

# Re: Tackling John Baez Head-On

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.physics/2005-04/msg01820.html>

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  - *Date:* 12 Apr 2005 10:57:44 -0700
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>>From Osher Doctorow

Saunders MacLane would have us run around looking for "Objects" ("Hey, ma, there's an Object – can I name it?"), looking for commutative diagrams ("Hey, pa, there's a commutative diagram, can I save it?"), looking for functors ("Hey, uncle, there a functor, can I add it to my list?"), looking for isomorphisms or even morphisms with iso- ("Hey world, show me your isomorphisms or even morphisms – I won't ask for clues.").

Pierre De Fermat had no such "advantages", but there were all these gamblers in society in those days, and so he discovered Probability with Pascal. Did he look for an object, a commutative diagram, a functor, a morphism? Don't mess me with, boy :>)

Albert Einstein had no such "advantages", but his geometer Professor friend Marcel Grossman knew about Ricci and Levi-Civita's analytic-geometric Absolute Differential Calculus and his Chair Minkowski had Geometry (Minkowski space, etc.), and there were physics anomalies like the advance of perihelion of Mercury, and here we are today.

Erwin Schrodinger and Prince Louis De Broglie had no such "advantages", but Erwin had Differential Equations which aren't Algebra, and so did Prince Louis, and here we are today. Erwin also happened to leave Austria in protest against Hitler and spent WWII in Ireland. Heisenberg, whose Matrix Mechanics is alleged by some to have started QM (well, delete a few people like Prince Louis and Einstein and Planck and even Schrodinger's early work, and you never know what you come up with), spent WWII as Hitler's top scientist (Head of Nazi Science, although the Physics Protectionist League as one might call them tear their hair out at the thought) and couldn't come up with an atomic bomb much less a WMD.

Superstring Theory has so many different authors that it's hard to keep track. John Schwarz of CalTech (who wasn't first, but came in fast afterward) and Michael Green of London U. and later Edward Witten of the Princeton Institute who kept one foot in Topological Quantum Field Theory (TQFT) and one foot in Superstring/Brane/M-Theory, couldn't come

up with an equation if it fell on their heads, and certainly nothing to compare with the Schrodinger equation, but they get plenty of publications and do advance the field (at what price?). Of course, their methods: Algebraic Geometry and Algebraic Topology, with by coincidence Physics thrown in (as an afterthought?).

Loop Quantum Gravity (LQG) may be the most farcical thing to hit physics since the Zeppelins. Claiming to be heirs of Einstein more or less (Lee Smolin, Abhay Ashtekar, Carl Rovelli), they now have the universe discretized which is the road that the Quantum Logic people went down in the early 1970s before they totally collapsed (they were recently reborn) in complete imitation of Werner Heisenberg. They use the "Generalized Hamiltonian" and "Lagrangian" which are really tools from Analysis, Differential Equations, and Physics, but in their obsession with Algebraic Geometry and later Algebraic Topology, they won't rest until we are all cut up into little pieces. Actually, I think that part of the universe may be resisting being cut up, but perhaps they have a contingency plan for that :>) Smolin and his colleague claim to have discovered one of their key insights in a British Pub in the process of falling asleep or watching the other fall asleep, which is the only thing that rings true. The colleague, whose name I have "sadly" forgotten although I think the initials are J. M., has written a popular book that differs slightly from Greene's Elegant Universe in containing more profanity and other-blaming than physics (well, minus the episodic narrations of personal experiences).

Osher Doctorow

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