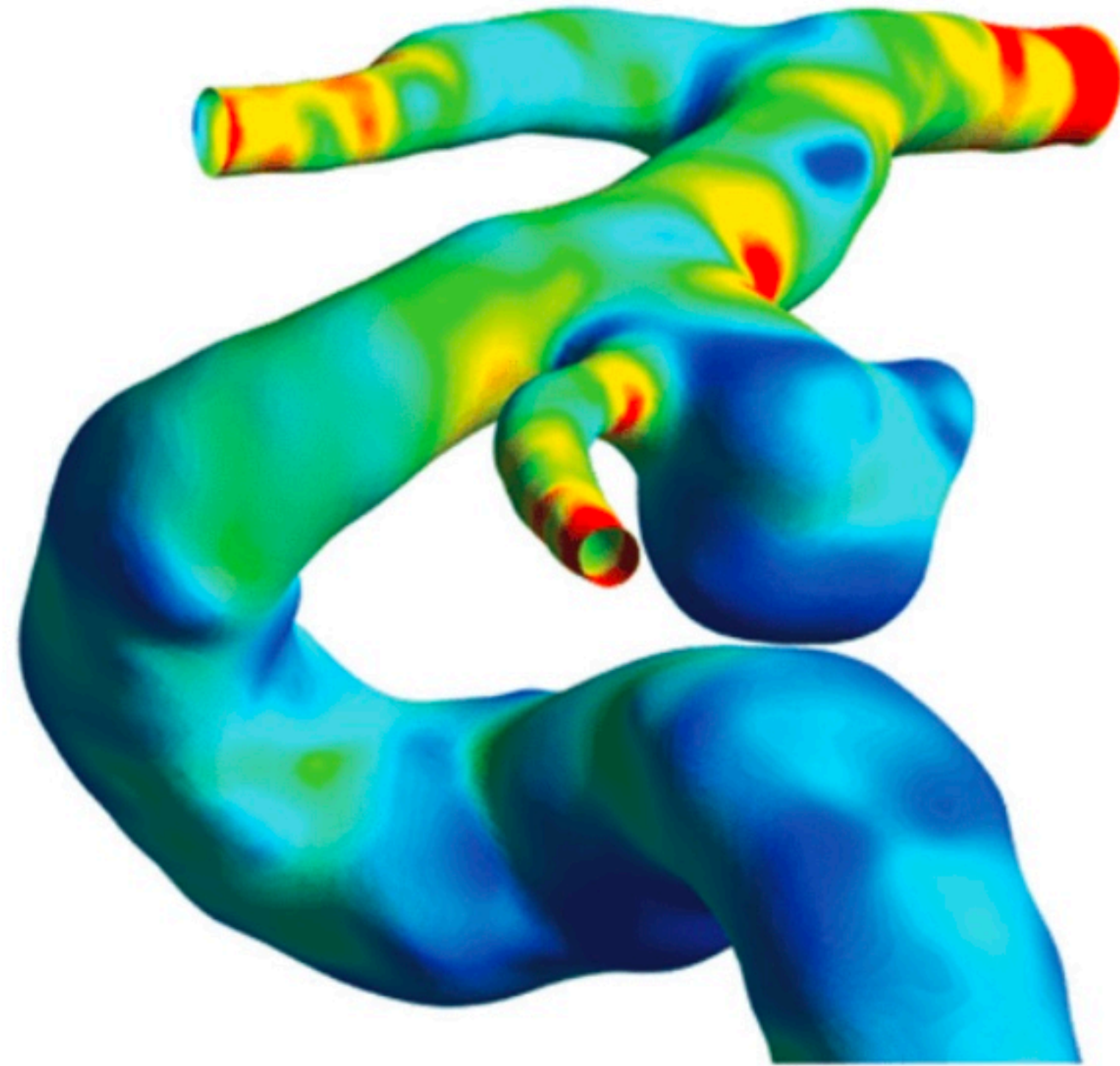
Geometric deep learning



Recall Einstein's

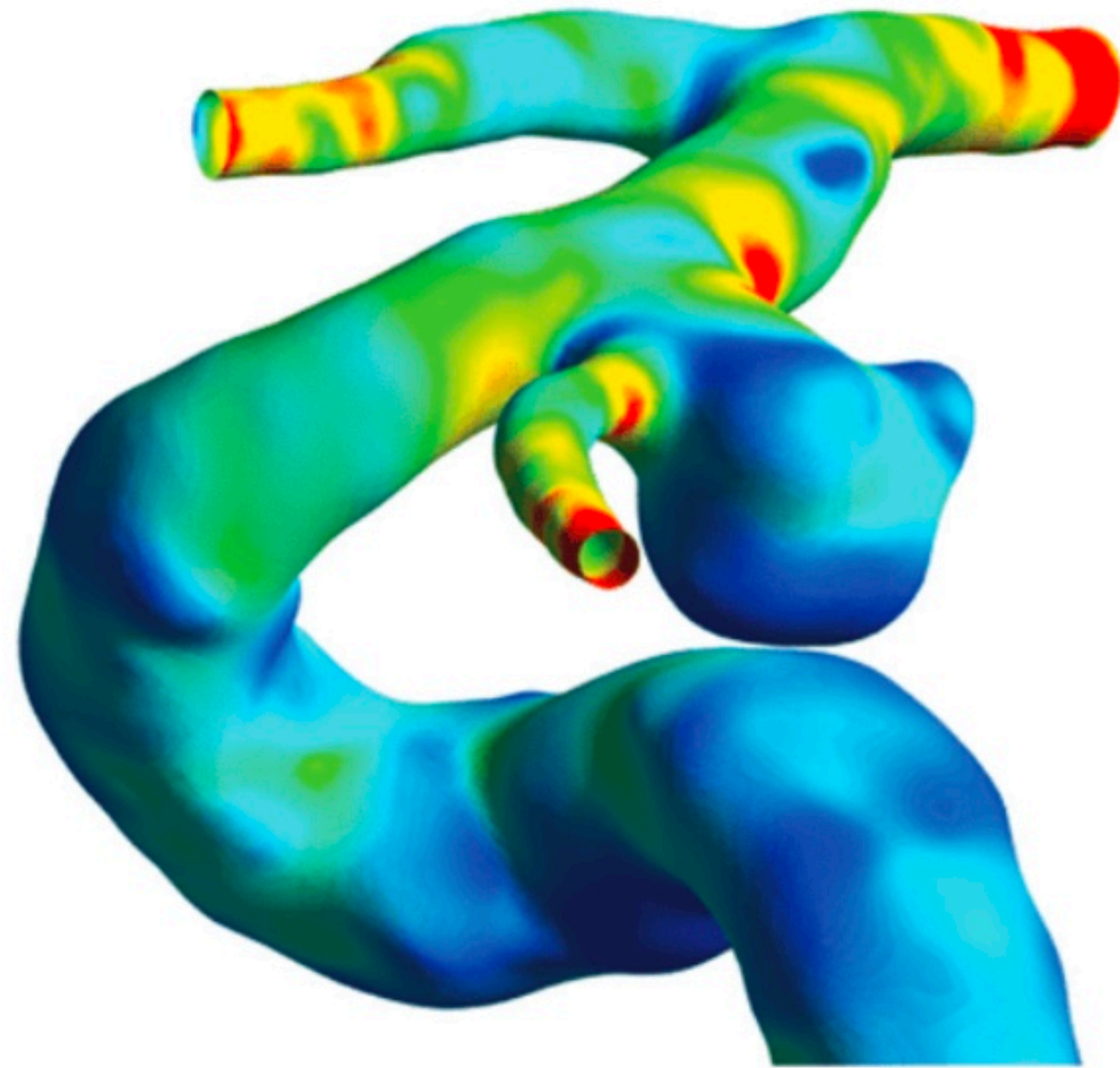
Principle of general covariance:
The laws of physics should take the same form independently of which coordinate system we use to represent them

Geometric deep learning

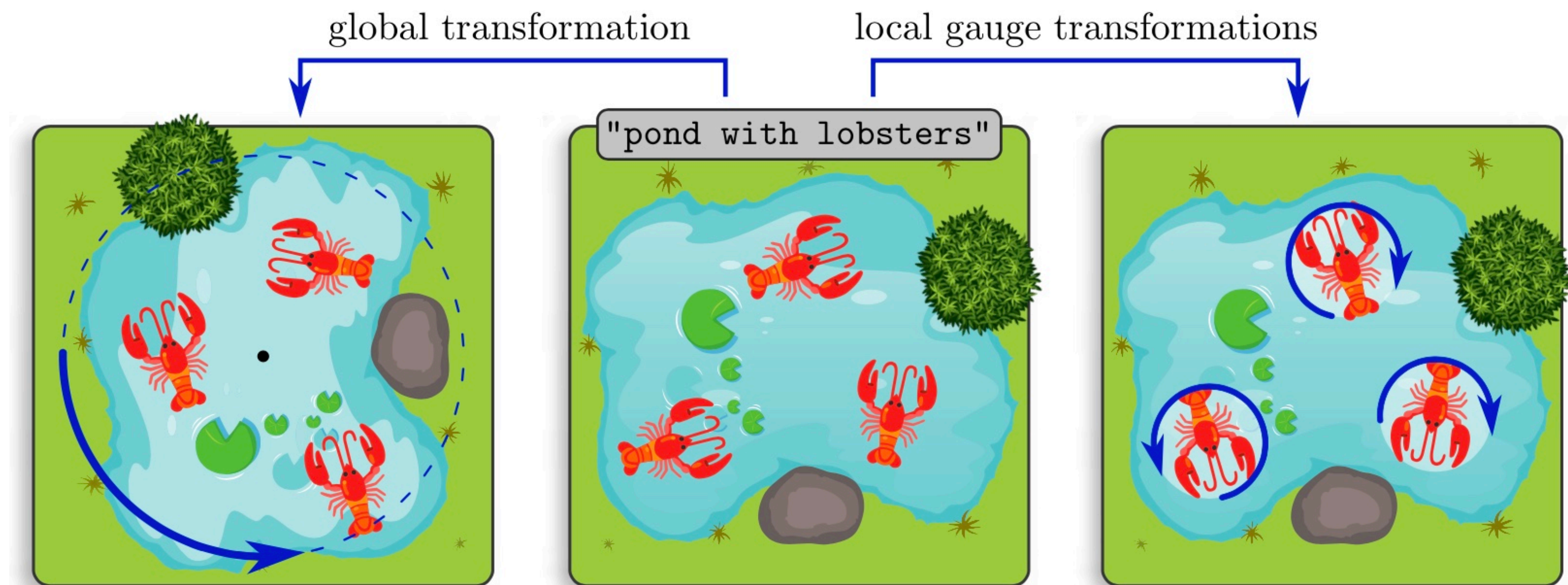


Principle of geometric deep learning:
The equations governing neural networks should be equivariant with respect to all **local** and **global** symmetries of the input data

Geometric deep learning

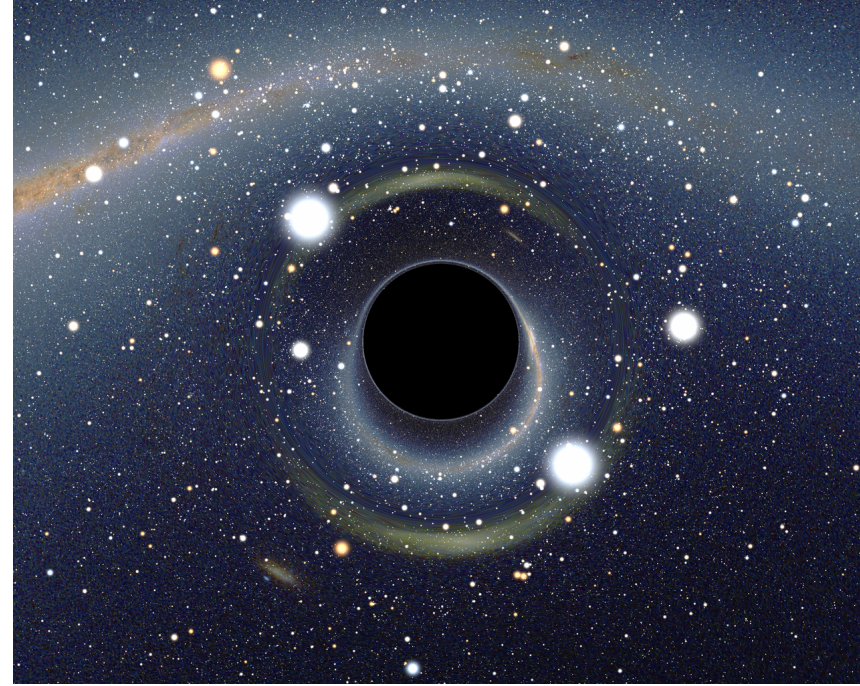


Principle of geometric deep learning:
The equations governing neural networks should be equivariant with respect to all **local** and **global** symmetries of the input data

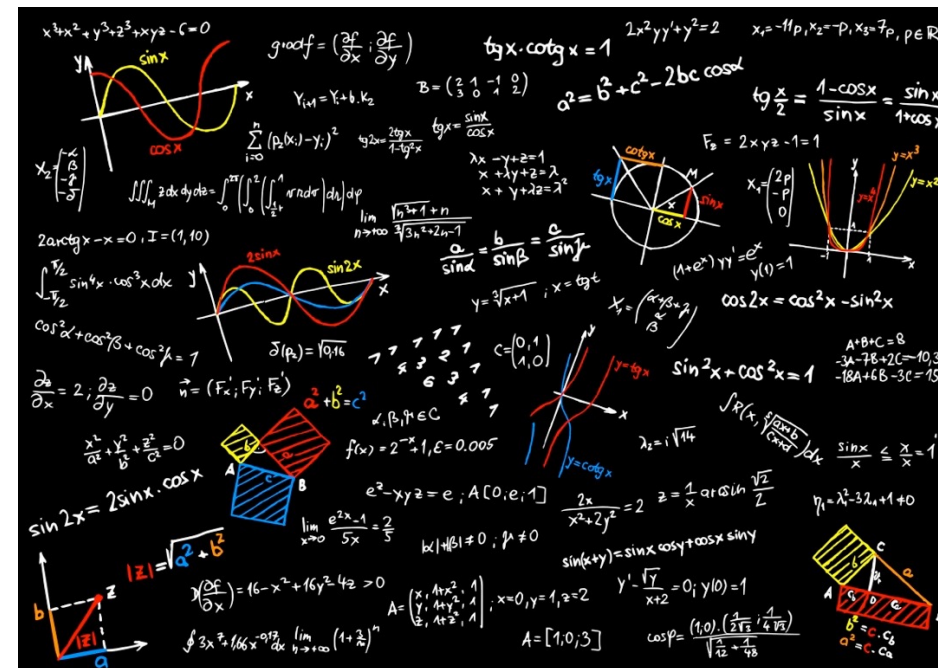
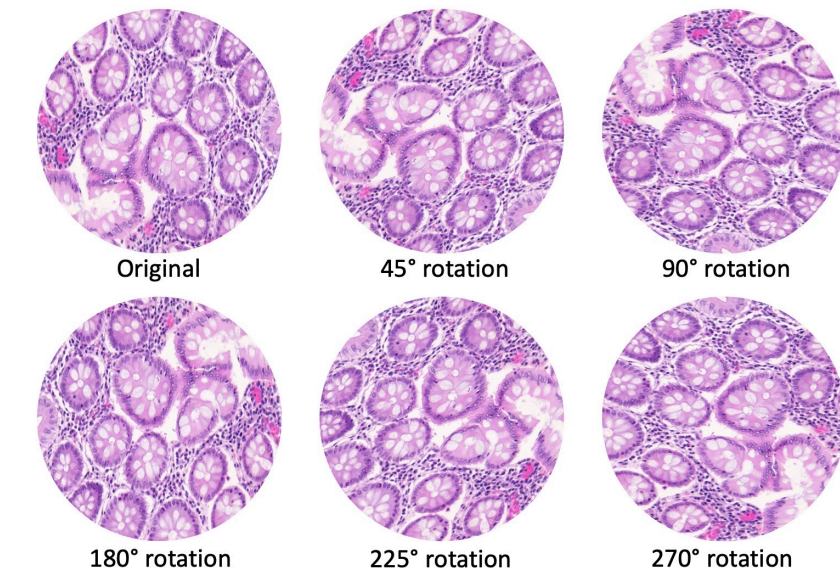


[Images from: Weiler, Forré, Verlinde, Welling (2023)]

Physics

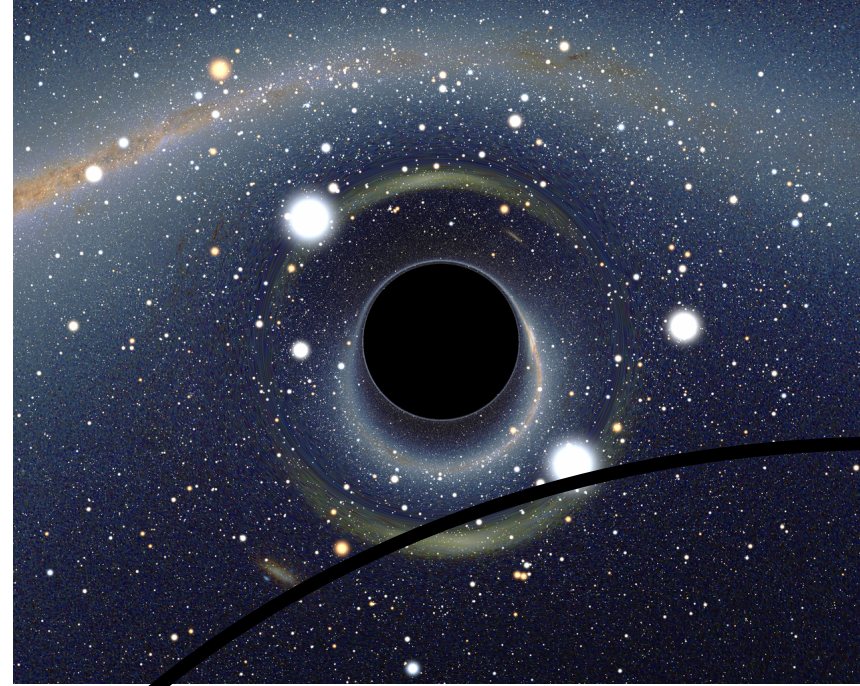


AI

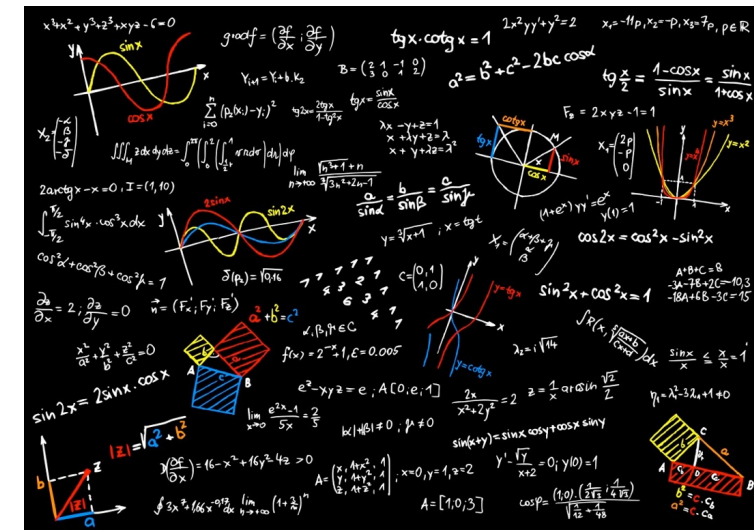
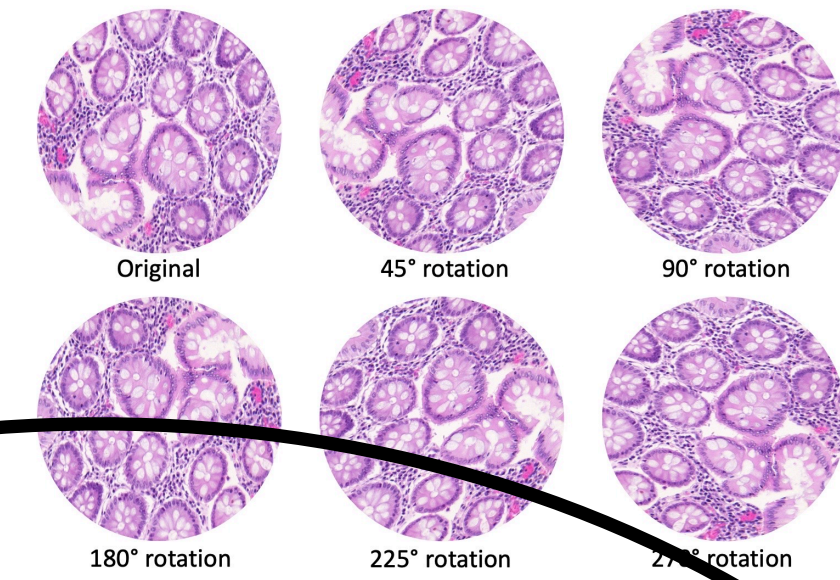


Mathematics

Physics



AI



Mathematics



Biology/Chemistry

A vibrant, multi-colored spiral galaxy with a central black hole, surrounded by a complex network of stars and filaments. The galaxy's colors transition from blue and purple in the center to orange and red towards the edges. The surrounding space is filled with a dense web of stars and filaments, creating a sense of depth and complexity. The word "TACK!" is written in white, bold, capital letters in the center of the galaxy.

TACK!