

Waterford Institute of Technology

Seminar Series in Mathematics & Physics

Presents

Hands Off Hubble

Cormac O'Raifeartaigh, WIT

We consider the recent decision by the International Astronomical Union to rename Hubble's law, a key piece of evidence supporting the Big Bang theory, as the Hubble-Lemaître law. We find the proposal problematic from a scientific perspective because it conflates astronomy with cosmology, i.e., conflates Edwin Hubble's observations of an empirical relation between redshift and distance for the distant galaxies with Georges Lemaître's derivation of a theoretical law of universal expansion from general relativity. We also find the proposal problematic from a historical perspective because it overlooks the fact that Hubble's law was accepted as an empirical relation by many physicists who did not at the time accept the notion of cosmic expansion. In conclusion, we find that the renaming of Hubble's law constitutes an unfortunate example of scientific revisionism, i.e., the renaming of past scientific discoveries in the light of today's knowledge.

Venue: Room F04 Cork Road Campus
Date: Wednesday 11th December 2019
Time: 4.15 p.m.

Admission Free: All are welcome to attend.