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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL PREFACE	ix
PREFACE	xv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	xvii

PART I GENERALITIES

1.1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS	1
1.1.1. Modular irreversibility	1
1.1.2. Topology and geometry	4
1.1.3. Hilbert spaces and topology. Generalized vectors	5
1.1.4. Yang-Mills and vectorial universal algebras	7
1.1.5. Topology and localization	8
1.1.6. Discontinuity as a condition in the field	9

PART II ANALOGUE EQUIVALENCE BETWEEN
TIME AND SPACE

2.1. MORE THAN TWO DIMENSIONS OF HILBERT GEOMETRY	13
2.1.1. Euclidean theory of space	13
2.1.2. Relativistic theory of space-time (as a special case)	14
2.1.3. Modular time and algebraic topology	15
2.1.4. The algebra of orthogonal relations	15
2.2. THE THREE CENTURIES OF CHANCE: PHYSICAL TIME AND SPACE	16
2.2.1. Remarks on the history of Aristotle and the history of the concept of time and physical space	16
2.2.2. The concept of time—Philosophy (see P. 17-20)	20
2.2.3. Creation and destruction of causal instances	22
2.2.4. Conclusion	23
2.2.5. Appendix: The history of the concept of time	24

To
Louis de Broglie,
who introduced me to
theoretical physics

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL PREFACE	xvii
PREFACE	xix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	xxiii

PART 1 GENERALITIES

1.1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS	3
1.1.1. Modelism or formalism?	3
1.1.2. Paradox and paradigm	4
1.1.3. Utility of dimensional analysis. Universal constants	5
1.1.4. 'Very large' and 'very small' universal constants	7
1.1.5. Today's scientific humanism	8
1.1.6. Epistemology as understood in this book	9

PART 2 LAWLIKE EQUIVALENCE BETWEEN TIME AND SPACE

2.1. MORE THAN TWO MILLENNIA OF EUCLIDEAN GEOMETRY	13
2.1.1. 'Euclidean theory of space'	13
2.1.2. 'Is it false that overnight everything has doubled in size?'	14
2.1.3. Absolute time and classical kinematics	15
2.1.4. The classical 'principle of relative motion'	15
2.2. THE THREE CENTURIES OF NEWTONIAN ME- CHANICS: UNIVERSAL TIME AND ABSOLUTE SPACE	17
2.2.1. Remarkable aphorisms by Aristotle	17
2.2.2. Kepler (1571–1630) and Galileo (1564–1642): celes- tial and terrestrial mechanics	18
2.2.3. The universal Galileo–Newtonian law $F = m\ddot{r}$	20
2.2.4. 'Greatness and servitude' of classical mechanics	22
2.2.5. Gravitation	25
2.2.6. Symplectic manifolds and analytical mechanics	26

2.3.	THREE CENTURIES OF KINEMATICAL OPTICS	28
2.3.1.	Fermat (1601—1665) and Huygens (1629—1695)	28
2.3.2.	Roemer (1676) and Bradley (1728): the two first measurements of the velocity of light	30
2.3.3.	Could Bradley's discovery allow a formulation of the relativity theory?	31
2.3.4.	A corollary to Bradley's aberration: photography of a fastly moving object	32
2.3.5.	Arago's 1818 experiment and Fresnel's very far reaching 'ether drag' formula	34
2.3.6.	'Normal science' in optics throughout the 19th Century	35
2.3.7.	In electromagnetism also there was a dormant relativity problem	40
2.3.8.	Unexpected end of the hunting of the snark	41
2.4.	TODAY'S NEC PLUS ULTRA OF METROLOGY AND CHRONOMETRY: 'EQUIVALENCE' OF SPACE AND TIME	42
2.4.1.	Fundamental significance of the Michelson—Morley type of experiment	42
2.4.2.	Optical metrology	43
2.4.3.	Microwave chronometry	43
2.4.4.	Measurements of the velocity of light	44
2.4.5.	Imminent fulfilment of the old Aristotelian dream	46
2.4.6.	Wonders of laser physics: the 1978 Brillet and Hall 'repetition' of the Michelson experiment	46
2.4.7.	Wonders of laser physics: metrology via Doppler free spectroscopy	47
2.4.8.	October 1983: The speed of light as supreme 'motion referee', and the new immaterial length standard	48
2.4.9.	Wonders of laser spectroscopy: chronometry via optical heterodyning	50
2.4.10.	Mössbauer effect (Heidelberg, 1957)	51
2.4.11.	Applied metrology, tachymetry and chronometry	51
2.5.	ENTERING THE FOUR-DIMENSIONAL SPACE-TIME PARADIGM	53
2.5.1.	Walking through the entrance gate	53
2.5.2.	Playing with hyperbolic trigonometry	55

2.5.3.	On the general Lorentz—Poincaré—Minkowski transformation	58
2.5.4.	On the Galileo—Newton paradigm as a limit of the Poincaré—Minkowski one	59
2.5.5.	Fresnel's ether drag law as a velocity composition formula	60
2.5.6.	Terrell's relativistic photography revisited	61
2.5.7.	Time dilatation and the 'twins paradox'	61
2.5.8.	The Harress (1912) and Sagnac (1913) effects	64
2.5.9.	The problem of accelerating a solid body	65
2.5.10.	Kinematics identified with vacuum optics. The restricted relativity principle as a kinematical principle	65
2.6.	THE MAGIC OF SPACETIME GEOMETRY	67
2.6.1.	Introduction	67
2.6.2.	Invariant phase and 4-frequency vector	69
2.6.3.	The 4-velocity concept	70
2.6.4.	Integration and differentiation in spacetime	70
2.6.5.	Invariant or scalar volume element carried by a fluid	73
2.6.6.	The Green- and Stokes-like integration transformation formulas	74
2.6.7.	Relativistic electromagnetism and electrodynamics	74
2.6.8.	Entering relativistic dynamics	77
2.6.9.	Fluid moved by a scalar pressure: a quick look at relativistic thermodynamics	79
2.6.10.	Dynamics of a point particle	81
2.6.11.	Isomorphism between the classical statics of filaments and the relativistic dynamics of spinning-point particles	82
2.6.12.	Barycenter and 6-component angular momentum around the barycenter. The relativistic 'general theorems'	83
2.6.13.	Analytical dynamics of an electrically charged point particle	85
2.6.14.	Wheeler—Feynman electrodynamics	86
2.6.15.	De Broglie's wave mechanics	90
2.6.16.	What was so special with light, after all?	93
2.6.17.	Concluding this chapter, and the Second part of the book	94

PART 3 LAWLIKE TIME SYMMETRY AND
FACTLIKE IRREVERSIBILITY

3.1.	OVERVIEW	97
3.1.1.	Old wisdom and deeper insights	97
3.1.2.	Mathematization of gambling	99
3.1.3.	Probability as data dependent	101
3.1.4.	The Shannon—Jaynes principle of entropy maximization, or 'maxent'	102
3.1.5.	'How subjective is entropy?'	103
3.1.6.	Loschmidt-like and Zermelo-like behavior in card shuffling	106
3.1.7.	Laplace, the first, and profound theorist of lawlike reversibility and factlike irreversibility	107
3.1.8.	Timeless causality and timeless probability	108
3.1.9.	Factlike irreversibility according to Laplace, Boltzmann and Gibbs	108
3.1.10.	Lawlike reversibility	109
3.1.11.	Matrix conceptualization of conditional or transition probabilities	111
3.1.12.	Laplacean reversal and time reversal	112
3.1.13.	Markov chains in general	112
3.1.14.	Factlike irreversibility as blind statistical retrodiction forbidden	113
3.1.15.	Causality identified with conditional or transition probability	114
3.1.16.	Concluding the chapter: a spacetime covariant, arrowless calculus of probability	114
3.1.17.	Appendix: Comparison between my thesis and those of other authors having discussed the fundamentals of irreversibility	116
3.2.	PHENOMENOLOGICAL IRREVERSIBILITY	119
3.2.1.	Classical thermodynamics	119
3.2.2.	Factlike thermodynamical irreversibility and its relevance to causality and information	120
3.2.3.	Entropy increase and wave retardation	121
3.2.4.	Light waves	122

3.2.5.	Waves and information theory	124
3.2.6.	Lawlike time symmetry and factlike time asymmetry in the Wheeler—Feynman electrodynamics	124
3.2.7.	Thermal equilibrium radiation	126
3.2.8.	Irreversibility and the cosmological cool oven	127
3.3.	RETARDED CAUSALITY AS A STATISTICAL CONCEPT. ARROWLESS MICROCAUSALITY	129
3.3.1.	Poincaré's discussion of the little planets' ring	129
3.3.2.	Boltzmann, Gibbs and thermodynamical entropies	130
3.3.3.	Loschmidt's objection and Boltzmann's first inappropriate answer. Recurrence of this sort of paralogism	132
3.3.4.	Retarded causality as identical to probability increase. Causality as arrowless at the microlevel	134
3.3.5.	Retarded causality and registration	136
3.3.6.	Zermelo's recurrence objection, and the phenomenon of spin echoes	137
3.3.7.	Other instances of lawlike symmetry and factlike asymmetry between blind statistical prediction and retrodiction	138
3.3.8.	Statistical mechanics: from Maxwell's three-dimensional billiard-balls game to Shannon's information concept	139
3.3.9.	Boltzmann's second thoughts concerning the Loschmidt objection	140
3.4.	IRREVERSIBILITY AS A COSMIC PHENOMENON	142
3.4.1.	Liminal advice	142
3.4.2.	Branch systems. The 'statistical Big Bang'	142
3.4.3.	Unusual statistics of self-gravitating systems	144
3.4.4.	Loschmidt-like behavior of the Universe: Big Bang and time reversal	145
3.4.5.	The Olbers paradox	147
3.4.6.	The 2.7 °K cosmological radiation	148
3.4.7.	Building order by feeding on the universal negentropy cascade	148
3.4.8.	Concluding the chapter	149

3.5.	LAWLIKE REVERSIBILITY AND FACTLIKE IRREVERSIBILITY IN THE NEGENTROPY—INFORMATION TRANSITION	150
3.5.1.	Preliminary considerations	150
3.5.2.	Is the subconscious mind time-extended, as matter is?	154
3.5.3.	Lawlike reversibility between negentropy and information	155
3.5.4.	'Seeing in the future and acting in the past'	158
3.5.5.	A proposed experiment in psychokinesis	160
3.5.6.	Concluding the chapter, and Part 3 of the book	162

PART 4 RELATIVISTIC QUANTUM MECHANICS AND THE PROBLEM OF BECOMING

4.1.	OVERVIEW	167
4.1.1.	Quantum theory as the child of wave physics and of a probability calculus	167
4.1.2.	Macrorelativity and microrelativity, Lorentz-and- <i>CPT</i> invariance	169
4.1.3.	'Correspondence' between the classical and the quantal, wavelike, probability calculus	172
4.1.4.	Topological invariance of Landé chains and of Feynman graphs; Wheeler's smoky dragon; EPR correlations	174
4.1.5.	Covariant Fourier analysis and the second-order Klein—Gordon equation	177
4.1.6.	Covariant Fourier analysis and the first-order spinning-wave equations	180
4.1.7.	Particle in an external field	182
4.1.8.	Concluding the chapter: quantum and relativity theories as daughters of wave physics	183
4.2.	1900—1925: THE QUANTUM SPRINGS OUT, AND SPREADS	185
4.2.1.	1900: Max Planck discovers the quantum of action	185
4.2.2.	Einstein's numerous contributions to the quantum theory: statistics, and the photon	188
4.2.3.	The hydrogen atom of Bohr (1913) and Sommerfeld (1916)	190

4.2.4.	The 'Old Testament' of the quantum theory and Sommerfeld's bible. Correspondence Principle. Two new ideas in 1925	192
4.2.5.	Bose—Einstein and Fermi—Dirac statistics	193
4.2.6.	De Broglie's matter waves	194
4.2.7.	Retrospective outlook	195
4.3.	1925—1927: THE DAWN OF QUANTUM MECHANICS WITH A SHADOW: RELATIVISTIC COVARIANCE LOST	196
4.3.1.	Liminal advice	196
4.3.2.	1925: Heisenberg starts the game of quantum mechanics	196
4.3.3.	1926—1927: Born and Jordan formalize quantum mechanics as a matrix mechanics	197
4.3.4.	1925: Dirac and the Poisson brackets	198
4.3.5.	1926: Schrödinger formalizes quantum mechanics as a wave mechanics	198
4.3.6.	1926: Mathematical 'equivalence' between Heisenberg's and Schrödinger's theories	200
4.3.7.	1926: Born introduces, and Jordan formalizes, a radically new 'wavelike probability calculus'	202
4.3.8.	Non-commuting position and momentum operators, and Heisenberg's uncertainty relations	202
4.3.9.	Non-commuting angular momentum operators	204
4.3.10.	1929: Robertson's formalization of the uncertainty relations	205
4.3.11.	1929: Heisenberg's microscope thought experiment and statistical retrodiction. 1931: Von Weizsäcker's modified use of it and retroaction	206
4.3.12.	On the time—energy uncertainty relation in nonrelativistic quantum mechanics	207
4.3.13.	The Hilgevoord—Uffink conception of the position—momentum and time—energy uncertainties	209
4.3.14.	Nonrelativistic quantum mechanics of many particles	210
4.3.15.	Ennuple quantal correlations: general formalism	212
4.3.16.	The Schrödinger, Heisenberg and interaction representations	213
4.3.17.	Nonrelativistic perturbation theory	214

4.3.18.	'Transformation theory': Dirac, 1926; Jordan, 1927	215
4.3.19.	'Grandeur and Servitude' of the Hamiltonian formalism	218
4.4.	1927—1949: FROM QUANTUM MECHANICS TO QUANTUM FIELD THEORY: RELATIVISTIC COVARIANCE SLOWLY RECOVERED	219
4.4.1.	Second- and first-order covariant wave equations	219
4.4.2.	1927: Dirac's first-order equation describing jointly an electron and a positron	219
4.4.3.	1934—1939: De Broglie, Proca, Petiau, Duffin, Kemmer: the covariant spin-1 wave equation	224
4.4.4.	Higher order spin equations. Fermions and bosons	225
4.4.5.	1927—1928: The Jordan—Klein and Jordan—Wigner 'second quantized' formalisms	225
4.4.6.	1928—1948: The groping years of the quantized fields theory	226
4.4.7.	1948: Schwinger's 'Quantum electrodynamics. I: A covariant formulation'	227
4.4.8.	1949: Feynman's version of quantum electrodynamics	230
4.4.9.	1949—1950: Dyson's articles	230
4.4.10.	Provisional epilogue	231
4.5.	PARITY VIOLATIONS AND <i>CPT</i> INVARIANCE	233
4.5.1.	Liminal advice	233
4.5.2.	Classical connection between charge conjugation and spacetime reversal	233
4.5.3.	The ' θ - τ ' puzzle resolved: Lee's and Yang's <i>K</i> meson	234
4.5.4.	Forgetting <i>K</i> mesons: ' <i>V</i> - <i>A</i> ' formalization of the weak interaction	235
4.5.5.	On the possibility of time-reversal violations	237
4.5.6.	<i>CPT</i> invariance and the spin-statistics connection	237
4.5.7.	Back to <i>K</i> mesons. 1955: Gell-Mann's and Pais's theory of the wonderful behavior of <i>K</i> ⁰ mesons	239
4.5.8.	1965: Christenson, Cronin, Fitch and Turlay discover the <i>CP</i> -violating decay of <i>K</i> ⁰ mesons	241
4.5.9.	<i>T</i> violations	241
4.5.10.	By way of conclusion, a little fable	241

4.6.	PARADOX AND PARADIGM: THE EINSTEIN—PODOLSKY—ROSEN CORRELATIONS	244
4.6.1.	1927: Einstein at the Fifth Solvay Conference	244
4.6.2.	1927—1935: The Bohr—Einstein controversy	247
4.6.3.	1935: The Einstein—Podolsky—Rosen article 'Can quantum mechanical description . . . be considered complete?'	248
4.6.4.	1935: On Bohr's reply to EPR	250
4.6.5.	1935—1936: Schrödinger's and Furry's discussions of the EPR argument	250
4.6.6.	More thoughts on the EPR thought experiment	251
4.6.7.	1947: A personal recollection	252
4.6.8.	1949: Wu's and Shaknov's experiment on correlated linear polarizations of photon pairs issuing from positronium annihilation	253
4.6.9.	1951 and 1957: Bohm's and Bohm—Aharonov's correlated spins versions of the EPR	253
4.6.10.	1964: Bell's theorem	253
4.6.11.	1967—1982: Experimenting and thinking with correlated linear polarizations of photons	254
4.6.12.	Deduction and discussion of the correlation formula for linear polarizations of spin-zero photon pairs	256
4.6.13.	Directionless causality	261
4.7.	<i>S</i> -MATRIX, LORENTZ-AND- <i>CPT</i> INVARIANCE, AND THE EINSTEIN—PODOLSKY—ROSEN CORRELATIONS	265
4.7.1.	Liminal advice	265
4.7.2.	Derivation of Feynman's <i>S</i> -matrix algorithm following Dyson	265
4.7.3.	Consistency between Feynman's negative energy and the commonsense positive energy interpretations of anti-particles	270
4.7.4.	Essential <i>CPT</i> invariance of Feynman's algorithm	270
4.7.5.	A concise derivation of the EPR correlation formula for spin-zero photon pairs	271
4.7.6.	Irrelevance of the evolving state vector; relevance of the transition amplitude	272

4.7.7.	Covariant expression of the EPR correlation for spin-zero fermion pairs	275
4.7.8.	The paradox of relativistic quantum mechanics	276
4.7.9	A digression on propagators. Causality and the Feynman propagator	279
4.7.10.	Concluding the chapter, and Part 4 of this book	282
PART 5 AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW OF GENERAL RELATIVITY		
5.1.	ON GENERAL RELATIVITY	287
5.1.1.	Liminal advice	287
5.1.2.	What is so special with universal gravitation?	287
5.1.3.	Einstein's 1916 formalization of the 'equivalence principle'. General relativity theory	289
5.1.4.	Time in general relativity	290
5.1.5.	Bending of light waves. Advance of periastrons	292
5.1.6.	Quantum mechanics in the Riemannian spacetime	292
5.1.7.	Quantization of the gravity field	293
5.1.8.	Gravity waves	294
5.2.	AN OUTSIDER'S LOOK AT COSMOLOGY, AND OVERALL CONCLUSIONS	295
5.2.1.	God said: Let there be self-gravitating light! Cosmogensis	295
5.2.2.	Black holes	296
5.2.3.	Souriau's and Fliche's 'layered universe'	297
5.2.4.	Brief overall conclusions	297
NOTES		299
BIBLIOGRAPHY		304
ADDED IN PROOF		319
INDEX OF NAMES		324
INDEX OF SUBJECTS		331

EDITORIAL PREFACE

In an age characterized by impersonality and a fear of individuality this book is indeed unusual. It is personal, individualistic and idiosyncratic — a record of the scientific adventure of a single mind. Most scientific writing today is so depersonalized that it is impossible to recognize the man behind the work, even when one knows him. Costa de Beauregard's scientific career has focused on three domains — special relativity, statistics and irreversibility, and quantum mechanics. In *Time, the Physical Magnitude* he has provided a personal *vade mecum* to those problems, concepts, and ideas with which he has been so long preoccupied.

Some years ago we were struck by a simple and profound observation of Mendel Sachs, the gist of which follows. Relativity is based on very simple ideas but, because it requires highly complicated mathematics, people find it difficult. Quantum mechanics, on the other hand, derives from very complicated principles but, since its mathematics is straightforward, people feel they understand it. In some ways they are like the *bourgeois gentilhomme* of Molière in that they speak quantum mechanics without knowing what it is. Costa de Beauregard recognizes the complexity of quantum mechanics. A great virtue of the book is that he does not hide or shy away from the complexity. He exposes it fully while presenting his ideas in a non-dogmatic way.

That is perhaps one of the finest features of this book. So often scientists claim impartiality and disinterestedness, while actually arguing in the most intolerant and parochial way. Costa de Beauregard's treatment of the Einstein—Podolsky—Rosen paradox is eminently fair to both Einstein and Bohr as well as their innumerable spiritual descendants. He even has the courage to consider the paranormal. So his book is a scientific adventure. It is also a scientific autobiography which shows how an imaginative and honest mind grapples with the philosophical concerns of time and physics.

Costa de Beauregard wrote on these themes before, notably in his two

monographs, *Le second principe de la science du temps* and *La notion de temps — equivalence avec l'espace*. He meditates, muses, wanders down interesting byways that seem far from his main path and then turn out to be urgent for understanding as well as exploring. His papers invariably stimulate his admiring (but often irritated) readers for they are the results of an original and extraordinarily intelligent philosopher-physicist, one who thinks long and deeply before setting his thoughts to paper. We recall, among his many contributions which will interest readers of the present book, the following:

- 'Two Lectures on the Direction of Time', in *Hans Reichenbach: Logical Empiricist*, ed. W. Salmon (Dordrecht, 1977), pp. 341—366.
- 'Discussion on Temporal Asymmetry in Thermodynamics and Cosmology', reported by Costa de Beauregard, *Proc. (Cardiff) Intern. Conf. Thermodynamics*, ed. P. T. Landsberg (London, 1970).
- 'Irréversibilité quantique, phénomène macroscopique', *Louis de Broglie, Physicien et Penseur*, ed. A. George (Paris, 1952), pp. 401—412.
- 'CPT Invariance and Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics', *Foundations of Physics* **10** (1980), 513—530.
- 'Lorentz and CPT Invariances and the Einstein—Podolsky—Rosen Correlations', *Phys. Rev. Letters* **50** (1983), 867—869.

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PREFACE

Although this book contains many historical references, it is not a book in the history of science; and although it contains quite a few equations, it is not a book in theoretical physics. Historical references and equations are brought forward as aids, the book being one in the philosophy of science.

Time is a concept needing a multidisciplinary approach, as members of the 'International Society for the Study of Time', to which I belong, know well. And of course physics is a full participant at the conference table where time is discussed.

The main aspects discussed here in *Time, the Physical Magnitude* are:

1. Time as an entity measurable with reference to space via motion, motion being formalized in 'universal' equations: initially, those of the Galileo—Newtonian dynamics; but now, those of the 1905 special relativity theory.

At the October 1983 Session of the General Conference for Weights and Measures it was decided that the velocity of light *in vacuo*, c , is an absolute constant by definition, and that the standard of length is thus no longer a primary standard, but an 'alter ego', so to speak, of the standard of time. Thus the physical 'equivalence' between space and time, which is the essence of the relativity theory, is legalized.

2. Irreversibility, or dissymmetry between past and future, is another fundamental aspect of physical time, appearing in the theories of wave propagation, thermodynamics, the probability calculus, statistical mechanics, and information theory. All these aspects of irreversibility are interconnected, being manifestations of one single fundamental universal irreversibility. This irreversibility is 'factlike, not lawlike', meaning that it resides not in the equations but in the solutions selected as significant. Therefore intrinsic reversibility of physical time needs an in-depth discussion, the origins of which are found in Laplace's 1774 thoughts on the probability calculus, in Loschmidt's 1876 well-known reversibility argument, and in the cybernetical discovery of a mutual convertibility of 'negentropy' and 'information'.

So 'arrowed (directional) causality', where 'cause precedes effect', turns out to be 'factlike, not lawlike', statistical in its nature, and nothing else than one more aspect of physical irreversibility.

3. Relativistic quantum mechanics tightly binds these two main aspects of time. It is a 'wavelike probability calculus', displaying paradoxical interference and beating of 'probability amplitudes'. It is endowed with an extended relativistic invariance where time reversal is allowed. Thus 'CPT invariance', as it is called (*C*, particle—antiparticle exchange; *P*, space reversal; *T*, time reversal) supplants Loschmidt's *T* reversal. CPT invariance, together with Born's wavelike probability calculus, are, according to me, the two pillars of a true understanding of the paradoxical phenomenon known as the 1935 'Einstein—Podolsky—Rosen (EPR) correlations', which display direct, long-range, and arrowless spacetime connections. Here again causality shows up as arrowless at the microlevel.

4. Although the general relativity and relativistic cosmology theories are outside my professional field of inquiry, I have found it necessary to include a brief discussion of each of them, as they have direct bearing upon the characterization of physical time.

And so this book, which finally grew out of my lifelong interest as a theoretical physicist in the aspects and the nature of physical time, is intended to nurture the meditations of all who are interested in Time: physicists certainly, who very often are led to reflect on time as do philosophers of science; philosophers of science mainly interested in physics; scholars of other disciplines needing (or wishing) to see what physicists have to say on time; and finally, of course, interested laymen who are amateurs in such matters.

As a final touch of controversy, I might add that the existence of lawlike time reversal, especially in the form of the negentropy—information reversibility, together with time extendedness in relativity theory and arrowless causality in the EPR correlations, have convinced me that there might very well be some truth in 'the claims of the paranormal'.

So, as I have mentioned, I see the heart of my book in the epistemological interpretation of relativistic quantum mechanics. The reader is advised that he will not be led there along a straight, or even a conveniently arranged, path. Climbing Mount Everest is no affair of a travel agency. Indeed, seeing its pyramidal top in the distance — or not seeing it if there are clouds — from various places in the plains helps

inspire one to undertake the long, arduous journey to the very side of the peak, and the final assault on it. Colonel Everest's geodesic surveys had to precede the toils of the climbers of the Chomo Lungma. Somewhat similarly, in this book *time, the physical magnitude* will be presented from a number of not unconnected vantage points. And the reader is advised that there may be some really arduous climbing and some delicate holds on the way up.

Practical advice for use of the book is as follows:

Chapters are numbered in the form $p \cdot q$, sections in the form $p \cdot q \cdot r$, and equations in the form $(p \cdot q \cdot r)$; reference to an equation inside the same section is often abbreviated in the form (r) , and reference to a section inside the same chapter in the form q .

Notes, numbered in the form n , are found at the end of Part 5. A numbered note may be referred to more than once inside the same chapter.

Bibliographical details, referred to in the text by author(s) and date(s) of publication, are placed in alphabetical order at the end of the volume.

Of course I am aware that quite a few books both on time in general and on physical time do exist, of which I know some, but not all. By fear of doing an injustice, I choose to mention none of them here. Time is sufficiently important and intricate a question that one need not 'apologize for one more book on time', and I hope that this one will arouse the interest of the reader.

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