Victoria University of Wellington
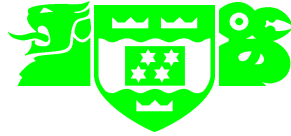
Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Maui

The Quantum Physics
of
Chronology Protection

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Quantum Gravity and Random Geometry

Kolimpari, Hellas, Sept 2002

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Why is chronology even an issue?

Observation:

- The Einstein equations are local:
$$G^{\mu\nu} = 8\pi \; G_{\mathsf{Newton}} \; T^{\mu\nu}.$$

- These equations do not constrain global features — such as topology.

- In particular, they do not constrain *temporal topology*.

Consequence:

- General relativity (Einstein gravity) *seems* to be infested with time machines.

An infestation of dischronal spacetimes:

- Goedel's universe.

- van Stockum time machines.
  (Tipler cylinders/Spinning cosmic strings.)

- Gott time machines.

- Kerr and Kerr–Newman geometries.

- Wormholes — quantum.
  (Wheeler's Spacetime foam.)
  [Spatial topology change $\Rightarrow$ time travel.]

- Wormholes — classical.
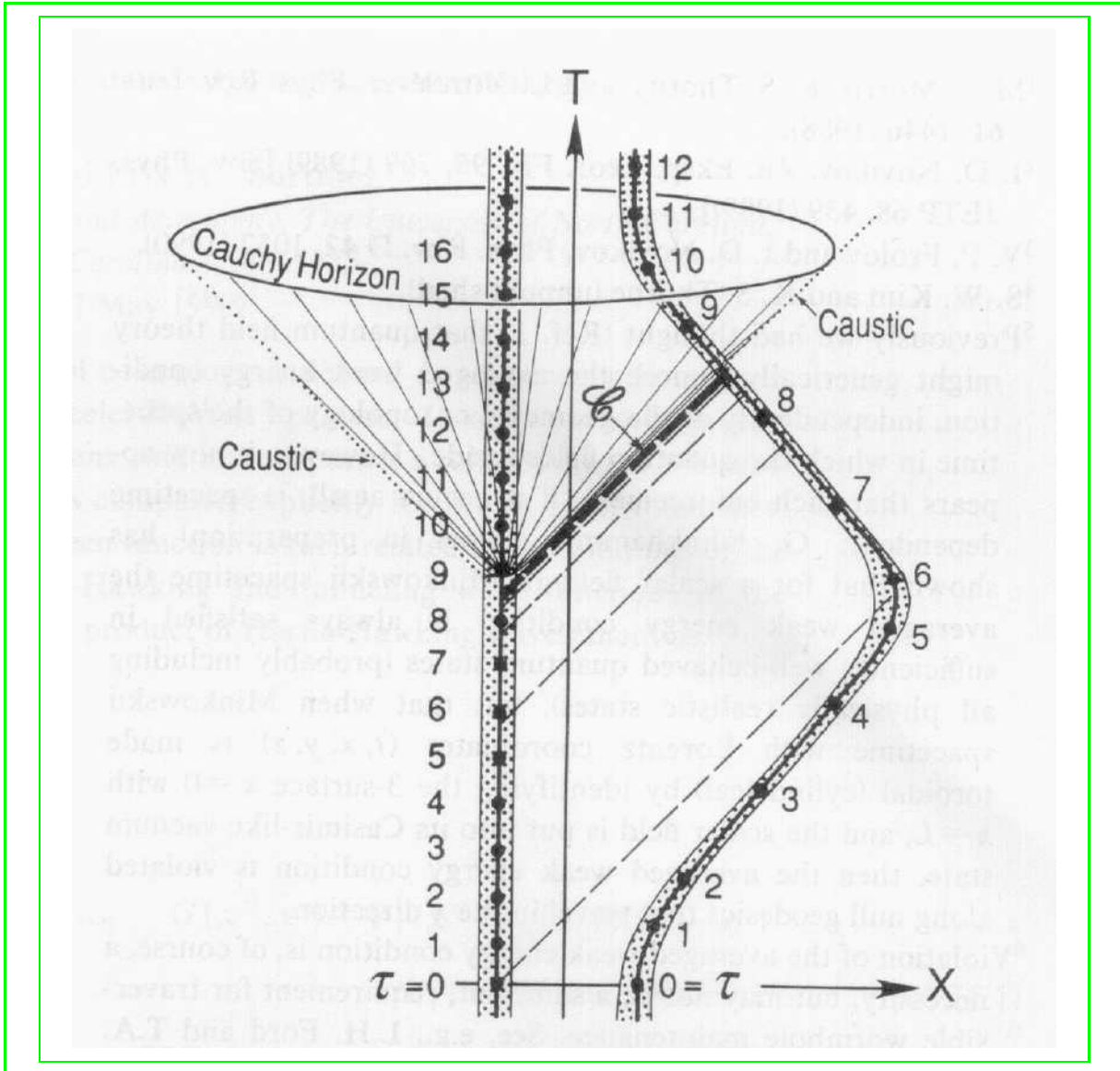 (Morris–Thorne traversable wormholes.)

So what?

- Time travel is problematic, if not down-right repugnant, from a physics point of view.

- One can either learn to live with it or do something about it —

  1. Radical re-write conjecture.

  2. Novikov: consistency conjecture.
     "You can't change recorded history".

  3. Hawking:
     chronology protection conjecture.

  4. Boring physics conjecture;
     (canonical gravity on steroids).

- I'll concentrate on explaining chronology protection.

Closed chronological curves (CCCs):

- Definition: any closed timelike curve (CTC) is a time machine.

- A closed null curve (CNC) is almost as bad.

- If the closed chronological curves are cosmological, completely permeating the spacetime, apply the GIGO principle.
  (garbage in — garbage out.)

- If the closed chronological curves are "confined" to some region we can begin to say something interesting.

- This situation corresponds to a "locally constructed" time machine.
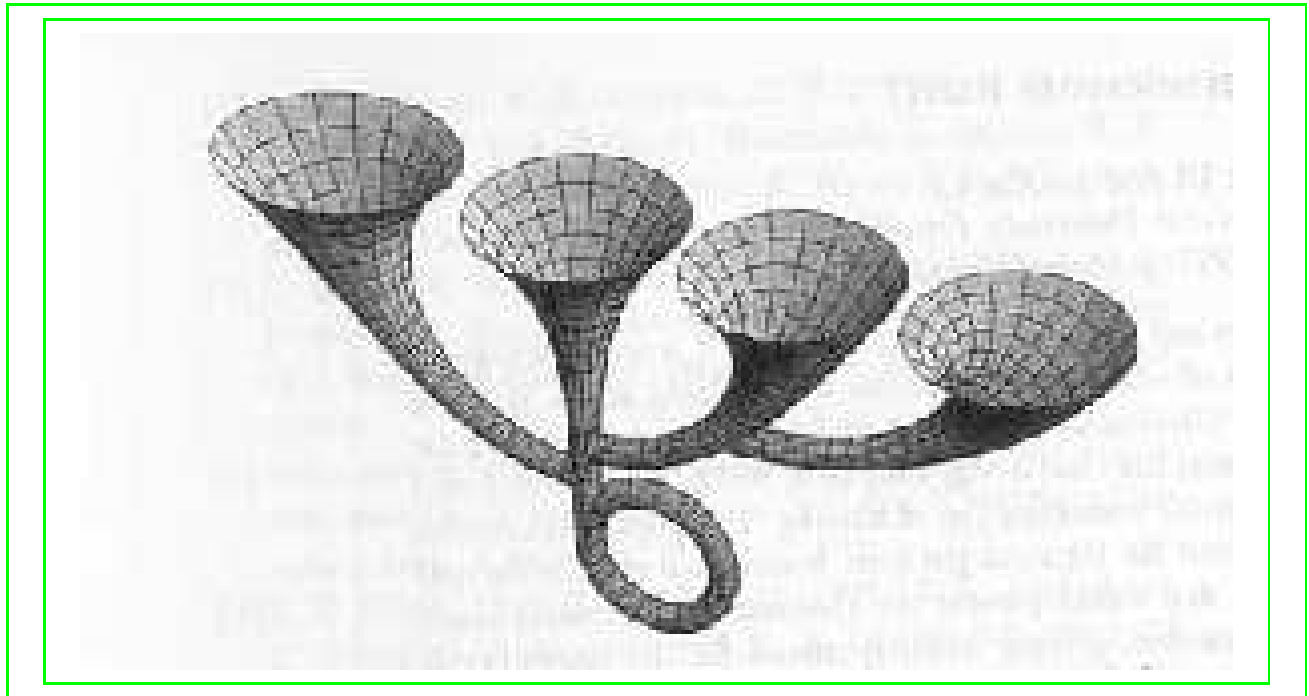
Locally constructed time machines:

Example 1:

Morris–Thorne traversable wormholes...

Locally constructed time machines:

Example 2:

Gott–Li bootstrap universe...

Lorentzian signature "no boundary" proposal...

[PRD 58 (1998) 023501]

Having your cake and eating it too:

- Stephen's chronology protection permits a rich structure of strange and interesting objects without indulging in a free-for-all.

- GR community hoped to be able to settle this issue using classical, or at worst semi-classical, methods...

Stephen: [PRD 46 (1992) 603-611]

> "It seems that there is a Chronology Protection Agency which prevents the appearance of closed timelike curves and so makes the universe safe for historians."

> "There is also strong experimental evidence in favour of the conjecture — from the fact that we have not been invaded by hordes of tourists from the future."

> "The laws of physics do not allow the appearance of closed timelike curves."

Definitions:

- Chronology violating region.

- Chronology horizon.

- Compactly generated chronology horizon.

- "First" CNC: "fountain".

(a)

8
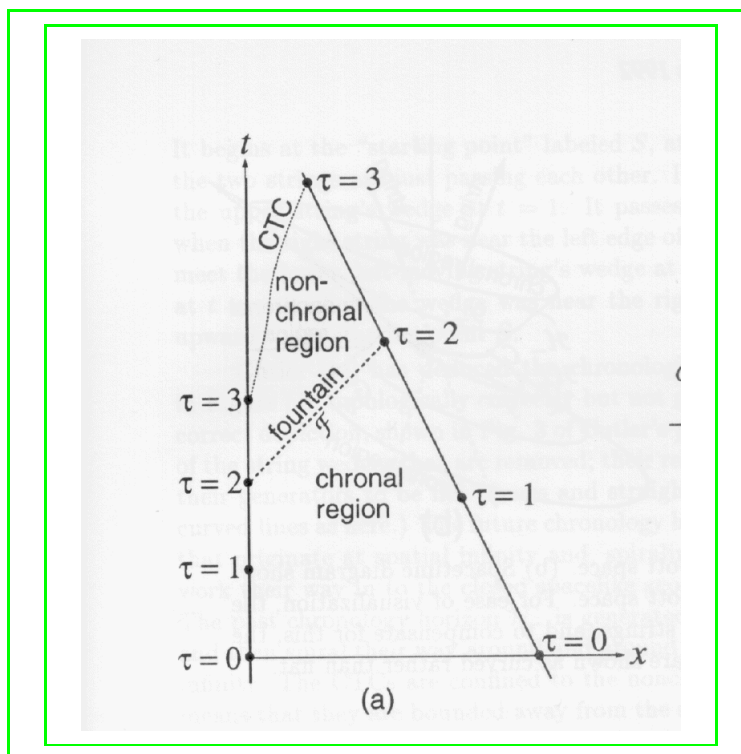
Classical chronology protection:

- Consider a photon that travels round the fountain.

- On every trip its energy is boosted:
$$E \rightarrow h\,E \rightarrow h^2\,E \rightarrow h^3\,E \;\ldots$$
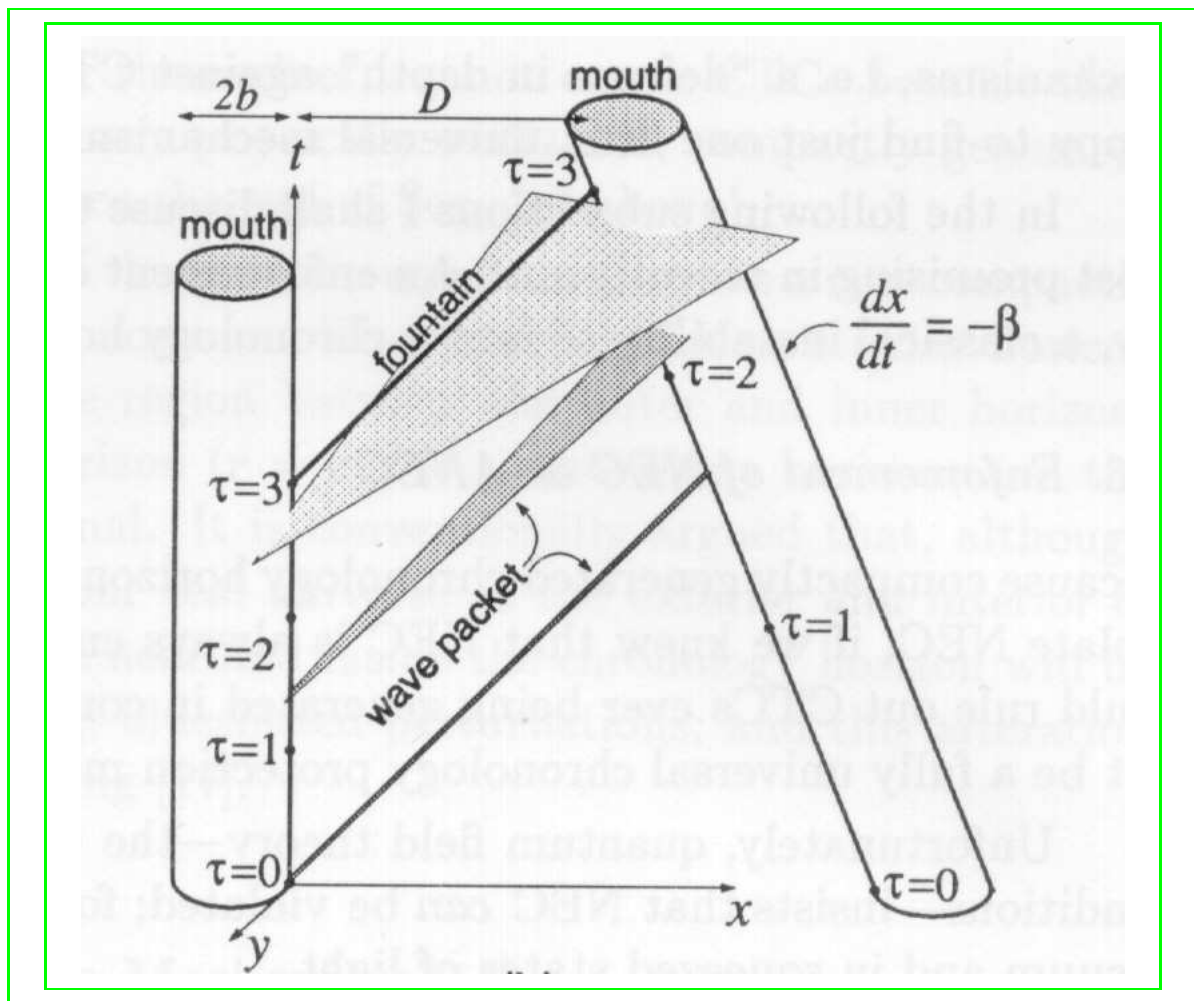
$$\text{with} \qquad h \geq 1.$$

  Simple cases:
$$h = \sqrt{\frac{1+\beta}{1-\beta}}$$

Questions:
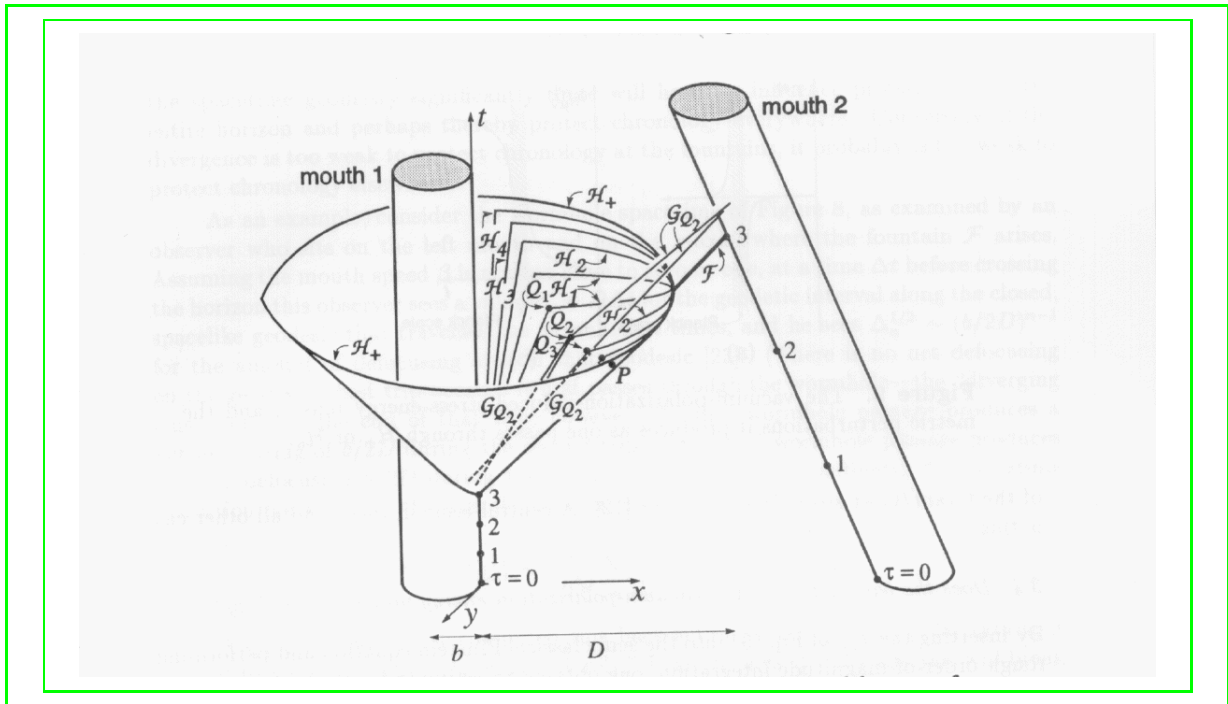
- Will this classical effect destabilize the chronology horizon?

- Will quantum physics amplify or ameliorate the effect?

Wave packet defocussing:

- **Question**: Will this defocussing effect stabilize the chronology horizon?

- This would be *bad*.

Quantum chronology protection:

Polarized hypersurfaces:

- There is an entire nested structure of self-intersecting null curves that wrap through the wormhole N times.

- $N \to \infty$ approaches the chronology horizon.

Renormalized stress energy tensor:

$$\langle 0|T_{\mu\nu}(x)|0\rangle = \lim_{y \to x}\langle 0|T_{\mu\nu}(x,y)|0\rangle.$$

$$\langle 0|T_{\mu\nu}(x,y)|0\rangle = D_{\mu\nu}(x,y)\{G_R(x,y)\}.$$

- G_R — renormalized Green function.

- $D_{\mu\nu}$ — second–order differential operator.

- Adiabatic approximation:

$$\langle 0|T_{\mu\nu}(x)|0\rangle = \hbar \sum_{\gamma}{}' \frac{\Delta_\gamma(x,x)^{1/2}}{\pi^2 s_\gamma(x,x)^4}\, t_{\mu\nu}(x;\gamma)$$

$$+O(s_\gamma(x,x)^{-3}).$$

- $t_{\mu\nu}(x;\gamma)$ function of metric and tangent vectors.

Blowups happen?

- $\langle T_{\mu\nu} \rangle \to \infty$ as $s[\gamma] \to 0^{+}$.

- This happens at every "polarized hypersurface".

- Unless there is an "accidental" zero in the Van Vleck determinant — $\Delta_{\gamma}(x, x)$.

- Unfortunately, there are special configurations (e.g., "Roman ring") where this happens.

- So generically $\langle T_{\mu\nu} \rangle \to \infty$; But for exceptional situations $\langle T_{\mu\nu} \rangle \to finite$.

- Need a better argument to guarantee chronology protection.

13

Breakdown of semiclassical quantum gravity:

- **Theorem**: The two-point function is not of Hadamard form at the chronology horizon. [Kay, Radzikowski, Wald; CMP 183 (1997) 533-556.]

- That is: At the chronology horizon

$$G_{\mu\nu} \neq 8\pi\, G_{\text{Newton}}\, \langle T_{\mu\nu} \rangle,$$

simply because $\langle T_{\mu\nu} \rangle$ does not exist...

- This does not necessarily mean $\langle T_{\mu\nu} \rangle \to \infty$.

- More prosaically $\langle T_{\mu\nu} \rangle \to undefined$.

- Need to go beyond semi-classical quantum gravity (scqg).

Green function:

The adiabatic approximation gives —

$$G_R(x,y) = \hbar \frac{\Delta_{\gamma_0}(x,y)^{1/2} \varpi_{\gamma_0}(x,y)}{4\pi^2}$$
$$+ \hbar \sum_{\gamma}{}' \frac{\Delta_{\gamma}(x,y)^{1/2}}{4\pi^2} \times$$
$$\left[\frac{1}{\sigma_{\gamma}(x,y)} + \upsilon_{\gamma}(x,y) \ln |\sigma_{\gamma}(x,y)| + \varpi_{\gamma}(x,y) \right]_.$$

- The sum runs over nontrivial geodesics.

- $\sigma_{\gamma}(x,y) = \pm\frac{1}{2}s[\gamma(x,y)]^2$ is the geodetic interval.

- $\Delta_{\gamma}(x,y)$ is the Van Vleck determinant.

- $\upsilon_{\gamma}(x,y)$ and $\varpi_{\gamma}(x,y)$ are smooth as $x \to y$.

Retaining only the most singular terms as $\sigma \to 0^+$:

$$G_R(x,y) = \hbar \sum_{\gamma}{}' \frac{\Delta_{\gamma}(x,x)^{1/2}}{2\pi^2 s_{\gamma}(x,x)^2} + O\left[\ln(s_{\gamma}(x,x))\right].$$

Reliability of csqft:

- Near the chronology horizon $\exists$ arbitrarily short self-intersecting spacelike geodesics

$$\mathrm{d}s^2 = \mathrm{d}z^2 + g_{ab}^{(2+1)} \, \mathrm{d}x^a \, \mathrm{d}x^b.$$

  (Not necessarily smooth.)

- $\Phi(z + s) = \Phi(z)$.

- $s < L_{\mathsf{Planck}} \Rightarrow$
  modes with $p_z > P_{\mathsf{Planck}}$ excited.

- That is: Close enough to the chronology horizon $\exists$ Planck scale physics.

- Region invariantly defined by looking at length of self-intersecting spacelike geodesics.

<u>Quantum physics wins:</u>

- $g_{ab}(z + s) = g_{ab}(z)$.

- Close enough to the chronology horizon
  ∃ Planck scale metric fluctuations.

- Should not trust semi-classical quantum gravity there.

- Generically, csqft (curved-space qft) is not enough to guarantee chronology protection.

- Full quantum gravity is unavoidable.
  (strings/branes, quantum geometry,
  Lorentzian lattice qg, canonical qg,
  whatever...)

Quantum gravity:

- Canonical quantum gravity (on steroids) and Lorentzian lattice quantum gravity both satisfy chronology protection by fiat.
  (Impose global hyperbolicity $\Rightarrow$ stable causality $\Rightarrow$ cosmic time.)

- Quantum geometry and string/brane models do not (yet) seem to be able to address these issues.

  – Quantum geometry (currently) has enough troubles getting a "continuum limit".

  – String/brane models (currently) address chronology protection only within the low-energy limit — where they are a special case of csqft.

Conclusions:

- Chronology protection is a useful organizing principle.

- Chronology protection keeps life "interesting", without letting things get *too* "interesting".

- Chronology protection forces us to think about full-fledged quantum gravity.

- Chronology protection forces us to think about the quantum gravity/ semiclassical gravity interface.

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